University of Limerick

2024

**Annual Quality Report
University of Limerick**
Reporting Period 2022-2023

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Annual Quality Report University of Limerick
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2022-2023

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

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

Glossary

AC	Academic Council
AHSS	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
APR	Academic Programme Review
APRC	Academic Programme Review Committee
AQR	Annual Quality Report
AS	Athena Swan
AVPAA	Associate Vice President Academic Affairs
AY	Academic Year
BI	Business Intelligence
CAO	Central Applications Office
CECD	Cooperative Education and Careers Division
CHN	Community Healthcare Network
CO	Chief Officer
Co-op	Cooperative Education
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CS	Corporate Secretary
CTL	Centre for Transformative Learning
CWELL	Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills
DAB	Designated Awarding Body
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education
DGSC	Digital Governance Steering Committee
DLSH	Digital Learning Support Hub
DPO	Data Protection Officer
EC	Executive Committee
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EHS	Faculty of Education and Health Science
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
EU	European Union
EUIP	European Union in the Indo-Pacific
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council

FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GA	Governing Authority
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPS	Graduate and Professional Studies
HAPPEE	The Health Alliance for Practice-Based professional Education and Engagement
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health Services Executive
ICAI	International centre for Academic Integrity
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTLC	Information & Communications Technology Learning Centre
IHEQN	Irish Higher Education Quality Network
IRQ	Irish Register of Qualifications
ITD	Information Technology Division
IUA	Irish Universities Association
IWAA	Irish World Aviation Academy
KBS	Kemmy Business School
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LCEN	Limerick Community Education Network
LTAS	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
MACSI	Mathematics Applications Consortium for Science and Industry
MIC	Mary Immaculate College
MLC	Maths Learning Centre
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSS	Module Satisfaction Survey
NAIN	National Academic Integrity Network
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NPHET	National Public Health Emergency Team
NWO	Netherlands Science Foundation
OER	Open Educational Resources
OVPR	Office Vice President Research
PASS	Personal Academic Support System

PCC	Plassey Campus Centre
PCs	Personal Computers
PDP	Provost/Deputy President
PDRS	Performance and Development Review System
PESS	Department of Physical Education and Sports Science
PMSS	Professional, Managerial Support Staff
PMTC	Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology Centre
PPN	Public Participation Network
PSRB	Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body
PVA	President's Volunteer Award
QA	Quality Assurance
QE	Quality Enhancement
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
QMS	Quality Management System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QRG	Quality Review Group
QSU	Quality Support Unit
RECs	Research Ethics Committee
SAH	School of Allied Health
SALI	Senior Academic Leadership Initiative
SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SESU	Student Engagement and Success Unit
SET	Sefl-Evaluation of Teaching
SI	Student Record System
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
TELME	Teaching Foreign Languages in a Multicultural Environment
UL	University of Limerick
ULREG	University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance Committee
ULRIS	UL Research Information System
UTEMB	University Teacher Education Management Board
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VP	Vice President
VPGCE	Vice President Global & Community Engagement
WAM	Workload Allocation Model

YERUN	Young European Research University Network

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for the University of Limerick for the reporting period **1 September 2022 – 31 August 2023.**
It is to be submitted by **Friday, 23 February 2024.**

The AQR has been approved by the UL Quality Committee, the UL Executive and is submitted by **Sinéad O'Sullivan, Director of Quality.**

University of Limerick

Established as an educational institution in 1972 and conferred as a university in 1989, University of Limerick (UL) is an independent, research-focused institution. UL is a leading economic driver in the region and boasts a proud record of innovation and engagement with industry and values creativity, curiosity and excellence in an inclusive community that is committed to social good.

UL offers programmes across a wide range of disciplines through its four faculties – Kemmy Business School; Education and Health Sciences; Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; and Science and Engineering. The University is recognised for research strengths in the areas of materials, manufacturing, software, science and engineering, and medicine/health, and the employment rate for UL graduates is higher than the national average.

With unrivalled sports and cultural facilities, UL is recognised as having one of the most spectacular and environmentally sympathetic third-level campuses in the world. The campus includes Ireland's first Olympic-size swimming pool, an indoor sports arena, a boathouse with a state-of-the-art indoor rowing tank, the Glucksman Library, the 1,100-seat University Concert Hall, the Irish Chamber Orchestra Building, the Irish World Academy of Music & Dance and an impressive range of visual arts, including outdoor sculptures, the National Self-Portrait Collection of Ireland and the Water Colour Society of Ireland Collection.

The campus is located 20 kilometres from Shannon Airport and five kilometres from Limerick city. The UL City Centre Campus, located in Limerick city, houses the digital fabrication laboratory 'FabLab' and the Citizen Innovation Lab.

The campus is home to the Nexus Innovation Centre which supports spin-out activity in the region, and is central to the UL Enterprise Corridor which hosts leading R&D companies such as Johnson & Johnson. Adjacent to the University is the National Technology Park (NTP), Ireland's first science/technology park (263 hectares), which is home to over 80 organisations employing over 3,000 people.

UL's mission is to build on the expertise of its scholars in creating, harnessing and imparting knowledge for the benefit of its students and the enrichment of its community. The University seeks to create a destination of excellence in education, research and innovation that will attract the highest-calibre staff and the best students from all sections of society, both in Ireland and abroad.

UL operates under national legislation as specified by the Universities Act 1997.

As set down in that legislation, overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested in the UL Governing Authority, which is appointed in accordance with the Act. Executive Committee is responsible for the overall management of UL. The academic affairs of the University are managed by faculty boards, the Academic Programme Review Committee and Academic Council.

Development and Approval of AQR

Operational responsibility for completion of the AQR rests with the Quality Support Unit. The Director of Quality is responsible for submission of the AQR to QQI. Upon receipt of the report template, the Director of Quality confers with the Provost/Deputy President and other relevant offices/officers as appropriate. The consultation and development process includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Part one is reviewed by QSU to ensure content is relevant and up-to-date and also to include any updates for the reporting period.
- A copy of the report template is circulated to the UL Quality Committee. All members are asked to contribute relevant case studies for inclusion.
- An email is sent to the University Executive and senior officers requesting case studies for inclusion in the AQR.
- An app has been developed by QSU for collection of data for inclusion in the Case Study section of the AQR. This is circulated to all members of UL Quality Committee, the UL Quality Team Leaders' Forum and other relevant offices/officers within the University.
- Relevant data is extracted from annual support unit quality reports for inclusion in the AQR.
- Relevant data is requested from academic and professional service units for inclusion in the report.
- Weekly progress update meetings are held internally in QSU to monitor progress.

Towards the end of January, a draft AQR is circulated to the UL Quality Committee for review and feedback. A single-item agenda meeting is scheduled to get feedback from members of the Quality Committee. Once final amendments are made, the AQR is circulated to Academic Council and Executive. The finalised report is circulated to Governing Authority for noting.

A documented operational procedure for completion of the AQR is available on the QSU SharePoint site.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested in the Governing Authority, whose functions include approving high-level strategy and policy, statutes and regulations. The Provost/Deputy President (PDP) reports directly to the Governing Authority on all quality-related issues. Matters relating to internal audit or risk management are dealt with by the GA Audit and Risk sub-committee.

Executive Committee, which is accountable to the President, is the senior management committee with responsibility for developing strategic policies and procedures, monitoring corporate performance and ensuring that all aspects of the corporate function operate with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

Academic Council controls UL's academic affairs. It oversees academic awards, standards and regulations and approves all new programmes and changes to existing programmes. Chaired by the President, Academic Council comprises senior officers, deans of faculty, heads of academic departments, Students' Union officers, assistant deans of academic affairs and elected staff representatives.

Reporting to the President, the Corporate Secretary has responsibility for a number of areas including: Management of the University governance function including attendance at Governing Authority meetings and management of all Governing Authority Committees; Ensuring Compliance with the Universities Act 1997; Development, revision and distribution of University statutes, regulations, corporate policies and procedures; Legislative Compliance; Management of University corporate legal affairs; Management of the University's Visual Arts Collection; Management of the University's Risk Management Function; Responsibility for the University's Internal Audit Function; Management of Recruitment & Appointment Processes for the President, Academic Vice Presidents and Deans; Management of a range of internal appeals processes; Records Management; Management of the development, progression and completion of various corporate-wide projects.

As per the academic organisational chart, UL comprises four faculties and 23 academic departments, together with research centres, institutes, and externally funded research centres which are aligned to host faculties. Overall responsibility for the academic faculties resides with the faculty executive deans, who report to the President. Each dean is supported in his/her role by heads of academic schools/departments, a faculty manager, an Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, an Assistant Dean of Research and an Assistant Dean of Internationalisation. All academic members of a faculty, together with student representatives, comprise the faculty board, which meets regularly to discuss academic matters, such as proposals for new programmes.

All UL professional service (support) units report to a member of Executive Committee. Full details of all support units with links to individual functional areas are available here.

The University of Limerick (UL) strategic plan UL@50 Strategic Plan 2019-2024 articulates institutional mission, vision and strategic priorities. The overall strategic plan is supported by (a) the UL Equality and Human Rights Strategy, which details objectives, actions and expected outcomes for 13 grounds of Equality and Human Rights under 10 themes: Governance; Leadership; Staff Experience; Educational Experience; Research Experience; Campus

Development; Events, Clubs and Societies; Public Relations, Marketing and Communications; Technology; and Procurement and Budgeting; (b) our teaching, learning and assessment strategy, which includes a specific commitment to quality in all our activities; and (c) our Research Strategy (*Wisdom for Action, 2022-2027*) These strategic documents each have associated implementation plans, which are subject to regular monitoring and review.

The University's decision-making processes and procedures are outlined on the Corporate Secretary's website here.

The University is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of its activities and to fostering a quality culture throughout the institution. The University recognises the pursuit of quality, and hence excellence, as a core value. Responsibility for the quality of our activities rests at institutional, local and individual level. The University Quality Policy is available here. The University's Quality Manual is available here. UL's risk management policy and associated processes also represent a core university system linking risk, quality and strategy.

UL's institutional arrangements for developing, monitoring, reviewing, enhancing and managing the quality of its activities are multi-layered and multifaceted. They are informed by national acts, statutory quality guidelines and international good practice and are appropriately underpinned by UL policies. The arrangements have evolved and are tailored to institutional organisational structure and mission. They are developed and overseen by relevant institutional and local unit-level governance committees and are reviewed by various means, including internal quality reviews and periodic institutional (external) reviews.

The University's Policy Management Framework sets out a standard set of principles to follow when developing, implementing and managing institutional policies with a view to promoting a consistent approach to both the development process and format of policies across the University.

UL Internal Quality Assurance Governance, Systems and Supports
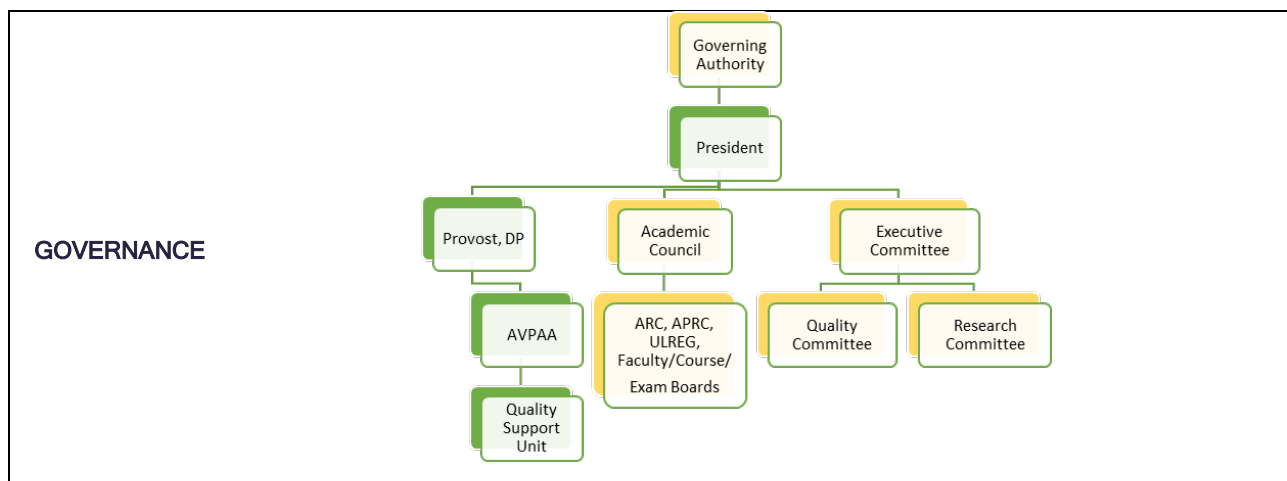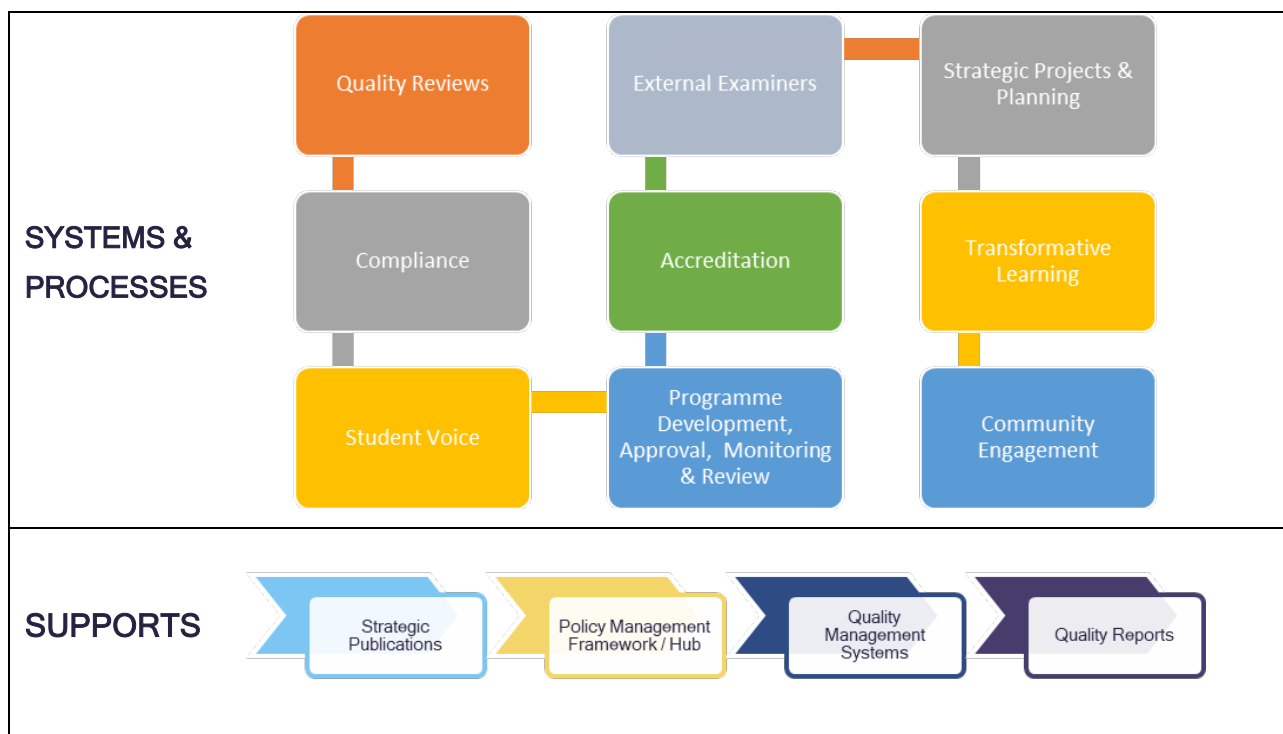
External Quality Assurance
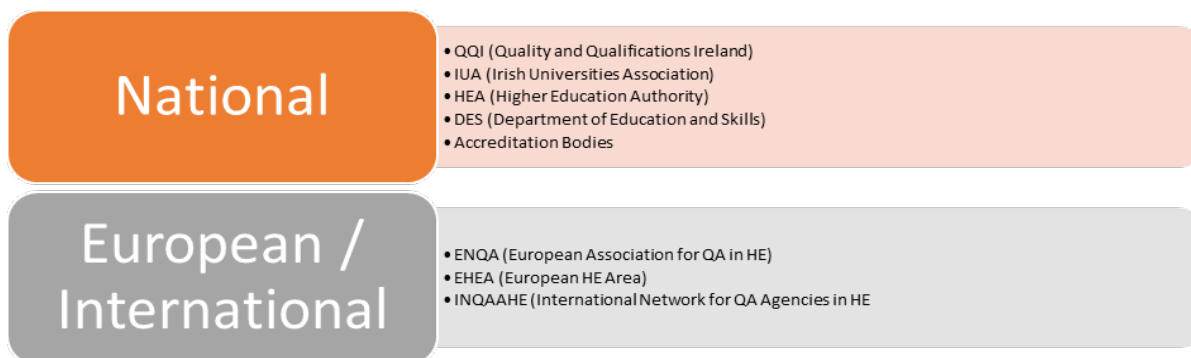
Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders

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1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Collaborative Provision & Transnational Delivery of Programmes

The University's policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision sets out a University-wide approach to collaborative and transnational arrangements in line with the strategic plan and related faculty and divisional strategies. The policy outlines the principles that the University use to evaluate proposals for partnerships with institutions. The policy and its associated procedures provide direction to staff in evaluating complex proposals, drafting agreements and developing new and existing collaborations, thereby encouraging consistency, transparency and good practice across UL.

Delivery to International Learners

In July 2015, QQI published a Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. The Code of Practice (or 'the Code'), which both draws upon and informs international effective practice, can be accessed here or from the QQI website. The Code represents a set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners. In the introductory text, QQI indicates that compliance with the Code should be integrated into the provider's quality assurance policies and procedures.

An evidence-based overview of (a) how compliance with the Code is integrated into UL's quality assurance policies and procedures and (b) how UL complies with each of the specific criteria included in the Code is available here.

Linked Providers

In the context of the 2012 Education and Training Act and in its role as a designated awarding body, the University accredits a number of programmes offered by linked providers. The University's linked provision arrangements are guided by its Linked Provider Framework. The framework covers linked provider approval, annual monitoring and periodic review processes, which include clear governance guidelines.

As a designated awarding body, the University has established relationships with two educational linked providers: Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick and the Garda College, Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

QA procedures for engaging with linked providers are governed by memorandums of understanding and agreement (MoUs/MoAs) between the University and individual linked providers. The MoUs/MoAs, and hence the exact profile and scope of the resultant QA oversight, are tailored to best suit individual institutional contexts and are approved ultimately by Academic Council and Executive Committee.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

In accordance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 3.1 (Programme development and approval) and European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) no. 2 (Design and approval of programmes), the University follows a well-established, rigorous process for developing and approving new programmes. The process and its related procedures and guidelines are documented internally on SharePoint. All new programmes must align with the institutional strategic plan, with justification included in approval documentation, and must comply with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The NFQ level, award type, learning outcomes, entry requirements, total credits, calculated credits, mode of delivery (full-time, part-time, blended, distance, evening, etc.), progression points and core pathway must all be specified on the programme submission application form for subsequent consideration by the approving groups. The University's Awards Title Framework is available here.

The IRQ is a statutory return, which is currently compiled and uploaded to the QQI portal by the Quality Support Unit and approved by the Provost. The QSU is responsible for return for linked providers. MIC return data approved by MIC. Garda College approved by UL PDP. It is a resource that provides public confirmation of the formal, technical relationship between a qualification and related programmes and the NFQ and is published online at www.irq.ie. The IRQ is a comprehensive and authoritative list of all quality-assured education and training qualifications recognised on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. In signing up to the Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies (DABs) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications , DABs endorse it as the basis for determining the inclusion within the NFQ of awards of designated awarding bodies, in accordance with Section 55B of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) as amended.

In accordance with the protocol, signatory designated awarding bodies will publish their awards included within the NFQ to the IRQ. Where QQI requires any further information on a data upload to the IRQ, it will consult with the relevant designated awarding body.   The publication of an award on the IRQ confirms that a relevant designated awarding body and QQI have agreed that it is appropriate that such an award be included within the NFQ. In line with EU requirements QQI has also published the IRQ data for Higher Education programmes at European level on the Europass Qualification Dataset Register at www.europass.ie making this information visible at EU level.

New programmes are formally approved in five stages by five different groups: the host department, host faculty, Executive Committee, Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) and Academic Council. Academic Council approves new programmes on the advice of APRC. Students and representative stakeholders of the academic units (faculty and department/school) proposing the programme are represented on Academic Council.

Procedures for institution-wide programme design, approval and modification are stored on SharePoint. The approval process procedures and guidelines, including defined criteria, are documented in *Procedures for Processing Programme Proposals* and *Guidelines to Ensure Quality and Consistency of Submissions*, respectively. Joint or dual degrees are subject to the provisions of UL's policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision.

Following approval by Academic Council, the modification or creation of programme records is maintained by the Programme Management Office of the Academic Registry Division. Further information is available here.

Apprenticeship Programmes

The provision of statutory apprenticeship programmes is an aspect of the University's work-based learning delivery and collaborative provision. The University's Policy and Procedures for the Provision of Apprenticeship Programmes provides direction to staff and potential partners when considering the provision of statutory apprenticeships. Adherence to the policy and its related procedures assures that statutory apprenticeship programmes are developed and delivered in accordance with statutory requirements and those of the University of Limerick. The policy is guided by QQI's Topic Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes and QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards as key external reference points but is also interdependent with other University policies and procedures relating to programme development, teaching, learning and assessment.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The University's policies and procedures in relation to admission, progression and recognition of prior learning are informed by QQI's Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training.

The online prospectuses for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and the Graduate & Professional Studies and UL Global websites specify the admission processes and entry criteria for the University's programme offerings. Programme award titles are aligned with the institution's Award Titles Framework. The Access and Widening Participation Policy provides for entry mechanisms, programmes and support services that ensure equality of entry, participation and outcome for all student groups at the University. The Recognition of Prior Learning Policy complies with national and European principles on recognition and recognises all types of prior learning, including that acquired by formal, non-formal and informal routes. Appeals with regard to admissions decisions are managed under the admissions appeals process for undergraduates and postgraduates. The RPL website, which outlines full details of RPL processes and procedures, is available here.

The Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures specifies the regulations relating to learner admission (sections 1.2, 1.3, 5.3, 5.4), progression (4, 5.5, 5.6), recognition (1.4, 1.5, 2) and certification of awards (1.6, 5.2). The handbook is updated annually to ensure all regulations and procedures remain fit for purpose. Handbook updates are recommended by APRC and approved by Academic Council. The Academic Programme Transfer Policy specifies conditions under which students can apply to transfer between programmes internally or from a programme in another HEI.

The Institutional Research Officer and the ITD Business Intelligence & Reporting team gather statistics on student admission and progression. Reports on student progression per programme are compiled and presented to course directors, heads of department/school, faculty deans and Executive Committee.
In accordance with the Academic Programme Review Policy (which is covered in more detail in section 4.3), each programme's course review board is provided with the following sets of anonymised data, which they use in their annual and periodic programme review reports:

- Course data report, including:
  - o Application data – CAO + international
  - o New entrant CAO points – minimum and median
  - o New entrant entry mode – DARE, FETAC, HEAR and mature students
  - o Student enrolment and progression data
  - o First-year presence and progression after one year
  - o Graduates by award level
- Course-specific results from the Student Exit Survey
- External examiner reports from the previous three academic years
- Graduate first destination reports
- All available annual programme review reports since the previous periodic review.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The UL Academic Council approves the entry requirements, programmes of study and award titles of all degrees, diplomas and certificates that are offered by the University.

Programme learning outcomes and the curriculum designed to achieve those outcomes are articulated as part of the initial approval of a programme by Academic Council. These outcomes are mapped to the appropriate NFQ award descriptor. Learning outcomes for all modules are outlined in the University of Limerick Book of Modules.   Assessment of modules is based on the achievement of those learning outcomes.

Each student's performance is considered at the University Exam Board, and award recommendations are then considered at the next meeting of Academic Council.

Learners who successfully complete major, minor, supplemental or special-purpose awards receive a University of Limerick parchment fixed with the UL seal and endorsed by the UL President and Provost & Deputy President. Graduands in receipt of major, minor, supplemental or special-purpose awards are conferred at the next scheduled conferring ceremony. Unless otherwise approved by the Provost & Deputy President graduands in receipt of awards of less than 30 credits are conferred in absentia. Graduands in receipt of awards of 30 credits or greater will be invited to receive their award at the conferring ceremony.

Details of the University's procedures for certification of awards and their alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications is available on the university website.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

In line with **ESG 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment)**, active and collaborative learning forms a central element of UL's teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Given the diversity of programmes on offer at UL, a variety of modes of programme delivery is available. In accordance with **ESG 1.3**, the mode of delivery is defined for all programme modules in the (new or revised) programme submission documentation approved by APRC/Academic Council (see last section). Academic regulation 1.4.3 (in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures) requires the academic staff member(s) to provide details to the students of the learning outcomes of the module, indicative grade descriptors corresponding to each grade, the criteria on which assessment is to be based, the minimum performance standard, the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument associated with the module and repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module. Programme

assessment policy and procedures are clearly articulated in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular chapter 2, Marks and Standards).

The UL Academic Council is charged under the Universities Act 1997 with ensuring academic standards and the quality of all awards made by the University. In accordance with the University's quality assurance procedures, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes to provide an independent view and report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. Academic Council examination boards will consider recommendations from faculty examination boards and submissions from both internal and external examiners before determining students' final awards. The University's External Examiners Policy is available here.

Under the terms of the University's Academic Programme Review Policy, all taught programmes are subject to formal annual review by the relevant course review board with a commitment to periodic review (usually every five years) by a panel that includes external personnel. Master's and PhD theses by research are monitored by means of an annual progression and monitoring system involving research review panels within each academic unit. The theses are examined and reported upon by internal and external examiners.

Working with UL's four faculties, Graduate & Professional Studies (GPS) manages the development and delivery of flexible and relevant professional and personal development programmes. GPS uses a hybrid model: academic schools/departments retain ownership of courses and academic material, and GPS provides the support, procedures and processes that enable the development and delivery of flexible learning pathways.

Students are systematically involved in programme delivery and assessment-related activity. Programme boards include student representation (with students absenting themselves when exam results are discussed), as do associated QA oversight fora, including Faculty Board, Academic Council and Governing Authority. Institutional-level student feedback is collected systematically through the annual student exit survey and the module satisfaction survey as well as through a range of other survey activities, including, but not limited to, the studentsurvey.ie, the self-evaluation of teaching, the UL postgraduate research experience survey and surveys of international students. Survey findings are considered, as appropriate, at local level (by individual academic staff, programme boards, heads of department) and at institutional level (by deans, Executive Committee, Academic Council), and summary reports are made publicly available.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The provision of module resources is the responsibility of relevant academic and support units. Relevant examples of the latter include ITD, Buildings and Estates, the Library and the Student Affairs Division. Where review processes (course review board annual programme review, external examiner reports, student surveys) point to a shortfall in a programme's learning resources and/or learner supports, the course director liaises with the head of department/school to rectify the situation.

Academic Registry is the main provider of administrative services (e.g. maintains student records, administers end-of-semester examinations, issues graduate parchments and transcripts, and develops and administers procedures for complying with the University's academic regulations and marks and standards) to units running programmes of study and their students. Academic Registry is subject to periodic quality review and, through its QMS, regular QMS auditing.

The main learner support units (Access Office, Mature Student Office, Disability Support Services, Counselling, Chaplaincy, Student Health Centre and Student Support Officers) reside in the Student Affairs umbrella division. The Access Office works to promote and support the participation of students from groups that have been under-represented in the third-level education sector. The Mature Student Office supports mature students who are registered on full-time undergraduate programmes and students who are registered on the Mature Student Access Certificate. The office helps to ease these students' transition into full-time higher education. Students with additional requirements are supported by Disability Support Services, which provides a range of services to students, including assistive technology. The Disability Support Services handbook provides detailed information for current and prospective students. Pastoral care is provided to students through the Personal Academic Support System (PASS), Counselling, Chaplaincy and the two students' unions (Student Life and Postgraduate Students' Union). The Student Health Centre's service is provided to registered students only.

Undergraduate programmes include either a six-to-eight-month cooperative education placement ('Co-op') or practice placement (clinical or teaching). Both types of placement are formal, compulsory and academically accredited elements of the programme. For programmes with professional placements regulated in part by an accrediting body such as the Medical Council or Teaching Council, placements are restricted to sites that are recognised by that accrediting body. In addition to Co-op, language students may undertake an Erasmus placement at a European partner institution.

The Careers Service (a section of the Cooperative Education & Careers Division) offers support to students and recent graduates in developing and implementing successful career plans and facilitates the recruitment process for students and employers.

The remit of the University's Access, Equality and Student Affairs Committee includes ensuring that "policies prepared are in accordance with good practice, student equality and diversity principles, and student, University and legislative requirements".

Led by the UL Global, the University's compliance with the Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners is documented here.

The Centre for Transformative Learning offers a number of initiatives to students to support their learning, including the First Seven Weeks programme, study skills and exam technique workshops, and a number of student support centres (the five learner support centres listed in section 6.2.2 and SESU).

HR's Learning, Development and Equal Opportunities section provides training and development courses to support the development of research skills for research and academic staff. Popular programmes include networking for research, grant writing, communicating research effectively, research ethics and PhD supervision. In addition, HR operates a research coaching programme, which brings together those involved in research to exchange experience and provide each other with guidance and support in achieving research outputs, including publications, books and research grants.

The Buildings and Estates Department manages and allocates space on campus in accordance with the University's Space Management Protocol (approved by Executive Committee). Buildings and Estates ensures that all aspects of the University's infrastructure are safe.

The Glucksman Library, which is managed and quality assured by the Library and Information Services Division, provides information resources and facilities to students, staff and researchers.

In relation to research, laboratory space and associated equipment falls under the auspices of the individual academic unit and/or research institute in which the facilities reside.

As part of their periodic quality reviews, academic, research and support units evaluate and report upon the adequacy of their physical premises, equipment and facilities. Any recommendations put forward to a unit by the reviewers are itemised in the unit's post-review quality improvement plan.

Students are asked to give feedback on teaching and learning facilities. The Exit Survey asks students about the appropriateness of the learning environment while the MSS asks students to rate how they feel about their modules' resources, rooms and facilities.

The institutional Safety Statement provides a framework for the organisation of safety throughout the University. The statement includes guidelines for personnel with delegated safety duties who will, by their actions and encouragement to others, ensure that the University continues to be a safe place in which to work and learn. The Health & Safety Essentials booklet, to be read in conjunction with the Safety Statement, provides guidance on the very broad scope of health & safety at work. The purpose of the booklet is to summarise the main points of the Safety Statement (Part 1) and provide information on a number of general health and safety issues relevant to the whole institution (Part 2). Further details of health and safety policies and procedures, including Garda vetting and foreign police clearance, are available on the Health and Safety page of the HR website.

Blended Learning

CTL has provided supports and resources for students in order to help them to maximise their engagement and enhance their experience of teaching, learning and assessment in the online context. Students did not choose to experience their learning in the remote setting and consequently for the majority this is a new and somewhat daunting experience for them. The

first resource developed was a set of guidelines on Learning online in UL which has an accompanying short recording to ease accessibility for students.

The Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL) three-year project is aimed at enhancing the digital attributes and educational experiences of Irish university students through mainstreaming digital in teaching and learning activities in Irish Universities, by addressing the professional development of all who teach or support teaching and learning. Supports have been developed to develop and enhance students' experience of online teaching learning and assessment. Resources developed for students by students include a video and set of guidelines on how students can best plan for effective learning during Covid-19; online exams advice for students; student success for online assessment for each of the faculties KBS, SEN, AHSS and EHS

EDTL @ UL workshops will be available soon as part of the UL Library's Digital Skills programme for students, #Take1step. These digital skills workshops will cover a range of topics and will be available between academic week 4 and week 6.

The five learning centres are all providing support to students within the remote context with a high level of engagement in the services and supports available. Further details available from CTL Annual Reports.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Overall research strategy and policy is articulated by the University's: (a) strategic plan; (b) research strategy and (c) quality policy. The management of institutional-level research is largely the responsibility of the Vice President Research, who is supported by the Office of the Vice President Research. Research-related policies and procedures are available here. The University Research Committee, which reports to Executive Committee, advises and reports on research priorities for the University.

At an institutional level, research master's, PhDs and Professional Doctorates are supported by the Doctoral College with respect to advocating for quality education, increasing infrastructural efficiencies, accommodating diversity of research and research needs, and networking opportunities as part of a community of researchers. Information on postgraduate research is given on the Doctoral College [Doctoral College | University of Limerick (ul.ie)] website. Academic regulations affecting postgraduate researchers are included in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular in chapters 2 and 5). In addition to providing access to that handbook, the Codes of Practice and Regulations page of the Doctoral College website provides access to the policies, procedures, forms and guidelines that underpin the research postgraduate processes. Doctoral College reviews and, where necessary, updates on an ongoing basis these forms, documents and relevant academic regulations. The Doctoral College is committed to embedding the core principles outlined in the National Framework for Doctoral Education [National Framework for Doctoral Education 2023.pdf (myphd.ie)].

QA measures are in place to collectively ensure the effective oversight of the quality of institutional research throughout the full lifecycle of research projects. The Research Portal provides information and relevant forms relating to research projects, including procedures relating to research proposal development, authorisation, submission and management. The Research Projects section of the Finance Department oversees and reports on financial aspects of research activity. The Human Resources Division publishes HR policies and procedures relating to research staff on its Research Staff web page.

UL is committed to ensuring that all research carried out under its auspices meets the highest standards of integrity, and that an environment of research integrity prevails through the promotion of good research practices, together with the use of fair, effective, and transparent procedures to address research misconduct. In support of the Research Integrity Policy, UL has appointed a Research Integrity Officer from among its senior faculty and research integrity champions are in place within each faculty.

UL's Research Integrity Policy applies to all employees of the University, as well as all Adjunct, Emeritus, and visiting personnel officially engaged in research work at the University and/or undertaking any research activity in the University's name. This policy is aligned with the
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity In Ireland (2014)
- IUA national policy statement on ensuring research integrity in Ireland
- Procedure for Managing Allegations of Misconduct in Research
- Conflicts of Interest –Protocol and Procedures relating to Research Activities

The Office of the Vice President of Research maintains overall responsibility for research ethics and governance structures at the University. This is facilitated by the Operating Guidelines for the Governance and Oversight of Research Ethics and the ULREG Terms of Reference. ULREG (University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance committee) is primarily concerned with research related policies, procedures and governance, whilst all research ethics

applications are considered at Faculty level by Research Ethics Committees (RECs). All appeals of Faculty REC decisions are referred to ULREG.

ULREG (University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance committee) is primarily concerned with research related policies, procedures and governance, whilst all research ethics applications are considered at Faculty level by Research Ethics Committees (RECs) and the Animal Ethics Committee. All appeals of Faculty REC decisions are referred to ULREG. The current chair of the University of Limerick Research Ethics & Governance committee is Paul Reynolds, Edge Hill University.

All members of the University staff and students are required to plan and conduct their investigations in accordance with appropriate ethical standards. Staff should ensure that they have knowledge of any relevant disciplinary guidelines on research ethics and that any empirical research has the required approval by the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee and/or other bodies as required. Research on patients (i.e. people who are receiving treatment as a result of an illness) falls within the remit of the Committee but requires ethical clearance from the relevant hospital Research Ethics Committee prior to the research commencing.

Faculty Research Ethics Committees are charged by the University to consider the ethics of proposed research projects which will involve human subjects and to agree or not as to whether the projected research is ethical.

Faculty Research Ethics Committees must be consulted about any research proposals which involve:
- Direct experimentation on individuals;
- Surveys or questionnaires administered to individuals;
- Use of data derived from individual records where individuals might be identified.
- Experimentation which involves animals
- Animal Science REC

Faculty Committee Information can be found at:
- Kemmy Business School Ethics
- Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics
- Education & Health Sciences Ethics
- Science & Engineering Ethics

The quality of research is reviewed through the quality reviews of academic units, research institutes and support units. The latter include the Office of the Vice President Research, Doctoral College, Finance, HR, Library and Information Services Division, ITD and Buildings and Estates, all of which contribute to a greater or lesser extent to achieving the University's research goals. Several of the above support units regularly develop, deliver or coordinate various research-related professional development courses, which are widely advertised throughout the institution by email. The University of Limerick tracks and reports on research performance via a number of mechanisms including research performance dashboard available to management, Annual Research Performance report published each year and returns to the Higher Education Authority.

The University of Limerick measures its research performance under four broad categories including publications, funding, research postgraduates, and impact. These are reported annually. In addition, the data is captured quarterly in order to meet ongoing requests for research performance metrics from Research Institutes, Departments/Schools, Executive

Committee, etc. A Research Performance Dashboard is in place and available for heads of department, Executive Committee and Directors of Research Institutes/Centres.

The activity under each of the categories is collated from various data sources both internal and external to UL. The internal data sources include but are not limited to the UL Research information system (ULRIS), Student Record System, Agresso financial system, and MyIP (research contracts and commercialisation activity). External data sources include bibliometric databases fl. Examples of key measures captured under the four categories include:

- Research outputs
- Research postgraduate graduations
- External funding awards
- Impact case studies
- Commercialisation activity

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Staff Recruitment

The University's HR policies and procedures for the recruitment of academic, support and research staff comply with Irish public sector recruitment and appointment procedures. Recruitment policies, procedures and practices comply with the Universities Act 1997, the Employment Equality Acts 1998/2004, the Equal Status Acts 2000/2004, Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Athena Swan and the HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) | UL - University of Limerick. The University's Equality and Diversity Policy is designed to ensure that the University's procedures and practices operate in a manner that is consistent with the institution's commitment to equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against individuals on grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, socio-economic status, ethnicity, national identity or neurodiversity.

The University's recruitment and staff development procedures for academic staff are designed to ensure that teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their teaching and research roles. Applicants called to interview are required to submit references prior to interview, and subsequent offers of employment are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Prior to taking up an offered position, the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of academic, professional or technical qualifications. PhD qualifications are the norm for academic staff.

The recruitment policies are reviewed regularly, updated as required, approved by Governing Authority and published on the HR website.

Staff Management

Terms of probation and tenure are addressed in each new hire's contract and job specification. Members of staff report to and are managed by their line manager. Established members of staff (i.e. those with a contract of at least 10 months) participate in the University's formal, mandatory Performance and Development Review System (PDRS). The PDRS is designed to identify the CPD needs of staff and to ensure those needs are met. It aims to ensure the alignment of team and individual objectives with the University's strategic priorities. The overall focus of the system is on improving performance and enhancing professional/career development.

Staff Development

The Talent Development Section is an integral part of the University's Human Resources Division. Their aim is to support the University's strategic plan by delivering focused training and talent development solutions to all employees that will enable a high performing organisation. A further aim is to ensure the most effective use of the talents, skills and abilities of employees by supporting employees to maximise the contribution they can make. The Talent Development Section aims to foster close relationships with academic and administrative departments to support them in achieving their objectives.

Newly recruited members of staff participate in an intensive, one-day general induction programme delivered by HR. General induction includes reference to web-accessible HR employee policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct for Employees and the Acceptable Behaviour in the Workplace Policy. In addition, new staff are provided with local

induction to familiarise them with their designated roles and responsibilities and their place within the unit.

Policies and procedures are in place for the promotion of Academic Staff. Job Sizing and Job Evaluation procedures are in place for professional, managerial and support staff.

Ongoing CPD is a central feature of the University's professional development environment. Through the PDRS, the head of department/school meets with each member of staff to agree on specific CPD requirements for that staff member. The Centre for Transformative Learning (CTL) operates a peer observation of teaching process whereby an academic member of staff observes a colleague's teaching and gives them feedback on how their teaching could be improved. The CTL offers the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process, which is designed to provide useful information to individual lectures on their students' experiences of the modules they teach. The CTL promotes graduate diploma and master's courses in teaching, learning and scholarship. In conjunction with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the Midwest Regional Cluster, the CTL offers teaching staff regular workshops on various aspects of pedagogy and a wide variety of resources and supports for improving their teaching. The University's Learning Technology Forum provides a coordinated approach to the use of technology-enhanced and blended learning. CTL have a dedicates website offering specific supports for staff with the move to online learning. The site covers continuity of assessment, alternative to end of semester exams, guidance on assessment choices and tools and guidelines for online teaching.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Information Technology and Systems

In addition to maintaining and developing the University's network and communications infrastructure, including the campus data centre facilities, the Information Technology Division (ITD) maintains a suite of enterprise applications and software systems that are critical to the teaching, learning, research and administrative goals of the institution. The IT strategy, UL Enable Stage-2 IT Strategy is about positioning IT in the institution as an enabling and leading capability for the University in realising its mission and strategic objectives. A list of IT-related policies and regulations is available on the ITD website.

The University operates the following information management systems:
- SI (Student Record System)
- Agresso (Finance Management System, Unit 4)
- Core (HR Information Management System)
- ULRIS (Research Information System)

Profiles of the student population as well as student progression, success and drop-out rates are gathered, reported and analysed in a number of ways. The Institutional Research Officer gathers statistics on student admission and progression. Reports on student progression per programme are compiled and presented to course directors, heads of department/school, faculty deans and Executive Committee.

The Office of the President compiles student profile data for inclusion in the University's annual Strategic Dialogue self-assessment report to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) – see the published HEA's Higher Education System Performance Institutional and Sectoral Profiles for details.

The annual institutional-level Student Exit Survey process includes internal longitudinal benchmarking and benchmarking against our linked providers.

The University's Student Engagement & Success Unit (SESU) undertakes research and analyses data relating to student engagement. The source of the data is the Studentsurvey.ie.

The Academic Registry Division maintains and controls the University's student records through its student records system (SI), from which various officers and offices can extract and tailor data to generate reports. Reports are generated from SI for relevant internal stakeholders at institutional level (e.g. Academic Council and Executive Committee) and local level (e.g. course review boards). Reports are generated from SI as required for external stakeholders, such as the HEA and the Department of Education and Skills.

A list of University programmes is generated annually from SI for submitting to the HEA. Twice a year (mid-semester), a 'not-registered' report is generated from SI and sent to the HEA and grant-funding bodies (e.g. SUSI). The security of SI is maintained through access levels, which are controlled by ITD and the system administrator in the units that use SI. Academics input their students' assessment results into the system, and data integrity scripts are run (Oracle Discoverer) to check the accuracy and completeness of the data.

Records Management and Retention

The University operates an institutional records management and retention policy. Policies and procedures on the maintenance and retention of quality-related documentation at unit level form part of each support unit's QMS. One of the quality management processes of the QMS is documentation control. All QMS processes are published on the Quality section of each unit's website.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

Data protection forms part of the remit of the Corporate Secretary's Office. The University operates a data protection policy, which was revised in 2018 to reflect changes under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a European Union (EU) regulation introduced in May 2018 to strengthen and unify data protection within the EU. GPDR replaces the Irish Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

The Corporate Secretary's Office website has a dedicated web page that outlines how and why the University shares personal data with third parties and lists all relevant parties. The Corporate Secretary's Office also manages the University's freedom of information function. The University complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and has an FOI unit and FOI officer.

The Corporate Secretary's Office website includes an Information and Compliance page. In addition to the aforementioned records management, FOI and data protection, this page provides information on the Disability Act, the Official Languages Act, copyright and environmental regulations.

Key Performance Indicators

The university has agreed a suite of KPIs with the HEA as part of its mission-based performance compact. These KPIs are reported annually to the HEA in our self-evaluation report, as part of the strategic dialogue process.

A suite of KPIs were developed to monitor the UL@50 Strategic Plan – these were agreed with EC and GA. This listing was prepared through extensive consultation with senior management, reviewing the new strategy, consideration of the KPIs used in previous strategies, data requested and reported on by the HEA, and discussions with GA. As the strategy is now being recalibrated in response to institutional review recommendations, further work on KPIs has been put on hold, pending the outcome of the strategic plan review.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Public Information

The University regularly updates its website so that its wide range of stakeholders can easily source information relevant to them. The Office of the President is responsible for maintaining the high-level pages, such as those providing information on institutional leadership, Governing Authority, Academic Council and strategic publications. Individual units are responsible for maintaining their own websites, all of which are accessible from the University homepage.

The University adheres to the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which informs institutional practice in this area. Section 8 of the Act requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. Links to each section of the University's FOI Publication Scheme are maintained by the FOI section of the Corporate Secretary's Office. Links include:

- General Information about the University of Limerick
- Information on Functions & Services Provided
- Information on Decision-Making Procedures
- Financial Information
- Procurement Information
- Other Routinely Published Information / FOI Disclosure Log

The Corporate Secretary's Office website also includes sections on data protection, records management and environmental information.

The University's Student and Staff Gateway provides information on calendars and timetables; policies, procedures and handbooks; learning resources; support and administration; further study; and details on upcoming events.

The Marketing and Communications Division is responsible for gathering and disseminating a wide range of information to audiences both internal and external to the University. The Division also manages the University's institutional social media accounts. The University's Social Media Strategy and Social Media Policy are available here. The focus of the strategy is to develop a core tier of social media channels and adopt a proactive social media publishing process that integrates the four faculties and key business units. The Division supports the campus-wide University Social Media Community Group and offers training, strategic advice and policy guidelines. A new three-year Marketing & Communication strategy and implementation plan (2023-26) is available here for the UL Campus Community, which outlines the key Marketing and Communications projects to be implemented over the next three years, with the aim of driving overall current strategic goals for University of Limerick. Information regarding UL Open Days is published annually on the University website.

UL Connect is University of Limerick's internal communications and information sharing platform. Linked to users' single sign-on, it comes up as one of three default home pages on all UL laptops and desk top PCs. The platform allows for easy sharing of text, video, images and podcast on a one-to-many basis and enables users to send communications to all users or specific audiences according to location (faculty), department, area (research / academic / PMSS (professional, managerial, support staff, or communities of interest. In addition to allowing for the horizontal sharing of information and events between staff, and the cascade of information from the University, UL Connect acts as a single location for other University information streams and third-party apps: social media accounts, News Centre, UL Podcasts, LinkedIn Learning, Core HR, Agresso, SilverCloud, TopDesk, Speak Out tool and more.

Learner Information

The online prospectuses for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and the Graduate & Professional Studies (GPS) and UL Global websites specify details of (or provide links to) the

University's programme offerings. The published information for each programme specifies the programme's title; NFQ level; entry requirements; duration; structure; list of modules; and many include information on career prospects; student profiles; video clips from students, graduates and staff; and a contact name and email address for requesting more information. Hard copies of the prospectuses and supplementary programme descriptor documents are made available to the public during open days, career fairs and information evenings. Current and prospective research students can access information on the University's research activities and offerings on the Research and GPS websites.

All programmes published on the online prospectuses lead to an award. Once a programme has been selected on the GPS website, the page specifies whether the programme leads to an award and, if so, what the award is. UL Global's International Foundation Programme web page makes it clear that the programme does not lead to an award itself but provides international students with an alternative application route to undergraduate study.

Information on internal transfer and progression is available in the Student Handbook, which all new students receive during enrolment.

Publication of QA Reports

QA evaluation reports are published at unit level in the context of the periodic quality review process for academic, research and support units. The outputs of the process for each unit include (i) a reviewers' report, which is published on the QSU website; and (ii) a quality improvement plan (QIP) for the unit, which is based on the recommendations from the reviewers' report. The final QIP implementation summary report is published on the websites of the QSU and the relevant unit, and the QSU informs the campus community (by email) about the publications.

The University publishes the reports from its institutional reviews (2012 and 2020 to date) on the Office of the President and QSU websites. Quality assurance policies are available on the University policy hub. Quality assurance procedures are available on the QSU website and are also published on individual unit websites.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Self-Evaluation

A diverse range of procedures are enacted at institutional, local and, indeed, personal level with a view to monitoring, self-evaluating and enhancing the quality of our activities. Institutional-level self-evaluation activities incorporate, but are not limited to, the following:

- The University collects, analyses and reports upon a whole range of datasets and other information to external stakeholders (e.g. the HEA, QQI and Department of Education and Skills). These activities are undertaken by a wide range of (largely) support units and offices/officers, as relevant to functional area.
- At an institutional level, the strategic plan sets priorities, objectives and measures of success. Progress on the achievement of the plan's aims and objectives, as defined in terms of indicators of success and outcomes, is monitored on an ongoing basis by Executive Committee and Governing Authority.
- The University's research strategy specifies action items and targets for each strategic objective. The Vice President Research oversees regular reviews of the strategy and reports on performance against targets to Executive Committee and Governing Authority. These KPI's are embedded into HEA compact and Knowledge Transfer Ireland reports which take place on a regular basis.
- Self-evaluation activities (and associated authorship of a self-evaluation report) are carried out as part of academic, research and support unit quality reviews. Review reports are made publicly available, and the review recommendations form the basis of a subsequent quality improvement plan (QIP). The implementation of the QIP is monitored by the QSU, the PDP/CO, the relevant dean and the university Quality Committee.
- UL implements an external examination process for both taught and research programmes, and external examiner reports are considered at local unit and individual level. External examiners are requested to contact the Office of the Provost/Deputy President directly if they have particular concerns.
- Under the terms of UL's Annual Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review policy, all taught programmes are subject to formal annual monitoring by the relevant course review board with a commitment to periodic review (usually every five years) by an external panel. The review outcomes are considered at departmental and faculty level and by Academic Council's APRC.
- Student feedback is gathered by means of the module satisfaction survey, student exit survey and studentsurvey.ie, and detailed and/or aggregate reports are considered by individual academics, heads of department, course boards, deans, Executive Committee and Academic Council.
- The QSU and the ITD Business Intelligence & Reporting team gather statistics on the Student Exit Survey. CECD work with BI team on the graduate 1st destination. QSU also gather and report upon the external examiner dataset.
- All UL support units are required to implement a QMS. A requirement of the QMS is the inclusion of a 'QMS Audit' process, whereby all processes are audited by trained QMS auditors on an annual basis. An Inter-Department Audit Process is in place to help units prepare for quality reviews. The audits are referred to as 'inter-department' because they are conducted by trained auditors both from within the unit under review and from other UL support units. The purpose of the audit process is to ensure that all components of the unit's QMS are audited for compliance with UL's quality framework.

The process allows for a sharing of best practice and a focus on inter-department collaboration. Support units are also required to complete an annual quality report, which provides valuable input for the annual institutional quality report (AIQR).

- Faculties provide an annual quality report, which is linked to the annual programme monitoring process and resulting faculty action plan.
- The UL Code of Governance is published on the University website. In addition to the reporting requirements set out in the relevant legislation, the University of Limerick provides the HEA with an Annual Governance Statement that is signed by the President and the Chancellor confirming that the Statement has been approved by the Governing Authority.
  Systematic and ongoing risk assessment exercises (feeding into risk registers) are undertaken by academic and support units in line with UL's risk management policy, the implementation and monitoring of which is undertaken by Executive Committee and Governing Authority's Audit and Risk Committee.
- Led by the QSU, the University conducts compliance exercises to document the extent to which the institution meets its external QA obligations. This work is guided by the *Process for Assessing Compliance with Statutory and Related Quality Requirements* (an internal document stored on SharePoint). Once the University receives notice of a new or revised quality requirement, the QSU coordinates an exercise that assesses the extent to which the University complies with that requirement. Examples include the 2015 ESG and QQI guidelines and codes of practice. Responsibility for assessing how the University complies with the requirement lies with the unit(s) or officers that have functional responsibility in the area concerned. Refer to the Compliance page of the QSU for more details. Identified enhancement opportunities lead to the development of a QIP, which is implemented by relevant units.

Periodic Review

In line with international good practice and national statutory requirements, the University of Limerick undertakes periodic quality reviews of its educational, research and related services every seven years. Coordinated by the Quality Support Unit, the review process represents one cornerstone institutional quality assurance and enhancement mechanism. Information relating to both the current and previous cycle of quality review activity is available on the QSU website. Prior to each cycle of reviews, the QSU engage in a campus-wide consultation process. Timelines are agreed for the review cycle which are approved by the Executive and published on the QSU website.

Quality review guidelines for the various streams of reviews are prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Quality review guidelines are approved by the relevant VP/CO. The QSU co-ordinates the quality review process, offering support and guidelines to all units. There are three key stages to the process:

a. The unit/Faculty/institute under review initially undertakes a self-analysis exercise, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for improvement. The unit/Faculty/institute documents these findings in a self-assessment report (SAR), which is circulated to the review team prior to the site visit.
b. A quality review group (QRG), comprising internationally recognised experts, is appointed to review the unit. The QRG members study the SAR prior to the site visit and provide preliminary comments to the QSU for circulation to the review team. The site visit is a three-day event on campus at which the review team (QRG) meet with faculty and staff of the unit. They also meet with students and a range of internal and

external stakeholders. This leads to the production of a concise report by the QRG (commendation and recommendations), which is read back to the unit at the conclusion of the site visit.

c. Follow-on activities which include discussion of the report by the UL Quality Committee, publication of the report on the QSU website, the creation of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by the unit/Faculty, and presentation of the report and QIP to Quality Committee. The final stage of this process is a progress update meeting with the relevant VP/CO 12-18 months after the review, where the Director of the Unit reports on all the actions taken by the Unit/Faculty relating to the report recommendations.

External Panelists

In compliance with the guidelines for the periodic quality reviews of academic, research and support units, the review groups include senior academics (academic units), peers (research units) and cognates (support units), who come from outside the Republic of Ireland and work in disciplines that provide them with a strong degree of familiarity with the core activities of the unit under review. The expert panelists on academic and research unit reviews typically have a significant international reputation in their field of expertise and come from a prestigious international university or other appropriate institutional setting. The expert panelists on support unit reviews are typically directors or senior members of a similar unit in a leading international university or comparable educational institution outside Ireland. The QSU maintains a record of all quality review group members.

In compliance with the University's procedures for the recruitment of academic staff, selection panels include one or two (depending on the level of appointment) external and one internal subject specialist. In compliance with procedures for the recruitment of research scholars, selection panels include at least one external and at least one internal subject specialist. In compliance with procedures for the recruitment of support staff, selection panels include a person external to the unit who has expertise in the unit's business. In compliance with the procedures for the promotion of academic staff, promotion panels include two external academics.

In compliance with the Academic Programme Review Policy, (i) expert personnel may be invited onto the course review board (for annual programme review) at the discretion of the chairperson, and (ii) the period programme review panel will include two external academic subject experts and at least one employer representative.

In accordance with the University's QA procedures, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes to provide an independent report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. The External Examiner Policy specifies the examiners' roles and function, how they are appointed (including reference to conflict of interest) and how the system is administered. External examiners of research programmes are approved by the relevant head of department/school and the Assistant Dean Research and appointed by Academic Council. Two-thirds of external examiners of taught programmes and PhD theses are international.

How the Internal QA System engages with External Quality Assurance?
Led by the QSU, the University conducts compliance exercises to document the extent to which the institution meets its external QA obligations. This work is guided by the Process for

Assessing Compliance with Statutory and Related Quality Requirements (an internal document stored on SharePoint). Once the University receives notice of a new or revised quality requirement, the QSU coordinates an exercise that assesses the extent to which the University complies with that requirement. Examples include the 2015 ESG and QQI guidelines and codes of practice. Responsibility for assessing how the University complies with the requirement lies with the unit(s) or officers that have functional responsibility in the area concerned. Refer to the Compliance page of the QSU website for more details.

Identified enhancement opportunities arising from these activities lead to the development of a QIP, which is implemented by relevant units.

The University submits an annual quality assurance report (AQR) to QQI. Following submission of the report to QQI, the University publishes the report on its website. Publication of the AIQR by the University is interpreted by QQI as publication of the University's QA procedures. UL also submits a statutory return of the Irish Register of Qualifications.

The University is required to undergo statutory external review through a process of self-evaluation and site visit from an external panel of peer experts. Recommendations arising from self-evaluation and those recommended by the panel are incorporated into an institutional quality improvement plan. The Quality Committee has oversight of the implementation of that plan.

Nationally, the University contributes to inter-institutional dialogue on quality-related issues through its participation on the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee. Internationally, the University engages with quality trends in higher education by participating in relevant international conferences, such as those organised by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	28
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering Graduate Diploma in Chemical Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	20 April 2023
Date of next review	1 September 2024

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science with Mathematics and Computer Science Bachelor of Education in Languages Bachelor of Science in Physical Education (with English, Gaeilge, Geography or Maths) Bachelor of Science (Education) in Biology with Chemistry or Physics or Agricultural Science Bachelor of Science (Education) in Physical Science with Chemistry and Physics Bachelor of Education in Graphics and Construction Technology Bachelor of Education in Graphics and Engineering Technology Professional Master of Education - Science Professional Master of Education - Technological Education Professional Master of Education - Physical Education Professional Master of Education - Music

	Professional Master of Education - Mathematics
	Professional Master of Education - Languages
Date of accreditation or last review	March 2023
Date of next review	March 2028

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Master of Education - Business
Date of accreditation or last review	31 March 2023
Date of next review	31 August 2028

4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Work and Organisational Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	24 October 2022
Date of next review	1 May 2027

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Nursing (Nurse / Midwife Prescribing)
Date of accreditation or last review	23 November 2022
Date of next review	12 November 2027

6. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Nursing (Respiratory Care)
Date of accreditation or last review	21 September 2022
Date of next review	21 September 2027

7. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Advanced Practice (Nursing)
Date of accreditation or last review	21 September 2022
Date of next review	21 September 2027

8. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Art in Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	12 November 2022
Date of next review	12 November 2027

9. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Doctor of Clinical Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	1 March 2023
Date of next review	28 February 2028

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	1
Joint/double/multiple awards	11 *(from APRC list of approved joint/dual awards in 22/23)*
Collaborative programmes	20 *(from APRC list of approved collab prog in 22/23)*
Franchise programmes	
Linked providers (DABs only)	2

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
Programme titles and links to publications	Full list of programmes available at www.mic.ie
Date of last review	30 November 2016

Date of next review	8 April 2024 (Institutional Review)

2. Collaborative provision	Linked Provider
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	Garda College, Templemore.
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Policing Graduate Certificate / Master of Arts in Serious Crime Investigation
Date of last review	31 August 2014
Date of next review	12 March 2024 (Institutional Review)

3. Collaborative provision	Joint Award
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	Rennes 2 (France), Åbo Akademi (Finland), Univerzita Mateja Bela (Slovakia), Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland) and Universidad de Burgos (Spain).
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Teaching Foreign Languages in a Multicultural Environment
Date of last review	November 2022
Date of next review	October 2025

4. Collaborative provision	Dual Award
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	Université de Franche Comté, UFR Sciences Juridiques, Économiques, Politiques et de Gestion,
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Laws in Common and Civil Law
Date of last review	April 2023
Date of next review	April 2028

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	Central Solutions
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Fundamentals of Sustainable Resource Management
Date of last review	January 2023
Date of next review	October 2024

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	*TBC - not clear from APRC submission doc*
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy
Date of last review	February 2023
Date of next review	October 2028

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	21

1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	ENIM (Ecole Nationale d Ingénieurs de Metz), France
Programme titles and links to publications	MEng/MSc programmes with Science and Engineering Faculty
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2023
Date of next review	November 2028
Detail of the agreement	MoA 4+1

2. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	ESTACA (École Superieure des Techniques Aéronautiques et de Construction Automobile), France
Programme titles and links to publications	MEng/MSc programmes with Science and Engineering Faculty
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2023
Date of next review	September 2028
Detail of the agreement	MoA 4+1

3. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	ENAC (École nationale de l'aviation civile), France
Programme titles and links to publications	MEng/MSc programmes with Science and Engineering Faculty
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2023
Date of next review	September 2028
Detail of the agreement	MoA 4+1

4. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Hainan University, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Irish World Academy of Music and Dance Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary Dance
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	June 2023
Date of next review	June 2028
Detail of the agreement	MoA 2+2

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5. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	UCAM (Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia),Spain
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Digital Communication
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2023
Date of next review	September 2028
Detail of the agreement	MoA 2+2

6. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Hainan University, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Irish World Academy of Music and Dance Master of Arts in Contemporary Dance Master of Arts in Ethnochoreology Master of Arts in Dance Studies Master of Arts in Irish Traditional Dance Performance
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	June 2023
Date of next review	June 2028
Detail of the agreement	MoA 4+1

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Annual Quality Report (University of Limerick)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2022-2023

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Quality Enhancement from Internal Monitoring and Review

The University is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of its activities and to fostering a quality culture throughout the institution. The University recognises the pursuit of quality, and hence excellence, as a core value. Responsibility for the quality of our activities rests at institutional, local and individual level.

All professional service units within UL implement a bespoke Quality Management System (QMS), based upon the seven quality management principles specified in the ISO9001:2015 quality management standard. Continual improvement (Principle 5) is the ethos underpinning quality management systems. Improvement is essential for a unit to maintain current levels of performance, to react to changes in its internal and external conditions and to create new opportunities for quality enhancement.

All academic and professional service units proactively engage with periodic quality reviews and use the review findings to drive both unit-level and institutional-level quality enhancements.

Examples of the impact of quality enhancement initiatives at both unit and institutional levels are outlined below:

- **Innovation of the Year Award**: UL spin-out Class Medical won the Innovation of the Year award at the Irish Times Innovation Awards. Class Medical designed and implemented a quality safety tool for urinary catheterisation to prevent injury.
- **Pharma Industry Awards 2022:** Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology Centre (PMTC): awarded 2 awards at the Pharma Industry Awards 2022 for Pharma Research Centre of the Year and Pharma Project of the Year.
- **Research Excellence and Impact Award for Outstanding Collaboration Award**: The team from MACSI (Mathematics Applications Consortium for Science and Industry) was selected as the 2022 winner of the President's Research Excellence and Impact Award for Outstanding Collaboration. MACSI helped to generate the statistical model that guided NPHET recommendations, and government decisions, about mobility restrictions, lockdowns, and the pace of easing of restrictions during the pandemic.
- **The 2023 Education Awards**: UL won the Overall Excellence Award at the Education Awards 2023, which took place in the Crown Plaza, Santry on 27 April 2023. UL was the most awarded institution with five awards in total, which recognises excellence in the third level education sector on the island of Ireland from both State and privately funded institutions. We won the awards for Best Marketing/Communications Team, Best Student Campus, Student Engagement & Communications, Best Use of Educational Technology/ICT Initiative of the Year and the Overall Excellence Award.
- **StudentVolunteer.ie:** UL was recently selected by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) as national host for StudentVolunteer.ie (SV.ie). SV.ie is the national student volunteering platform, which is currently hosted and managed by the IUA and which UL uses to run its student volunteering and PVA programmes. UL's student volunteering programme was the blueprint for the development of SV.ie a number of years ago. This outcome is testament to the leading role that UL continues to play in the development and embedding of student volunteering locally and nationally.

- **Healthcare Award:** School of Allied Health - SAH 'SingStrong' initiative to improve health in people with respiratory conditions, was successful in gaining an award at the Irish Centre Healthcare Awards. It won in the Healthcare Initiative - Older Person's Care Services category.
- **Matrix Quality Accreditation**: The Cooperative and Careers Division has attained Matrix Quality Accreditation. The international Matrix accreditation represents the evidenced, highest quality standards in impartial higher education guidance, advice, signposting and information. The peer review evaluated CECD across Cooperative Education, Careers and School Placement services, with a particular focus on professional expertise, stakeholder insights and collaboration, and leadership and management. The review found that the division excelled across all three service domains.
- **CWELL Programme chosen by US Peace Corps as example of international best Practice**: The United States Peace Corps, the US government's international development agency, has recently launched its Volunteer Service Initiative, which seeks to support communities and countries around the world that have requested support in expanding their community and/or national volunteer service initiatives. To support this initiative, the Peace Corps is creating a practical guide using a series of international exemplars of best practice. The UL Engage supported CWELL programme has been chosen as one of these international exemplars.

Quality enhancement also had an impact on UL's rankings during the reporting period.

- **Sustainable University Ranking**: UL was ranked the 23rd most sustainable university in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings 2022. The rankings were based on aspects such as setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste, water, transportation, and education and research. UL was ranked 23rd out of 1,050 universities worldwide compared to 21st out of 950 universities in 2021. UL's overall score increased by 225 points year-on-year. Follow this link to download and read our 2022 Sustainability Report Sustainability | University of Limerick (ul.ie).
- **Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023**: UL has been ranked in the top 100 institutions worldwide for its work measured against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ranking examines a university's performance against the SDGs across teaching, research, equality, internal culture and the impact UL has in the wider society. Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023 has placed UL at number 86 out of the 1,591 institutions assessed globally in measuring the positive societal impact UL is having in implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This represents a significant improvement compared to last year, where we were ranked 101-200 out of 1400 universities.
- **QS World University Rankings**: University of Limerick is ranked in the top 500 of universities in latest QS World University Rankings. UL jumped over 100 places and is now ranked at 426th in the world (and 5th in Ireland (up one place)). The improvement is a 14 testament to UL's community and its improved performance across many measures, and also follows the establishment of a cross university Rankings working group led by the OVPR focusing exclusively on rankings submissions to support UL's submissions to the various rankings agencies.

Athena Swan Silver Awards: UL is the first institution in the Irish Higher Education Sector to receive the prestigious Silver Athena Swan (AS) Institution Award. To achieve a Silver Athena Swan Award the institution had to demonstrate the impact of the committed actions in our previous submissions. The Kemmy Business School also succeeded in achieving an Athena Swan Silver award, the first business school in Ireland to do so. The Department of Mathematics & Statistics achieved a Silver Athena Swan Award in August 2023. These awards recognise the continued commitment and consistent work to firmly embed equality,

diversity and inclusion into UL's institutional culture. These awards make UL a leader in the field for equality in higher education, nationally and internationally.

The total Athena Swan awards achieved during the reporting period are as follows:

Unit	Level	Awarded	Renewal
Institution Award	Silver	Nov 2022	Nov 2026
Kemmy Business School	Silver	Nov 2022	Nov 2026
School of Education	Bronze	Nov 2022	Nov 2026
School of Allied Health	Bronze Renewal	Nov 2022	Nov 2026
School of Medicine	Bronze Renewal	Nov 2022	Nov 2026

Policy Approvals

During the reporting period, the following policies were approved.

Document Title	Approval Body	Approval Date/s
Travel & Subsistence Policy	Governing Authority	06/10/2022
Official Hospitality Policy	Governing Authority	06/10/2022
Policy for the Disposal of Assets	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
Sabbatical and Special Research Leave Policy	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
Grievance Policy	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
Staff Dis/Ability Policy	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
Policy and Procedure for Blended Working	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
High Performance Athlete Policy	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
Policy and Procedure on Employee Protection -Substance Misuse	Governing Authority	17/11/2022
Protected Disclosures Policy	Governing Authority	31/01/2023
External Examiners Policy	Governing Authority	17/05/2023
Policy for Conflicts of Interest	Governing Authority	17/05/2023
Policy and Procedures for Granting Multi-annual Status to Tenure Track Academic Staff	Governing Authority	17/05/2023

Policy for Internal Promotion to Professor (Personal Chair)	Governing Authority	17/05/2023
Policy Approval Process	Governing Authority	17/05/2023
Awards Titles Framework	Academic Council	14/06/2023
Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures	Academic Council	14/06/2023

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	Development of a University Research Strategy	The University's Research Strategy is available <u>here</u>. This objective is complete
2	Development of a University Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy aligned to the UL strategy UL@50.	**Action for Wisdom**: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022-2027 was approved by the Executive Committee on 23rd November, by Academic Council on 7th December and by Governing Authority on 15th December 2022. The published strategy is available on the University's <u>website</u>. This objective is complete.
3	Conduct a university-wide cultural audit	The University conducted a culture audit which is now referred to a newly established Culture & Engagement Working Group who will draw on the findings of a range of sources, including The UL @50 Consultation, the AS-EDI Culture Survey, the 2023 Culture Audit and may choose to conduct further research and staff surveying with the objective of proposing a series of recommendations aimed to enhance the culture of the University over time. This objective is complete.
4	Establishment of UL Global Lounge	In conjunction with Buildings and Estates, UL Global have agreed on a design and layout proposal from UL's architects, and tender documentation is under preparation. UL Global aims to launch the new Global Lounge by Autumn 2024 at the latest. This objective is ongoing.
5	Implementation of MoveOn for UL Global	The MoveOn Implementation remains on track for late April 2024 to onboard as many aspects as possible of mobility for Erasmus+, Exchange and components of Study Abroad as outlined in the original specification. This is an ongoing live engagement with the Move On Project Manager and UL Global with

6		training on Move On still ongoing as of January 2024. This objective is ongoing.
6	Introduction and implementation of a new Information Management System for the University Governing Authority	Following the tendering of a new information management system to be utilised by the Corporate Secretary Office to facilitate the meeting and governance processes of the Governing Authority, Decision Time were awarded the contract for an integrated Board Governance Software and Risk Management Software. A cloud-based governance portal in use with public, private sector customers and is enhancing the day-day operations for Governance and Risk. The system is contributing to the University's commitment to practice good governance and streamline support for management and sharing of information. The Governance unit have been working closely with the members of the Governing Authority and ITD to support the implementation and maximise the use of the system to support the implementation, and prepare, run and attend more productive meetings. The unit is already benefiting with a more effective management of the meetings as it allows a secure distribution of highly confidential documentation, a more simplified management of data, a better and more user-friendly design for any level of technology experience. With the system also being in line with the Risk Management of the University users are able to maximise the system to ensure both strategic and operational decision making is further supported. This objective is complete.
7	Conduct a thematic review of professional supports for Research	A thematic review of professional supports for Research was undertaken in March 2023. The published report is available here. This objective is complete.
8	Conduct a review of approval pathways and supporting policies for collaborative agreements	A working group has been assigned to conduct a comprehensive review of current policies and practices in relation to collaborative arrangements.

		This objective is ongoing and will be complete in the next reporting period.
9	Develop a Healthy Campus Charter	University of Limerick officially signed a [Healthy Campus Charter](#) with the Higher Education Authority on 13 January 2023. The charter was launched by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris to help Higher Education Institutions across Ireland embed health and wellbeing into campus life for staff and students. The University of Limerick is recognised as a pioneering Healthy Campus member, having launched its Healthy UL Framework in 2019. This objective is complete.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Authority (GA)	06.10.22, 17.11.22, 15.12.22, 31.01.23, 02.03.23, 23.03.23, 17.05.23, 28.05.23, 15.06.23
GA Access, Equality and Student Affairs	30.09.22, 02.11.22, 09.02.23, 23.03.23, 11.05.23
GA Audit and Risk Committee	20.10.22 04.11.23 02.12.23 13.02.23 03.04.23 08.05.23 26.06.23
GA Finance, HR and Asset Management Committee	14.09.22 07.11.22 07.02.23 09.02.23 04.05.23 02.06.23
GA Governance Committee	12.09.22 24.10.22 25.11.22 09.02.23 25.04.23
Executive Committee (EC)	07.09.22, 14.09.2,2 21.09.22, 05.10.22, 14.10.22 (Away Day), 02.11.22, 16.11.22, 23.11.22, 30.11.22, 14.12.22, 11.01.23, 25.01.23, 08.02.23, 22.02.23, 08.03.23, 22.03.23 05.04.23 19.04.23 26.04.23 03.05.23 16.05 23 19.05.23 25.05.23 31.05.23 14.06.23 21.06.23 28.06.23 29.06.23 (Away Day) 30.06.23 (Away Day) 05. 07.23 19.07.23
Campus and Infrastructure Sub-Committee	06.09.22, 07.02.23 The committee is currently reviewing its Terms of Reference.
Human Rights – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee	25.01.23, 21.02.23, 28.03.23, 18.04.23 16.05.23, 29.06.23
EC Quality Committee Sub-Committee	07.09.22, 02.11.22, 11.01.23, 30.01.23 (SM), 15.03.23, 03.05.23, 07.06.23
University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee	26.10.22 10.03.23 24 04.23 25.05.23
University Research Committee	03.10.22, 14.11.22, 30.01.23, 27.03.23, 29.05.23
Academic Council	23.09.22, 05.10.22, 07.12.22, 13.01.23, 01.02.23, 01.03.23, 17.05.23, 14.06.23
Academic Council Grading Committee	31.08.22, 22.09.22, 01.12.22, 18.01.23, 15.05.23, 02.06.23, 14.06.23, 23.06.23
Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC)	15.09.22, 13.10.22, 17.11.22, 15.12.22, 12.01.23, 09.02.23, 09.03.23, 13.04.23, 11.05.23, 15.06.23
Academic Regulations Committee	06.09.22, 20.10.22, 15.11.22, 13.12.22, 07.02.23, 07.03.23, 18.04.23, 16.05.23

AHSS Faculty Board Meetings	12.10.22, 23.11.22, 08.02.23, 15.03.23
KBS Faculty Board Meetings	28.09.22 02.11.22 08.02.2, 15.03.23
EHS Faculty Board Meetings	21.09.22 17.11.22 25.01.23 15.03.23
S&E Faculty Board Meetings	12.10.22 23.11.22 25.01.23 15.03.23
Research Ethics and Governance Committee	21.11.22 20.02.23 08.05.23 10.07.23
University Teacher Education Board *Replaced by:* University Teacher Education Management Board (UTEMB)	07.09.22 29.11.22 26.01.23
New Committee - University Teacher Education Forum	27.09.22 29.11.22 26.01.23
University Management Council Group	08.09.22 13.10.22 24.11.23 24.01.23 07.03.24 27.04.23 28.06.23
Library Information Resources Development Committee	13.09.23,

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

A Digital Governance Steering Committee (DGSC) has been formed at UL to support the strategic prioritisation of the University's investment in its IT and digital infrastructure. The establishment of the DGSC has played a key role in implementing the UL Enable IT Strategy. Over the last 12 months, the DGSC has worked with the President and Executive Committee to implement a governance process for the approval, planning, and management of digital investment for the campus. Additionally, the DGSC supports the Executive Committee to ensure all digital activities are aligned with the University's overall objectives in teaching, learning, and research.   The DGSC, which is a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, advises on the management of digital platforms, reviews IT and digital project initiatives and reports on progress to the Executive Committee. It also provides ongoing recommendations for critical issues and risks related to cyber security and ensures current and future projects are aligned with UL's strategic goals.

An additional quality officer to support academic department and periodic programme review has been appointed to the Quality Support Unit.

The following strategic appointments were made during the reporting period:

Academic Appointments

- Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- A new Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Head - Department of Computer Science & Information
- Assistant Dean, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion AHSS
- Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs (KBS)
- Head, School of Education
- Head - Department of Accounting & Finance
- Head - Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences
- Head - Department of Chemical Sciences
- Head - Department of Biological Sciences
- Full Professor (previously Professor) in Clinical Nursing (Joint Clinical/Academic Appointment)
- Professor (previously Associate Professor) of Rural General Practice (0.5FTE) Assistant Dean International
- Professor of Cancer Bioinformatics
- Professor in Education (STEM Education)
- Professor of Digital Engineering (SALI Professorship)
- Professor of Law
- Professor of Biochemical Engineering (SALI Professorship)

Professional Service Appointments

- Director of Student Affairs Division
- Director, UL Global (Interim)
- Director of Sustainable Futures and Innovation
- Head of Disability Services
- Deputy Director, Buildings and Estates
- Director of Lero
- Associate Vice President Doctoral College
- Research Integrity Officer

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Finance	12-15 September 2022	Report available here
Academic Registry	21-24 November 2022	Report available here
Faculty of Science & Engineering	23-26 January 2023	Report available here
Professional Support for Research (Thematic)	6-9 March 2023	Report available here
Plassey Campus Centre Group	24-28 April 2023	Report available here
UL Engage	28-31 May 2023	Report available here

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[2] 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	6	1	5				
of those:							
On-site processes	6	1	5				
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes							
Average panel size for each process type*	5	5	5				

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

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	6	4	2			1	3	1	1	3	3
Secretary											
Academic/Discipline Specific	17	8	9		2	3	7	2	3	14	3
Student Representative	5	2	3			4		1		2	3
QA	2	1	1		3					2	
Teaching & Learning	1		1							1	
External Industry /Third Mission	1	1				1					1

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Several developments and enhancements have occurred during the reporting period. These are outlined below under the recommended headings.

2.0.1 Governance and Management of Quality

- The terms of reference of the Quality Committee were reviewed and the composition of the Committee was refreshed.

2.0.2 Programmes of Education and Training

- On the 2nd & 3rd of November 2022, GPS organised UL's inaugural conference on Transforming Higher Education. The purpose of this conference was to showcase excellence in professional and workplace-based education. The conference featured contributions by selected speakers from the UL@Work academic international panel, industry collaborators, internationally renowned speakers and members of the UL's academic community who shared innovation and best practice in education tailored to the needs of our learners.
- The faculty of AHSS developed the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master of Arts in Teaching Foreign Languages in a Multicultural Environment (TELME). This programme aims to develop high quality professionals to teach foreign languages in a multicultural environment and is organized in two academic years among six universities: Limerick, Rennes 2 (France), Åbo Akademi (Finland), Univerzita Mateja Bela (Slovakia), Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland) and Universidad de Burgos (Spain). The programme has been carefully designed to meet the career needs of professional language teachers in multicultural contexts in an inclusive and innovative learning environment that allows maximum flexibility for the student to shape their own experience.

2.0.3 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

- An example of the University enhancing its digital capacity and infrastructure is the movement of the internal documentation and processes associated with staff recruitment online in October 2022. Enhancements to the process include
  - *Time saving*: formatting is defaulted and the forms have mandatory fields to eliminate incomplete forms which can cause delays recruitment.
  - *Approvals tracking*: all recruitment packs have a multi-stage approvals process which ensures that appropriate approvals pathways are used and changes can be tracked.
  - *Sustainable*: a strategic priority for the University, moving recruitment packs online is part of our transformation into a sustainable, integrated and efficient organisation.

2.0.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

As outlined in 1.2   above the University strategy for learning, teaching and assessment 'Action for Wisdom' as approved. The plan has three pillars – Transforming the Curriculum, Transforming Teaching and Inclusive Teaching and Support. Implementation of the strategy will be monitored by Academic Council

2.0.5 Supports and resources for learners

- In support of engaged, creative learning, the Library Makerspace opened for UL students, faculty and staff to create, innovate, and experiment with a range of emerging technologies

including: 3D Printers, 3D Scanner, Arduino, cutting machine/ heat press, PCs with software to enable - 3D design, animation, coding, graphic design, video & photo editing. The Library provided 60 bookable Library Digital Information Skills classes in October 2022. The classes spanned a range of intro classes for new students, classes for researchers and postgraduate students and specialist classes in systemic reviews, archives and open science. Additional classes were presented within programmes in partnership with faculties. Access to these tools enables users to try out new and different technologies, which encourage experimentation, enhances creativity, supports teaching & learning and embeds digital skills. Technology for loan is sustainable and ensures equity of access to expensive technologies thereby reducing digital disadvantage among students.

- The ICT Learning Centre (ICTLC) is supporting the two core first-year CSIS computer programming modules during the semester, using the Digital Learning Support Hub (DLSH) framework. The ICTLC director presented on the DLSH framework project at the QQI 10th anniversary conference - Quality and Qualifications Ireland in October, for more information please view a short recording of this presentation here.

- **Zone pop up space for student-facing services**: The Library launched an experimental new learning space called the i-Zone, located in a prominent and highly visible location close to service desks. The space is intended for any student-focused service on campus to pop up and offer demonstrations and instruction to small groups of up to 12. Modelled on informal demo spaces like those in stores like Apple, the iZone is fitted out with casual, moveable furniture, a large screen, and some tables.

2.0.6 Information and Data Management (including analysis and impact of information gathered via the national Student Survey)

- **GPS Marketing and Recruitment:** The Hubspot Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform has been procured by GPS for an additional 12 months. The platform, in use by undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment teams across the institution, delivers the capacity to drive lead generation and nurturing objectives in the pre-application stage. Improvements to GPS lead generation capabilities, which have increased 150% year on year, offers UL the ability to engage directly with increasing numbers of interested students and to drive engagements on the postgraduate and professional studies portfolios.

- **New VLE 'Brightspace'**: The implementation of the new Virtual Learning Environment aims to build a flexible, technology-enhanced learning platform that responds to digitalisation and the future world of work. Brightspace replaces the two VLE platforms (Moodle and Sulis) currently used at the UL, implementing an enterprise-wide solution that aligns with the UL's ambitions to grow and improve UL's national and international educational offerings, enabling greater functionality and collaboration across courses and modules.

- **Studentvolunteer.ie**: Earlier this year, the Irish Universities Association sought expressions of interest for one of the Universities to become the new national host of the Studentvolunteer.ie website. Proposals were received from two universities and, following a detailed evaluation process by the IUA, the proposal submitted by University of Limerick to host Studentvolunteer.ie was approved by the members of the SV Group. Work has been ongoing on this project since February 2023, and UL is now the host of this important national platform.

2.0.7 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

- **Young European Research University Network**: UL hosted the Young European Research University Network (YERUN) General Assembly in March 2023. This network, founded in 2016, brings together like-minded young research universities in Europe. Currently there are 23 members from 16 European counties and with secretariat based in Brussels, it represents the voice of young universities. The General Assembly brought together the Presidents and network coordinators from the 23 YERUN universities to facilitate discussions on the group's mission and objectives; influencing and advising on EU policies; promoting collaborative and transformative activities amongst members and to showcase the achievements of young European research universities.

- **Teaching and Research Seminar:** An inaugural Research and Teaching seminar took place on board the manifestation of Celtic connectiveness, L'Armorique MV, one of the Brittany Ferries fleet, in March 2023, when it was docked in Ringaskiddy. The purpose of the conference was to facilitate in person interactions between academics and professional staff in follow up of virtual interactions, in an effort to establish educational, cultural and/or research cooperation activities. The activities/themes play to the economic, social and cultural growth of Brittany and the West Coast of Ireland building on the fact that all universities are located on the Atlantic seaboard, some in port cities, and share common themes of place, the sea, minority languages, sustainability, arts culture, civic and community engagement etc. Collaboration will be explored under the following four themes:
  - Ports, Sea and Water
  - Celtic and Irish Studies
  - Digital Transformation
  - Environment and Sustainability

- **Irish World Aviation Academy:** On 29 May, the Irish World Aviation Academy (IWAA) was launched. The IWAA represents the strategic partnership between Air Nav, in future IAA, and UL and will serve as a gateway for collaboration with the international aviation industry for bespoke collaborative programmes of learning, research and knowledge exchange.

- **Dutch Irish Research Project HybridLabs**: On 12 July, it was announced that UL, ESB, Shannon Foynes Port Company and Clare County Council are stakeholders in the Dutch Irish research project HybridLabs, to help accelerate the deployment of offshore renewable technologies for both electricity and hydrogen production. HybridLabs has been funded to the tune of €10m by the Netherlands Science Foundation NWO to address energy transition needs whilst also strengthening the offshore food and ecological transitions. A unique Dutch Irish infrastructure of hybrid experimental facilities, simulators, and offshore demonstration sites, UL's initial contribution to HybridLabs will be composed of research in materials circularity at the Bernal Institute and will be embedded in a wider group of relevant projects. The UL contribution also includes the development of educational programs in MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) format and facilitating visiting HybridLabs members with office and desk space, as well as lab access where required and possible. The project will also link to the emerging Maritime Training Centre in Kilrush, County Clare, that will support safe Estuary and maritime operation by providing training courses and certification.

2.0.8 Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

- The Quality Review Framework Cycle 4 AY2023/24-AY2028/29 was approved by Academic Council in Jun 2023 and ratified by Governing Authority in September 2023. Planning for the implementation of the review cycle will commence in AY2023/24.

2.0.9 Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

- As outlined in 1.4 above, a thematic quality review of the professional supports for research was undertaken between the 6th and 9th March 2023.
- The new UL institutional repository, Research Repository was launched on 20 October 2022. It provides significantly increased functionality and is a strategic development in UL's commitment to Open Science. As a data repository, it can publish data, code, media and non-traditional research outputs. As a next generation institutional repository it is a global showcase for UL research output with the capability to fully integrate with other research systems. It also provides separate, custom-branded spaces for research centres, Open Educational Resources (OER's), conference materials and special projects.
- The Sport and Human Performance Centre based in PESS was launched on 26 October 2022. Building on existing strengths and reputation in Sport and Human Performance the Centre aims to extend collaborative research networks across UL, and both nationally and 12 internationally to advance interdisciplinary research in the field.
- **Doctoral College**: The launch of Ireland's first such college took place on 23 June 2023 in the Glucksman Library attended by Minister Niall Collins and included the launch of Doctoral College PhD Scholarships. The Doctoral College highlights the commitment and importance of doctoral education across the University.
- **Community Healthcare Network Model:** The Kemmy Business School launched a new research initiative with the HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare organisation. This partnership is designed to support the recently established Community Healthcare Network structure across the Mid-west of Ireland which has been developed as part of the Sláintecare vision to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time. To deliver on this, the CHN Model focuses on improved integration between multidisciplinary primary care teams and health and community support services at network level. The implementation of this model presents a unique interprofessional, multi professional and general leadership context that merits investigation to ensure effective delivery of integrated services for enhanced patient care and staff wellbeing. Funded by the HSE Community organisation in the mid-west, the overall aim of the project is to review the concepts, advantages, enablers, barriers, and opportunities for CHNs adopting a multi-stakeholder perspective. Working over a two-year period this research project will employ action-based research principles to identify a framework of factors that contribute to good practices in interprofessional and multi professional collaboration from an individual, team, and network perspective as part of this new organisational initiative.

2.0.10 Third-Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

- **As outlined in 1.4 above a quality review of UL Engage took place between 28-31st May 2023. The** aim of UL Engage is to integrate civic and community engagement into the University's core missions in research and teaching. Our communities include local and global connections with all kinds of stakeholders in civic, public or professional spheres, with policy makers, product users, third sector organisations, community groups and residents. UL Engage supports university/community collaborations in all shapes and sizes through a variety of new and existing UL programmes and projects.
- **UL Citizens' Assembly**: The UL Citizens' Assembly on 25 May 2023 was a collaboration between UL Engage, Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Public Participation Network (PPN) and Limerick Comhairle na nÓg, supported by the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN). The event was designed to provide a platform for further engagement between UL and the community. 100 Limerick people selected 4 x projects proposed by UL academics on the basis of 3 key criteria: capacity to address an SDG; civic engagement plan; and positive impact in Limerick. Each team was presented with a €10,000 award by the Vice

President for Global and Community Engagement to support the implementation and delivery of their engaged research project.

- **Health Alliance for Practice-based Professional Education and Engagement**: Following approval by Executive Committee, the Health Alliance for Practice-based Professional Education and Engagement (HAPPEE) got underway during the summer. The alliance, which is supported by Limerick City and County Council and six local primary schools in Limerick's most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, brings together clinicians and staff from St Gabriel's Foundation and UL School of Allied Health to create community-based placements for UL students studying Speech and Language therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. Project coordination and evaluation is led by the Office VPGCE, via the UL Engage unit.
- **ESB / UL Collaboration**: On 27 June 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between ESB and UL which commits both organisations to collaborate in areas including education, teaching, and training, research and development, international co-development including the European Union, and commercial development, along with services and facility access. The MOU aims to support Ireland's transition to renewable sources of energy in line with ESB's Net Zero by 2040 strategy, and UL's commitment to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. An initial portfolio of projects has been identified which includes opportunities for employee training and development, student education, co-op placements, and internships. ESB and UL will also work together to explore renewable energy projects across various UL campuses. The collaboration also extends to the organisations' joint efforts in the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce.

2.0.11 Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG)

E-bikes Initiative: An innovative new research project examining how e-bikes can change transport behaviours to improve health and protect the environment has been launched at University of Limerick. ISCycle (Inclusive e-bike uptake and Sustainable use) headed up by a Senior Lecturer in the School of Allied Health (who is also a member of the Physical Activity for Health Research Centre), Health Research Institute, was launched on 19 January. The initiative is funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and Department of Transport as part of the SEAI National Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Funding programme. ISCycle will be rolled out in phases across workplace settings in Limerick City, beginning with UL as the first study site. The study will continue throughout 2023 and 2024, with preliminary findings available early next year.

- **The inaugural UL Student Sustainability Challenge**: Funded through our UL 50 celebrations budget – five projects succeeded in the Student Sustainability Challenge on the evaluation against targets, feasibility plan and societal impact. These highly commendable projects stretched from the recycling of plastic drink bottles to create filament for 3D printers and the development of an effective approach towards the heat loss analysis for buildings using drones, AI and mobile apps; to the development of resources exploring the biodiversity of Ireland's waters; and the testing of theories for the production of hydrogen gas, as an affordable, clean energy alternative. A ground-breaking project focusing on sustainable agriculture practices and knowledge sharing in Western Uganda emerged as the overall winner. The project founder, a PhD student in the Kemmy Business School, used a bottom-up approach involving local matooke (green banana) farmers, larger commercial farmers, agriculture specials and government officials to develop specific frameworks to encourage sustainable agriculture practices in Rubaya sub-county in Uganda.
- **Climate Action Road Map**: UL have developed and submitted a Climate Action Road Map as mandated by the government on 30 March 2023. The Road Map sets out a programme of

ambitious measure to achieve a carbon neutrality by 2030. Among the commitments outlined are that university buildings will be retrofitted to upgrade heat, lighting, and energy sources and that by 2030, UL will only provide sustainable forms of transport within and between campuses, with a focus on physical mobility where possible and that most of the food consumed on the UL campus will be healthy and sourced from within the bioregion and/or from university grounds.

- **Green Library Campaign:** The Library & Information Services Division is implementing a programme of activity in support of the UL Sustainability Framework in 2023, beginning with the relaunch of the Green Library Campaign from The European Union in the Indo-Pacific: UL is part of the European Union in the Indo-Pacific (EUIP) research consortium of 28 universities – 15 across the Indo-Pacific and 13 from the EU. The three-year research project explores the role of the EU in the Indo-Pacific, a region with three of the four largest economies in the word (China, India and Japan) which produces 60% of global GDP. The project is led by the University of Canterbury and involves a number of leading universities from the region, including Australia National University, Waseda University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, Chulalongkorn University, Korea University, and Jawaharlal Nehru University. The launch meeting was attended by the VPGCE at Chulalongkorn University on 6-8th February.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

2.12.1 Raising Awareness: Policies and Processes

Academic Staff
An established academic integrity policy, '*The Teaching and Learning Committee Guidelines for Academic Staff on dealing with Plagiarism*', provides academic staff involved in learning and assessment with a detailed overview of both necessary definitions and the disciplinary process. Additional support and training materials information (e.g. videos, links etc) are provided via the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) (<u>CTL Academic Integrity</u>).

An Academic Integrity Unit will be formed in autumn 2023. The Academic Integrity Unit will progress the key strategic goal of upholding, cultivating and embedding a culture of academic integrity across UL. The short to mid-term focus for the Academic Integrity Unit will be the revision of the current policy and procedures governing academic integrity within the University. In the interim, the unit will provide support and guidance to staff through the creation of an Academic Integrity space on UL Connect, a dedicated platform for collaboration, information and knowledge sharing for staff. Through this platform, the Academic Integrity Unit will make staff aware of guidelines such as those published by the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), along with other NAIN resources (AI lexicon, Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management', etc), as well as material published by the (International centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI), other bodies and institutions. Disseminating these resources, which will include news articles, podcasts, conference proceedings and research, will act as a catalyst for reflection and discussion to foster a culture of academic integrity generally.

Students
From a student perspective, there is information in both the <u>UL Student Charter</u> at UL (under Integrity, page 6) which states that: The University expects students not to plagiarise (i.e., present another's ideas or writings as their own), fabricate or falsify data, commission others to complete assessments or engage in academic cheating in any form whatsoever. More serviceable information is provided via the CTL (<u>CTL Academic Integrity</u>). The library also offers numerous online resources and has recently launched an Assignment Toolkit on Brightspace which offers guidelines on citation and means of approaching and fulfilling assignment requirements in a manner that upholds the principles of academic integrity.

2.12.2 Academic Integrity Detection Software

Turnitin software, which is used within the University for submission of written assignments, introduced an AI Detection Add-On feature which aims to assess the use of technology in the production of an assignment. This feature is currently enabled on the software. The continued use of the AI detection tool on Turnitin will be considered as part of the overall review and redevelopment of academic integrity policies and processes. There are numerous resources available, numerous workshops (e.g. on assessment) provided by the CTL. There is also information related to Turnitin available via the UL Learning Technology Forum (<u>Turnitin webinar)</u>.

2.12.3 Future Plans

The Academic Integrity Unit, once established and fully staffed, will develop revised academic integrity policies and processes with the aim of having these in place for the 2024/2025

academic year. In accordance with the UL Policy Review Framework, this work will require collaboration with staff and students from across the University including but not limited to Faculty Student Support Officers, the Student Engagement and Success Team (Library, CTL, Student Affairs), Course Directors and University Advocates. Policy development will incorporate relevant guidance from national (e.g. NAIN) and international bodies (e.g. ICAI) to ensure that University policies and processes are reflective of best practice and outline workable procedures to embed and enact academic integrity in curricula and the broader institution. Our existing academic integrity policies and processes provide a coherent mechanism but require further development to ensure that they address the more nuanced questions which are specifically arising as a result of the availability of generative large language models (ChatGBT, BARD etc) and to better reflect recently published guidelines e.g. NAIN Generative Artificial Intelligence: Guidelines for Educators.

The Academic Integrity Unit will also redevelop the academic integrity information directed at students to reflect any revised policies and processes. This will include the provision of online training and resources, delivered through the Brightspace portal, which will be signposted during orientation.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators 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	Conduct a review and evaluation of Cycle 3 quality review activity.	Led by the Director of Quality, conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of Cycle 3 quality review activity. This will include an overview of review demographics, a thematic analysis of review outcomes and linking review recommendations to UL's strategic plan.
2	Agree and Publish the review schedule for Cycle 4 of quality reviews for academic and professional service	The schedule for the next cycle of reviews will be developed in consultation with Heads of Department /Divisions.
3	Develop a Global Engagement Strategy for UL.	A Global Engagement Strategy Committee, a sub-committee of the Executive, will oversee the development and implementation of the UL Global Engagement Strategy that will support the University's strategic objectives for research, learning and teaching, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4	Develop a Human Rights EDI Strategy for UL.	Under the leadership of the Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, a working group was established to engage in institution-wide consultation on the development of a new HR EDI Strategy for UL for the period 2023 to 2027. The new strategy will outline UL's commitment to upholding the principles of Human Rights and EI for staff, students, visitors and service users within the HE community.
5	Conduct a thematic review of Research Ethics.	Led by the Quality Support Unit, the University will undertake a comprehensive review of Research Ethics across the University. Output from a comprehensive audit of research ethics activity in UL,

		scheduled for Dec '23/Jan '24, will act as input for the self-evaluation activities in preparation for the review site visit.
6	Establish a dedicated unit with responsibility for Academic Integrity.	An Academic Integrity Team will be established to progress the key strategic goal of upholding, cultivating and embedding a culture of academic integrity across UL. Initial work will be on the development of a policy and procedure in terms of embedding academic integrity in curricula, with the team adopting a two-pronged approach to the achievement of this aim: 1) Education of the students and staff on the principles of academic integrity; 2) Investigation of cases.
7	Review the UL Policy and Procedures for Collaborative and Transnational Provision to ensure they remain fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements.	Internationalisation is a key strategic goal of UL. The current Policy on Collaborative and Transnational Provision was approved in May 2020. As the variety and complexity of collaborations continues to expand, and the legislative framework is constantly evolving, it is timely to conduct a complete review of UL policies and procedures related to collaborative and transnational provision.
8	Develop an institutional framework underpinning academic workload allocation.	A Workload Allocation Model (WAM) project has been established to develop an institutional framework underpinning academic workload allocation and to adopt a centralised software supporting the process and providing a platform for managing workload data in the AY 2024/25.
9	Continue with the digitalisation of key quality assurance processes	A number of projects have been identified which involve the initial or enhanced digitalisation of key quality assurance processes. These projects are expected to commence in 2023/24 Curriculum management system: External examiner management
10	Institutional Student Feedback Mechanisms	The Working Group on Institutional Feedback Mechanisms will report on its findings to enhance student feedback mechanisms for modules, programmes and services.
11	Apply for use of the International Education Mark	The university intends to apply to QQI for the use of the International Education Mark (IEM). A working group is set up to evaluate current policy and practice with respect to the University's support of international students and the revised Code of Practice which is to be published by QQI.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Marketing and Communications	25-28 September 2023	New Unit
Student Affairs	27-30 November 2023	November 2014
Garda College (Linked Provider Institutional Review)	11-14 March 2024	n/a
Mary Immaculate College (Linked Provider Institutional Review)	8-11 April 2024	2017
Research Ethics (Thematic)	May 2024	n/a

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The current cycle of quality reviews (Cycle 3) completes this year with the Student Affairs review in November 2023. Planning is currently underway for Cycle 4.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

CASE STUDIES

Theme 1: The use of Data Analytics in QA/QE

CASE STUDY 1

Title: Application of Machine Learning for Analysis and Visualisation of Student Feedback at StudentSurvey.ie

Theme: Use of Data Analytics in QA and QE

Keywords: Digitisation, Research funding applications

Short Abstract:

The Application of Machine Learning for Analysis and Visualisation of Student Feedback at StudentSurvey.ie for qualitative data from 2016 - 2022. A notable contribution of this work is the introduction of a completely automated process that incorporates various techniques for summarizing, visualizing, and interpreting open-text student feedback obtained from surveys conducted on StudentSurvey.ie.

This research project was part of a collaboration between the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering and the Quality Support Unit, and was awarded a bursary in December 2022 by the StudentSurvey.ie Analysis and Impact Group to analyse the rich body of qualitative data emerging from StudentSurvey.ie and PGR StudentSurvey.ie.

Case Study

This funded research project focussed on the Application of Machine Learning for Analysis and Visualisation of Student Feedback at StudentSurvey.ie. Analysis of open-ended question responses cannot be performed quantitively and requires qualitative analysis. A variety of approaches to qualitative analysis are used in StudentSurvey reports, none of which were automated or used Deep Learning. This highlighted an opportunity for the automatic qualitative analysis of open-ended feedback for the University of Limerick's data in the StudentSurvey.ie dataset. This was the focus of the research project.

The research project highlighted the importance and value of collaboration between academic research colleagues and those with a quality role in harnessing the latest advances in Machine learning and AI models to enhance quality using data analytics.

Deep Learning models were compared for Topic Modelling, Named Entity Recognition and Sentiment Analysis using UL's 2016-2022 StudentSurvey.ie data. The evidence suggests that Deep Learning models are suitable for experimentation to implement an automated system for the qualitative analysis of student feedback.

The following Research Questions (RQs) were addressed for the project:

1. How do various open-source DL models compare for topic extraction from open-ended responses in student feedback?
2. How do various open-source DL models compare for named entity extraction from open-ended responses in student feedback?
3. How do various open-source DL models compare for sentiment analysis in open-ended responses in student feedback?
4. Which visualisation methods allow for meaningful interpretation of identified topics, named entities and sentiments?
5. What parts of the analysis of open-ended student feedback can be fully automated?
6. What parts of the analysis of open-ended student feedback can be semi-automated (human in the loop)?
7. Does dynamic filtering by different data attributes allow for better interpretation of identified topics, named entities and sentiments?

Different experimental setups were employed to effectively analyze and interpret the gathered data. These setups were carefully designed to suit the specific requirements of each question type, ensuring that the data collected is appropriately analyzed and compared within the context of the study.

One of the models that was used was the Bi-Term Topic Model to generate meaningful topics for analysis. A Bi-Term Topic Model would for example yield a term such as 'mental health' instead of 'health', providing a richer and more meaningful context. A custom named Entity Recognition was employed to extract the entities such as university personnel labelled as "UNI_PER", "ACTIVITY" for in class or on campus activities, "LEARNING_RESOURCES" for Lectures and Notes, "SUPPORT & FACILITY" for Learning Centres, Library, and "ONLINE_TOOLS" for educational tools such as Moodle. This experiment provided more in-depth analysis of the responses in addition to the previous experiment which allowed better visualization, and interpretation of the student responses.

A deep learning-based model named BERTopic was also deployed. BERTopic leverages the power of a transformer-based language model called BERT to capture semantic relationships between words, resulting in more coherent topic clusters. The extracted

topics using BERTopic model were labelled as "Teaching and Learning", "Educational Amenities", "Academic Evaluations", "Institutional Obligations", Academic Assistance", "Teaching and Academic Staff", "Educational Resources", "Applied and Experiential Learning", "Accessible Support", "Extra-curricular Activities", "Online Communication Channels", "Student's Individual Experience", and "Blended Learning". Compared to the classical models, BERTopic identified.
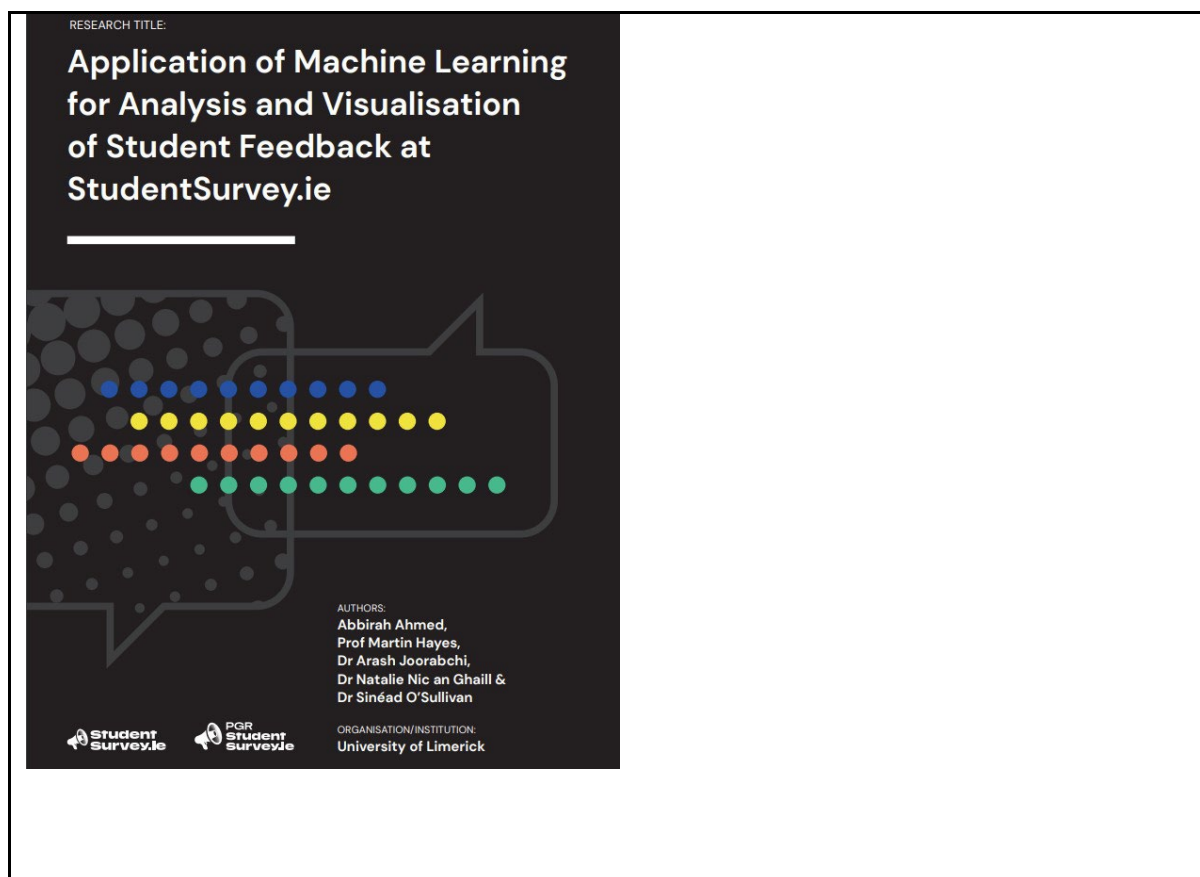
One significant contribution of this work is the deployment of both classical and deep learning models for the extraction of topics from the corpora, and a comprehensive analysis of the student responses. Based on the experiments which we ran on Q1 responses, it is evident that BTM model is more effective for our corpus which consists of short texts while LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) a can be used to identify the general themes in the corpus. BERTopic, on the other hand is more powerful when it comes to the semantically 96 related topic extraction task.

Another notable contribution of this work is the introduction of a completely automated process that incorporates various techniques for summarizing, visualizing, and interpreting open-text student feedback obtained from surveys conducted on StudentSurvey.ie. Importantly, this process does not rely on sentiment analysis and effectively handles feedback, even when it consists of short text entries. These techniques are topic modelling, named entity recognition, n-gram analysis, and bigram networks. Such analysis can be performed by any researcher with access to StudentSurvey.ie data, without requiring a detailed understanding of the developed code. Consequently, even when dealing with extensive amounts of open-text data from StudentSurvey.ie, it becomes effortless to make rapid comparisons and draw meaningful conclusions from the data. The visualizations techniques developed in this work act as a solid basis for topic analysis, offering a concise summary and overview of the full dataset. The availability of these visuals enables prompt and rational decision-making processes aimed at enhancing the university experience for students.

The outputs of the Research Project were published on the StudentSurvey.ie website
Link to Media:
https://studentsurvey.ie/sites/default/files/2023-12/Application%20of%20Machine%20Learning%20for%20Analysis%20and%20Visualisation.pdf

RESEARCH TITLE:

Application of Machine Learning for Analysis and Visualisation of Student Feedback at StudentSurvey.ie

AUTHORS:
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Dr Sinéad O'Sullivan

Student Survey.ie   PGR Student Survey.ie

ORGANISATION/INSTITUTION:
University of Limerick

Theme 3: Digitalisation

CASE STUDY 3

Title: Digital Transformation of Quality Review Group (QRG) Nomination, Approvals and Records Management

Theme: Digitalisation

Keywords (2-3 words): Quality Management Systems, Digitalisation, automation, quality enhancement

Short Abstract (optional):

This case study involved the review of the existing practice for the nomination and approval of quality reviewers to quality review panels. It transformed a manual process

with multiple touch points that was heavily reliant on email and to a streamlined, accessible cloud-based solution. This solution was based on single point data entry and incorporated automated workflows to trigger each phase in the process including due diligence, approvals and records management. In the reporting period, The enhanced approach resulted in the reduction of ~ 3 hours of manual administration per nomination, and reduced the time to final approval from up to 1 week to an average of a few hours. Other impacts include the ability to monitor the process lifecycle in a secure and transparent manner and instant reporting on QRG demographics for statutory and internal reporting requirements.

Case Study

A set of 7 design principles were adopted at the outset of the project as follows:

1. Business Continuity: To ensure continuity of the university's cycle of quality reviews to comply with its statutory obligations and quality assure its services
2. Process Enhancement: To map and digitalise the existing nomination and approvals process, addressing the immediate requirements with a focus on longer-term sustainable process enhancements
3. IT Security and Technology: To leverage existing software approved by the University's cloud governance group (IT security, data protection provisions, legal – SLAs and contracts), with a focus on low-code development accelerating delivery of project. To provide a secure cloud-based solution with appropriate access controls and multifactor authentication and single sign on (SSO)
4. UX design: To provide a single secure data capture form, focussing on user experience and interface design. A browser-based design was preferred, to reduce the need to install any bespoke software.
5. Risk mitigation and minimisation reduced risk of data loss, single point data entry, improved document version control, reduced single point failures (unavailability of key staff), reduced reliance on emails and increased visibility of process lifecycle.
6. Improved document visibility and collaborative approach, real-time record management on centralised database, approvals process incorporating comments from each approver extracted from database. This reduced duplication and enhanced structured and consistent communications.
7. Corporate Branding and reduced maintenance: Ensuring a consistent look and corporate brand by incorporating brand guidelines in the design and template-based communications to ensure consistency within the process.

The solution is based on the Office 365 suite and Power Platform. Data is gathered using a MS Form and submissions are automatically transferred to a SharePoint list. The use of an MS form allows parties external to the organisation to contribute nominations, relevant in the case of the University's linked providers, as they are not required to have permission to the university's SharePoint environment. On a nomination is submitted, this

triggers a notification to the review coordinator to begin the due diligence process. During due diligence, any potential conflicts or points of interest are recorded by the review coordinator. The completion of due diligence triggers a 2 phase approvals process, beginning with the Director of Quality and ending with the relevant Executive Committee portfolio manager. All observations noted throughout the due diligence and approvals process are records and included in communications as the nomination form progresses through the approval pathway. Once final approval is given, an automated workflow transfers the nomination record onto the Quality Support Unit's Quality Review Manager database and app.

The project outcomes are divided into 3 categories: Enhancements, Reduced workload/practices and Sustainability.

Enhancements

•Accessible cloud-based form for data capture

•Risk mitigation & minimisation

•IT security

•Role based access control

•Compliance with GDPR

•Process transparency

•Document visibility

•Implementation of UL's Brand Guidelines

Reduced:

•Reliance on email

•Administrative burden

•Content updating and maintenance (embedding of existing webpages, multimedia and social media feed)

Sustainability

•Enhanced sustainable process for multiple processes

•Cloud-based platform that is hardware independent

•Online transparent solution with real-time record management

•In-built document version control, backup and recovery

Impacts of the projects:

•Accessible, cloud-based form for data collection

•Reviewed, enhanced and digitally transformed process

•Removed unnecessary touch points & manual steps

- Created a "single source of truth"
- Enhanced branding and consistency of communication
- Significant reduction in administrative burden
- Significant reduction in time from nomination to approval
- Reduction in use of email
- Process-driven automated approach minimising risk of single person-dependency
- Enhanced process transparency
- Enhanced capability for statutory and internal reporting requirements

CASE STUDY 4

Title: Customer Relation Management System – Enquiry Project

Theme: Digitalisation

Keywords: Customer Relationship, Engagement

Short Abstract:

As part of its strategy, the University of Limerick aims to increase the number of postgraduate, professional studies and international students in its student numbers. The importance of engaging with and maintaining relationships with prospective students, international agents/partners and industry contacts is key to the conversion of prospects into students. A CRM system provides for the development of a communications and engagement strategy with these stakeholders from the point of initial interest (e.g. capturing expressions of interest, enquiries, sign-ups, event registrations) through to student enrolment. The university recognises the importance of a CRM solution to support the conversion of prospects into applicants and students. This is particularly relevant in the postgraduate, international and professional studies markets. In the absence of an Institutional CRM, Radius (owned by the School of Medicine) has been approved for use by additional departments where there is an immediate need.

GPS implemented Radius to manage communications with applicants on their programmes in a measured way since Summer 2021. This has been hugely successful in managing post offer communications with applicants. As an extension of phase 1 of this project will focus on the implementation of managing enquiries through Radius.

Case Study

In May 2023, GPS Admissions introduced a new solution for the management of enquiries from prospective students. Prospective students now contact us by completing a form which feeds into the Radius CRM system. Contacts details for postgraduate and professional studies programmes across the university website point to Contact Us | University of Limerick (ul.ie)

Benefits

- Support increased conversion rates through defined messaging
- Customer Experience Improvement - Service Improvement
- Process Improvement/Streamlined
- Drive efficiencies needed to allow UL to scale to larger numbers of applicants
- Consistent approach to management of queries from potential applicants
- Better reporting, operations and managing of applicant journey from prospect to student
- Enquiries are being collected in a structured format by completion of a form
- Enquiries are differentiate based on the stage the prospective student is at
- Considering Applying
- Already Applied
- Getting Started
- The solution is specifically targeting prospective students. There are no changes in how we handle enquiries from staff.

Future Improvements

Currently the project team are investigating the use of the 3 generic mailboxes to be integrated into Radius. This will help further track prospective Students applicant journey as well as streamlining the enquiry management process for staff as it will reduce use of two systems into one system.

CASE STUDY 5

Title: Digital User Access Project goes live

Theme: Digitisation

Keywords: Quality Enhancement, Digitisation

Short Abstract:

In another step towards transforming UL's digital environment, 2023 saw the successful rollout of the Digital User Access Project which has revolutionised how we manage access to key digital systems, such as Email and SharePoint, in UL.

Case Study

This project was delivered through collaboration between ITD and HR. In alignment with UL Enable IT Strategy, the Digital User Access Project has also achieved its core objective of strengthening UL's governance and cyber security posture by ensuring that access to key digital systems is linked to a person's term of employment. To date, the Digital User Access Project has delivered the following:

- Automation and linking of all UL staff digital accounts with Core HR ensuring that all employees have timely access to digital resources.
- Reduction in manual tasks and improved communication.
- 1,300 postgraduate research students received enhanced UL digital accounts, providing extended access to digital resources for one year after completion of studies.
- Partner Records are now managed on the Partner Access Management System (PAMS) eliminating all associated manual processes for line managers, HR and ITD.
- 96% reduction in requests logged to the ITD Service Desk to create or modify digital accounts

CASE STUDY 6

Title: Hybrid Teams Enabled meeting rooms refurbishment

Theme: Digitisation

Keywords: Digitisation, Quality Enhancement, Collaboration

Short Abstract:

UL Executive, following a recommendation from Space Management Committee, provided funding to fit out a specified meeting rooms across the campus to enable hybrid working, while ITD are leading the way with implementing this.
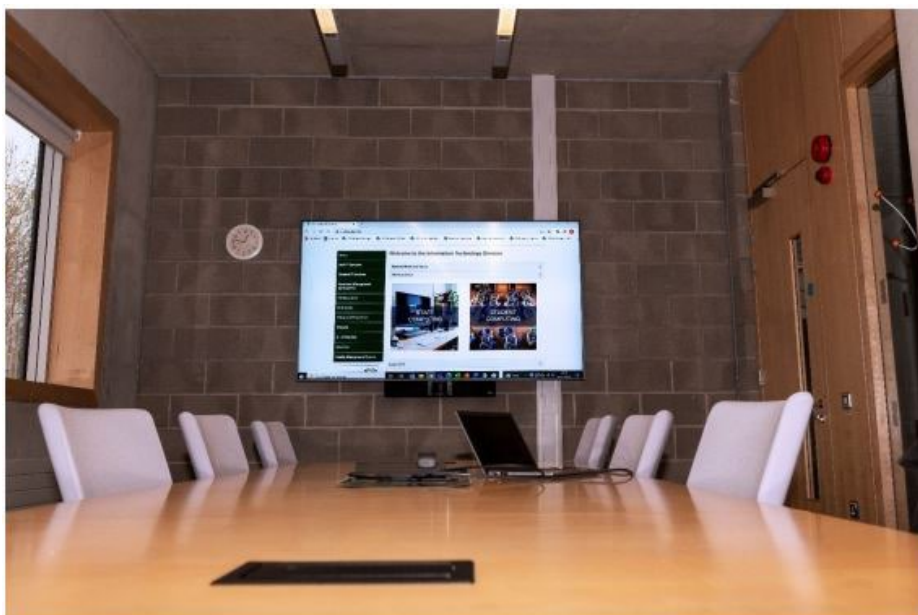
Case Study

In a hybrid working model, the use of physical meeting rooms needs to be integrated with Microsoft Teams online meetings when some attendees are in the physical meeting room

on campus and other attendees are working from home. It is therefore necessary to install equipment in meeting rooms to enable them function in a Teams (or other online meeting platform) meeting.

The equipment required will vary in each meeting room depending on existing equipment and room size, but at a minimum a video camera, microphone, speakers and display screen will be available.

61 meeting rooms have been completed and meeting room owners have received 1-1 training and can provide you with room support. Further help can be found on Topdesk via https://ul.topdesk.net/ (search for Hybrid Meeting Rooms).

Recently upgraded meeting room with new TV Display and video soundbar

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CASE STUDY 7

Title: Strengthening the University's cybersecurity posture

Theme: Digitisation

Keywords: Cybersecurity, Quality Enhancement

Short Abstract:

Throughout 2023, there have been a number of high-profile cyber-attacks in the Higher Education sector in Ireland and abroad. Due to the rapidly changing cyber threat landscape, ITD has continued to strengthen UL's cybersecurity posture through phishing simulations, education campaigns, and a number of other technical projects.

Case Study

Now, more than ever, it is vital that all members of the campus community are proactive in trying to mitigate potential cybersecurity incidents given the continued rise in cyber-attacks focused at third-level institutions. Education campaigns play a crucial role in increasing awareness of good cybersecurity practices. During the year, a number of phishing simulations were carried out to raise awareness amongst staff. As part of Cybersecurity Awareness Month in October, ITD ran an engaging social media campaign featuring bite-sized cyber-safe tips and infographics targeted at staff and students. Information campaigns ran on user vigilance around phishing, password security and how to identify online scams.

A suite of new ITD-branded pull-up banners were placed at key locations across campus to amplify the cyber-safe messaging. Continuous improvement is key to any organisation's response to the growing threat of a cyber incident.

ITD regularly reviews and tests existing procedures and controls in certain areas such as Disaster Recovery and Incident Response to ensure their effectiveness and alignment with both national and international standards.

Theme 4: Governance and Management of Quality

CASE STUDY 8
Title: UL launches new Digital Governance Steering Committee
Theme: Governance and Management of Quality
Keywords: Governance, Digital Infrastructure
Short Abstract:

In recognition of the important role of technology in shaping the educational landscape, a Digital Governance Steering Committee (DGSC) has been formed at UL to support the strategic prioritisation of the University's investment in its IT and digital infrastructure.

Case Study

Already, the establishment of the DGSC has played a key role in implementing the UL Enable IT Strategy. Over the last 12 months, the DGSC has worked with the President and Executive Committee to implement a governance process for the approval, planning, and management of digital investment for the campus.

Additionally, the DGSC supports the Executive Committee to ensure all digital activities are aligned with the University's overall objectives in teaching, learning, and research. The DGSC, which is a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, advises on the management of digital platforms, reviews IT and digital project initiatives and reports on progress to the Executive Committee. It also provides ongoing recommendations for critical issues and risks related to cyber security and ensures current and future projects are aligned with UL's strategic goals.

To help with the prioritisation of digital and IT infrastructure projects in UL, a new process has also been developed to categorise initiatives under specific criteria such as mandatory projects, priority development, improvement projects and maintenance.

Theme 5: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

CASE STUDY 9

Title: Future-ready: Driving the digital transformation of teaching spaces

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Keywords: Digitisation, Quality Enhancement

Short Abstract:

A collaborative initiative between the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering (E&CE) and the Information Technology Division (ITD) has led to the significant transformation of the B2-041 lab in the Main Building into a dynamic and inclusive educational space.

Case Study

This renovation marks a significant shift from traditional educational environments, offering a more flexible and engaging learning experience that caters to the diverse needs of students.

The redesigned B2-041 lab moves away from the conventional setup of rows of desks and desktop computers. It now supports over 70 students, organised into groups of five in various pods. This new arrangement not only fosters active learning but also enhances accessibility, ensuring that the space meets a wide range of student needs.
Each pod is equipped with a large computer screen, which can be controlled by lecturers for instructional purposes or used by students for collaborative projects, using their own devices. To achieve this modern teaching environment, ITD worked closely with colleagues from Science and Engineering, selecting Mersive Solstice as the key technology to revolutionise the lab into a cutting-edge interactive space. Additionally, ITD played a crucial role in overseeing the AV installation, boosting Wi-Fi capabilities, and managing the network infrastructure of the room.

John M Kelly, Chief Technology Officer in the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering, commented on the project's impact: "We have created a space that not only enhances the student learning experience but also addresses the diverse needs of all students, making it a more inviting and accessible environment for class engagement and participation."

CASE STUDY 10
Title: Transforming the student learning experience with Brightspace
Theme: Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Keywords: Quality Enhancement, Digitisation
Short Abstract:
The Brightspace VLE project has benefitted from the enhanced digital capabilities of the IT team, made possible by the investments from Stage 1 of the UL Enable IT Strategy.

Case Study
ITD staff from Educational Technology, Project Management, Enterprise Architecture, Service Delivery and Business Intelligence and Reporting Systems collaborated to deliver

a high-quality system to enable the transformation of teaching and learning for the University.

Enhanced functionality for this important university wide system was delivered to provide streamlined and secure access to the system as well as module creation and enrolment from the Student Information System.

Access to additional platforms to enhance digital education, such as Turnitin, Panopto and Leganto, and to report on teaching and learning interactions and activities for academics and the University Executive were also delivered. There has been significant activity on the Brightspace VLE this semester, where we see in excess of 12,000 logins daily.

Students spend their time interacting with content in their modules, completing assignments and interacting with other learners using the communication tools. Additionally, students keep in touch with their learning using the Pulse mobile app that provides quick access to calendars, content and notifications on the go.

Further work on the Brightspace VLE is planned until the project ends in April 2024. Academics will have the opportunity to digitally enhance their teaching and learning by participating in pilots on accessibility and peer assessment. Additionally, the project team will seek feedback from students and academics in the spring semester that will assist in our continuous improvement approach to our teaching and learning systems.

Theme 6: Learner Resources and Supports

CASE STUDY 11

Title: ITD Engage: Elevating the student IT experience

Theme: Learner Resources and Supports

Keywords: Student Experience

Short Abstract:

From taking to the stage at the Orientation tent to running brand awareness campaigns, it has been a busy semester for ITD promoting the vast range of IT supports available to new and existing students.

Case Study

Throughout Orientation Week, staff from the ITD Service Delivery team facilitated thirteen individual talks for new students, provided multiple daily tours of IT services in the library and provided additional information at a pop-up desk in EG-010.

We were delighted to collaborate with our colleagues in Academic Registry, UL Global and GPS to deliver an engaging week of events. ITD also collaborated with staff from the First Seven Weeks programme and library peer advisors to ensure there was consistent messaging around digital services for students and promote our Student Quick Start Guide to IT. Further engagement events also took place in the library in October via a pop-up desk, providing advice on student print services.

In October we ran a highly successful campaign called 'Get to Know ITD.' Information about digital services such as our Student Quick Start Guide, TOPdesk, Office365, OneDrive and print services were communicated to students who were then encouraged to test their knowledge and enter a prize draw to win a Dell laptop. The campaign proved to be a major success for the division, with particularly strong engagement among first-year students. The summer season marked a notably busy period for the department as we engaged in a brand refresh of our social media channels and updated our complete video library on YouTube. Our video guides have proven to be highly successful with over 2,000 views on our Multi-Factor Authentication tutorial alone!

CASE STUDY 12

Title: Safeguarding process between Togetherall and UL

Theme: Access, Transfer and Progression

Keywords: Student wellbeing

Short Abstract:

The UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service is a primary care level free and confidential service which is available to all registered UL students.

Togetherall is an external mental health online platform who work in partnership with universities to provide registered students with free, anonymous online access 24/7.

Case Study

The UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service is a primary care level free and confidential service which is available to all registered UL students.

Togetherall is an external mental health online platform who work in partnership with universities to provide registered students with free, anonymous online access 24/7. All institutions have a pre-arranged safeguarding process developed with Togetherall for those occasions where a student presents with risk to the platform. Students sign up to the process when they indicate consent regarding the terms and conditions of the Togetherall platform. The safeguarding process involves a Togetherall clinician approaching the student to request that they de-anonymise themselves so that they can be supported by their home institution. Where a student refuses to do this, the Togetherall system can de-anonymise the student to provide the student's Higher Education Institution student number.

Incident of safeguarding a student:

In November 2023, this safeguarding process was activated between Togetherall and the Head of Counselling at UL on behalf of a student at risk to themselves. Once the safeguarding incident was received by the Head of Counselling (HOC), the HOC made use of the Student Emergency Contact Protocol in order to identify the name of the student. A number of staff at UL were then contacted in order to ascertain the contact telephone number of the student. Staff from Admissions Office and from the Corporate Secretary Office all worked together very promptly with the Head of Counselling to aid contact with the student.

Upon the prompt email and phone call to the student by the HOC, the student attended the Counselling service within an hour of the initial Togetherall contact for a drop-in session with one of the services' Psychologist Assistants. The student communicated that they had not been able to approach the counselling service themselves outside of Togetherall.

Outcome:

The student was referred to a Senior Counsellor in the UL Counselling Service for a further assessment using the Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) framework to ascertain the level of suicide risk, mental health difficulties, and to develop a treatment plan. The outcome of the CAMS assessment demonstrated that the student's presentation met the scope of practice for the UL Counselling and Wellbeing

Service, and they were therefore placed on a priority waiting list. Within three days after the CAMS assessment, the student commenced short-term therapy with a Senior Counsellor. The counselling sessions are currently in progress

.

Theme 7: Accessibility

CASE STUDY 13

Title: Global Accessibility Awareness Week @UL

Theme: Accessibility

Keywords: Inclusion, Accessibility

Case Study

As part of Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) in May, a Global Accessibility Awareness Week @UL was run in UL, led by the Educational Assistive Technology Centre (EATC) and supported by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion unit, Marketing and Communications (Marcomms), and the Human Resources Division. This week was designed to create through a range of different methods.

The EATC offered an Accessible Communications Workshop through our partners in Marcomms. 32 people attended this training. It was well received and resulted in individual units requesting presentations for their units (e.g., Psychology & CECD)

The EATC and Marcomms collaborated to create awareness via social media platforms. Below are the stats and information relayed back from the Marcomms unit. This does not include personal posts that received 9,697 impressions, over 600+ engagements and 90 reshares. We used social media to create awareness of EU Web Accessibility Directive and how to create social media accessible.

GAAD Social Media Statistics

- Total Reach of 53,682 people across all channels
- Total of 1,750 Engagements across all channels
- Total of 93 Click Throughs to the UL Accessibility website
- Total of 454 Likes across all channels
- Total of 17 Retweets on Twitter

"This is a really fantastic response, and not only demonstrates the value of posting about the issue of accessibility but also highlights the appetite for more content on this front. To

put this into context, the average news announcement issued by UL so far this year has resulted in a Reach of 36,500 people, producing 1,200 Engagements and 328 Likes". - Tom Spencer in Marcomms.

A sample social media post highlighting the level of engagement the social media post was getting.

We also had two expert speakers Kyran O Mahony, Chief Technology Officer at NCBI and Founder and Director of Inclusion and Accessibility Labs DA (accessibility auditing) and Matthew Deeprose, Senior Learning Designer and Accessibility Specialist, respected accessibility advocate from the University of Southampton. Attendance was low (about 20, about 40+ registered) but the session was recorded and made available internally to all staff, please see GAAD Event 16th May 2023 - Kyran O Mahony and Matthew Deeprose.mp4.

Feedback examples:
- "The workshop the other day was absolutely fantastic". (Accessible Communications Workshop)
- "Thomas – just wanted to say you're just amazing!!!! Your knowledge and drive around what you do is just unbelievable!!" (Accessible Communications Workshop)
- "Thank you for your excellent workshop this morning." (Accessible Communications Workshop)
- "Excellent (and accessible) guidance for organizational communication of all kinds". (Social Media Comment – related to social media post)
- "Great sessions this morning Thomas, thank you for organising and facilitating. Matthew's work in the area of digital accessibility is pretty inspiring" (on Expert Speakers)

CASE STUDY 14

Title: Accessibility and the Web

Theme: Accessibility

Keywords: Inclusion, Accessibility, Web

Case Study

Marcomms (Marketing & Communications Division) are making significant strides in improving the accessibility of all websites under the UL web domain. The migration of older sites to the new more accessible Drupal CMS has aided this positive approach to enhancing accessibility. Marcomms were crucial in acquiring the new Drupal system and they are currently looking at automated systems to support accessible web practice and detect potential barriers to accessibility. Through the Web Accessibility Team a digital hub was developed which has since been populated by the Marcomms team with lots of accessibility specific resources.

In terms of traffic to this accessibility hub, below are a broad view of the stats. These are from mid-March. It is not a huge amount of hits but not bad either, averaging 300 a month. This is expected to grow significantly as accessible practice and policies and practices around accessibility become more widespread. The EATC are currently leading a Path 4 HEA funded project looking to create more accessible digital content bespoke to UL that will support awareness of accessibility and provide guidance on how to create accessible content.

accessibility	1,452	1,167	52%	00:00:58	28%	1.97s
creating-accessible-content	476	389	61%	00:00:59	25%	2.18s
/accessibility-statement	376	348	62%	00:00:53	43%	2.36s
accessibility-at-ul	206	147	36%	00:00:57	21%	1.35s
/accessibility-at-ul	92	67	41%	00:01:32	28%	1.53s
/images	77	32	50%	00:01:00	19%	1.32s
/creating-accessible-content	67	52	25%	00:00:37	8%	1.65s
/alternate-text	43	34	50%	00:01:13	26%	1.9s
/learn-about-accessibility	36	35	0%	00:00:12	6%	1.4s
/images-of-text	25	16	25%	00:01:10	25%	1.16s
/functional-images	20	17	100%	00:01:15	29%	1.2s
/web-accessibility-complaints-procedure	19	19	0%	00:01:50	5%	1.44s
/content	4	1	0%	00:00:18	0%	0.51s
/nodes	2	2	0%	00:00:20	0%	3.18s
/our-aims	2	2	0%	00:00:08	0%	1.11s

As evidence of the improvement in accessibility, according to the Silktide Top Irish Higher Education Institutions websites for accessibility, UL took over top spot in May 2023 and have held it until recently. UL is currently, second, behind University of Galway (see below)

Top Irish Higher Education Institutions websites for accessibility

These are the highest rated Irish Higher Education Institutions websites for accessibility.

Search

Rank	Change	Organisation	Score	Change	Level A		Level AA	
1st	▲ 1	University of Galway	92	▲ 4.8		93.8%		90.3%
2nd	▼ -1	University of Limerick	91	▼ -1.4		93.5%		90.2%
3rd	-	Athlone Institute of Technology	78	▼ -1.8		81.2%		73%
4th	-	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	77	▼ -1.9		90.4%		64.4%
5th	-	Galway Mayo Institute of Technology	76	▼ -0.4		75.7%		72.8%
6th	▲ 7	National College of Ireland, Dublin	74	▲ 4.2		76.5%		69%
7th	▼ -1	Limerick Institute of Technology	73	▼ -1.8		79.1%		66.1%
8th	▼ -1	Munster Technological University	73	▼ -0.1		81%		65.5%
9th	-	University College Dublin	72	▼ -0.1		76.9%		65.5%
10th	-	Technological University Dublin	72	▼ -0.1		72.8%		67.6%

Marcomms, who have been extremely proactive in terms of driving the accessibility agenda also offer accessibility training as part of their web editor training. They have also recruited staff with detailed knowledge of creating and designing accessible content.