



GRIFFITH COLLEGE
– 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE –
1974 TO 2024



Griffith College

Coláiste Uí Ghríofa

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, July 2024



**Dublin
Main Campus**



**Cork
Campus**



**Limerick
Campus**



**Dublin City Centre
Campus**



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Notes to reader:

To support your reading of this document:

1. Griffith College understands that where definitions exist to identify a distinction between the use of the terms student and learner, “student” is often used to indicate someone engaging in formal directed learning, connected to an educational institution, whereas “learner” can be considered more inclusive and reflective of a more diverse learning community developing knowledge, skills and competences. Griffith College uses these terms interchangeably.
2. There is a Glossary/List of acronyms and initialisms provided in Appendix 5.



FOREWORD BY PRESIDENT



On behalf of Griffith College, I am proud to present our Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER). This comprehensive document, which presents the output of an extensive self-evaluation process undertaken within the College, not only reflects upon our five decades of dedication to academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity, but also reaffirms our commitment to continued enhancement and serves as a roadmap, as we identify key objectives for our future.

As Griffith College celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2024, the timing of this ISER is opportune for the College's reflection upon its half-century of success, and its impact on alumni and on the national and international communities it serves. The institutional review process allows us to celebrate our successes, critically evaluate our practices, and identify areas for future enhancement and growth.

I wish to thank all who contributed so openly to the self-evaluation process and Griffith College's growth as a whole. To our faculty members, whose dedication to our learners and their teaching and assessment is a source of great pride; our administration and support teams whose tireless efforts ensure the best possible learner experience; our learners, who, across all study modalities, are driven by a desire to acquire new knowledge; and our alumni whose achievements reflect so positively the values and learner attributes of Griffith College. In addition, our collaborative and industry partners have brought, and continue to bring, a rich and diverse industry perspective to the College's outlook, practices and programmes.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank the various state agencies, especially our colleagues in Quality and Qualifications Ireland, whose insights and expertise inform and guide our rigorous academic standards and supportive learning environment, identifying best practice and opportunities for enhancement. These long-standing trusted relationships underscore the collaborative spirit essential for growth and success. I would also like to thank the external expert panel members for their time and for agreeing to share their expertise with us through the Institutional Review process, which this ISER document serves.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all who supported the compilation of this report, and to the members of the ISER Steering Committee who worked tirelessly to capture, collate and present the views of the College's entire community in this ISER report during yet another busy year for Griffith College.

This document is a milestone in our journey. It is presented in the spirit of openness, with a desire to embrace the positive change that a review process supports. Griffith College is committed to listening, learning, and adapting where opportunities for improvement are identified. Equally, we are committed to sharing our best practices with others to ensure the Irish higher education system continues to develop for the benefit of all learners.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diarmuid Hegarty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Diarmuid Hegarty
President, Griffith College



COLLEGE BUILDING



First Assembly Point

NO ENTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

Griffith College is delighted to present and share this report on the extensive review it undertook of all its activities in 2023/24. The formal internal self-evaluation review (or ISER) was carried out as part of QQI's Cinnte reviews of public and independent private higher education providers.

The report is designed to inform and support a related review of the College by an international panel of experts representing learners, academics and employers. It is also intended to serve as a working document for the College, guiding the ongoing development of its programmes, activities, learners and staff. The ISER report is being made publicly available to all those who would like to know more about the College, and who may wish to offer advice or suggestions to further advance the interests of its learners, staff and Ireland's higher education sector more generally.

With the College celebrating its 50th anniversary, the ISER provides an ideal opportunity for detailed reflection on the College's achievements since its foundation, its many challenges and successes to date, the extensive breadth and depth of its current activities, and the proposals for the College's ongoing development.

The invitation to undertake a QQI Cinnte review, a process previously limited to public institutions, marks another welcome recognition of the College's development to date. It acknowledges the legacy, maturity and quality of its higher education provision, the College's positive impact on increasing educational access and fostering innovation, and provides a valuable opportunity to inform and guide the College's further development.

From the outset, the ISER process has been embraced by the whole College community and actively supported throughout by all. The scope chosen for the review is intentionally broad, and encompasses all educational and related activities provided by the College across each of its four constituent campuses, including those it undertakes in association with its collaborative partners and industry-based employer groups.

The ISER is based on the open, honest and informed reflections, feedback and recommendations of the College's learners, staff and entire community, with everyone's views welcomed, given and received without restriction. This openness is facilitated through extensive formal and informal feedback processes seeking feedback on either a named or anonymous basis. It is further supported by the College's focus on quality enhancement and improvement, accepting and learning from its current challenges and successes, and using them to adapt and improve the College's future practices.

While this is the first Cinnte Review to be undertaken by Griffith College, the processes of reflection, evaluation and review, to obtain valuable findings and recommendations for improvement are well established and embedded in the College's culture and practices. This ISER complements the College's extensive formal and informal feedback processes involving learners, staff, lecturers, external examiners, employers and other stakeholders. It is directly informed by the many regular internal and external reviews undertaken in respect of the College's programmes, faculties, and various teaching and non-teaching support departments. It is also informed by the previous institution-wide evaluations of the College's quality assurance and enhancement processes





undertaken by QQI, its related legacy organisations, HETAC and NCEA, Nottingham Trent University, University of Ulster, Heriot-Watt University, and a wide range of professional statutory and regulatory bodies such as ACCA, King's Inns and the Law Society of Ireland.

This ISER process involved all members of the College's community of learners, academic teaching and support staff, and other external stakeholders. The compilation of their reflections, evaluations and recommendations in this report has been managed by the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team.

The next two chapters of this report outline the general quality assurance and enhancement context in which the College operates and detail the College's approach to the ISER process. These are followed by chapters providing detailed information on the College's quality assurance and enhancement processes under three broad objectives: Governance and Management of Quality; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; and Self-Evaluating Monitoring and Review, with each of the chapters providing self-evaluations of the College's current processes, detailing areas of existing good practice and outlining the College's proposals for further development. The final chapter provides overall conclusions arising from the ISER process to date.

The structure of this report and its constituent chapters and sections follows the template of Cinnte reports nationally. The College wishes to thank QQI for their development of the template and their related guidance notes on its use, both of which have greatly assisted the College in focusing its ISER activities and compiling this report.

This ISER report is the second of two linked documents provided to the international panel of experts and follows the College's earlier Institutional Profile (or IP) document. Both documents are publicly available. To facilitate the reading of this ISER report as a stand-alone document, relevant content from the IP document is either repeated or summarised, with references provided to the IP document for those interested in further information about a particular topic.

2. GRIFFITH COLLEGE CONTEXT

2.1 Griffith College – An Introduction

Griffith College is one of Ireland's leading independent higher education institutions. Established in 1974, the College is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary. The College has an annual student population of close to 8,000, across a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional programmes. These programmes are managed and supported by a team of 725 staff, which encompasses those of both full-time and part-time contractual status.

The College has four campuses, two in Dublin and one each in Cork and Limerick.

Over the College's 50 years of continuous development to date, it has evolved from its original focus on preparing students for the examinations of Ireland's professional accountancy examinations to become the integrated, multi-discipline, multi-campus, higher education institution it is today providing nationally and internationally accredited programmes for learners of 127 nationalities.

Key features of Griffith College in 2024 include the following:

- ▶ Overall learner population of 7,936 in the academic year 2023/24 across all programmes.
- ▶ Learner population of 5,750 on programmes leading to QQI awards.
- ▶ Over 150 accredited programmes leading to QQI awards at NFQ levels 5 to 9.
- ▶ Programmes leading to the awards of professional bodies and other accreditation agencies (e.g. ACCA, Heriot-Watt University, Law Society of Ireland, etc.).
- ▶ Delivery of programmes across a wide range of disciplines (e.g. accountancy, animation, business, computing, design, engineering, health care, journalism, law, media, music production, pharmaceutical business, photography, visual arts, etc.).
- ▶ Delivery of accredited programmes across the College's four campuses and in association with collaborative partners (e.g. ESS Ltd., Innopharma Education, Pulse College).
- ▶ Delivery of programmes using a wide variety of study modes to suit learners' needs.
- ▶ EU funded business and innovation research projects.
- ▶ Teaching and national examinations in music and drama by the College's Leinster School of Music and Drama.
- ▶ Legal publishing by the College's Clarus Press.
- ▶ On-campus accommodation for 664 learners on the College's main campus in Dublin.

Further details on Griffith College's development and current activities are provided in the linked Institutional Profile (IP) document and throughout this ISER report.

2.2 HET Sector and Statutory Context

The educational and statutory contexts in which the College operates as an independent private higher education institution are set out below.

Educational Context

The College's educational and related activities are integrated into Ireland's national higher education structures. The College's academic programmes are validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), and lead to awards on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). These programmes range from NFQ level 5 programmes, preparing learners for higher education, to NFQ level 9 postgraduate diploma and masters' programmes. The College also delivers academic programmes accredited by Heriot Watt University, the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM). Other programmes delivered by the College prepare learners for professional examinations of Irish regulatory bodies such as the Law Society of Ireland, Honorable Society of King's Inns, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and the Certified Public Accountants of Ireland (CPA Ireland).

Throughout its history, College founders, senior managers and faculty members have continued to play active roles in the development of higher education nationally, for example holding roles as council and committee members of HETAC (QQI's predecessor body) and the National Apprenticeship Alliance; as contributors to national policies; and active participants at conferences. The College also works closely with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), the Department of Justice, and other State bodies, such as the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) in relation to the recruitment and admission of international learners in key areas of employment growth in Ireland.

The College's full-time undergraduate programmes are offered through Ireland's Central Admissions Office (CAO) system.

The College works closely with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in relation to funded programmes for those in industry seeking to upskill or find employment. The HEA also provides a fund to support learners attending the College who have particular disabilities or additional learning requirements.

The College's programmes are delivered and managed by its various faculties and programme teams involving a range of roles including: heads of faculty, programme directors, year heads, lecturers, learners, class representatives, faculty administrators, external examiners, work-based mentors, dissertation supervisors, etc.

The College's educational activities are guided and supported by a wide range of established governance and support departments in relation to teaching and learning, learner services, quality assurance and enhancement and a central

academic administration department supporting the learner journey from admission to graduation.

Further details of the College’s governance, management and operation of its educational activities are presented in subsequent chapters of this ISER and in the related IP document.

Legal Context

Griffith College is an independent higher education provider, registered with Ireland’s Companies Registration Office. Originally incorporated as Bellerophon Limited, since its move to Griffith Barracks in 1992, it has traded as Griffith College Dublin, and more recently as Griffith College.

The College owns the freeholds of its Dublin campus, located on South Circular Road, Dublin 8, the Limerick campus located on O’Connell Avenue in Limerick city, and the Cork campus on Wellington Road, Cork. It holds a lease on its Dublin city-centre campus located on Wolfe Tone Street, Dublin 1. Griffith College also owns another property on Greenville Avenue, Dublin 8, close to its South Circular Road campus, which it intends to develop in the future.

As a private limited company, the College’s financial statements undergo annual statutory audits by an independent audit firm. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Based on the latest audited financial statements prepared to 30th June 2023, the College has net assets in excess of €37m, including cash reserves in excess of €21m.

The College’s Finance Department plays a central role in ensuring the College’s financial stability and supporting its strategic development. Reporting to the College’s Board of Directors, it advises and supports the College’s Management Board, heads of faculty, and departmental managers, on financial matters, ensuring that financial considerations are integrated into College-wide decision-making and risk management.

Further details of the College’s financial governance, management and operation of its activities are provided in Chapter 13 of the College’s related Institutional Profile document.

2.3 Provider Profile

Griffith College has QQI-approved scope of provision for programmes leading to major, minor and special purpose awards ranging from NFQ Level 5 to NFQ level 9. The College provides programmes within the following broad domains of learning: Art and Design, Business, Computing Science, Education, Engineering, Healthcare, Journalism, Law, Pharmaceutical Science and the Visual Arts.

The College delivers programmes in full-time, part-time, and blended modes, and was approved for blended provision in 2019. These programmes are provided on a national basis, with transnational provision approved on a per-programme basis with QQI.

The College provides programmes from its campuses in Cork, Dublin, and Limerick, at collaborative partner sites such as Pulse College’s Windmill Lane and Halston Street facilities, and Innopharma Education’s Process Laboratory on its Ravenscourt Campus in Sandyford, Dublin 18. In addition, the College provides some programmes nationwide through training centres and in-company client sites. The use of such sites is approved at programme validation (with QQI) and all named sites are approved in advance of their use by the College’s Academic and Professional Council.

The table below, from the College’s related Institutional Profile document, provides a summary of the number of the College’s QQI accredited programmes (at NFQ levels 5 to 9), at the end of March 2024. A full list of the current Griffith College portfolio of QQI-validated programmes, per faculty is provided in Appendix 1. The list of QQI-accredited programmes offered by Griffith College is provided in Appendix 2.

The College also delivers a wide range of professional accountancy training programmes leading to Accounting Technicians Ireland (ATI), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and CPA Ireland qualifications. The College’s School of Professional Accountancy is an ACCA platinum tuition provider, and is a CPA Goldstar approved licensed provider. Griffith College Limerick offers an MBA programme validated by Heriot-Watt University (HWU), and HNC/HND in Engineering programmes from the Business Technology Council (BTEC). The Law School provides both

Table 2.1: *Number and profile of Griffith College QQI-accredited programmes (NFQ levels 5 to 9), as of QQI PAEC March 2024 meeting*

NFQ Level	Number of Programmes	Award Type						
		Higher Certificates	Ordinary Degree	Honours Degree	Higher Diploma	Postgrad. Diploma	Masters	Special Purpose/ Minor/ Microcred
Level 5	1							
Level 6	28	6						22
Level 7	22		13					9
Level 8	47			17	4			26
Level 9	51					21	21	9
TOTALS	149	6	13	17	4	21	21	66

the Law Society of Ireland's entrance exam (FE1) and the Honorable Society of Kings Inns' preparation courses.

Further details of the College's programme provision are provided in the subsequent chapters of this ISER and in the College's related Institutional Profile document.

2.4 Quality Assurance Development within Griffith College

Griffith College has a long and proud history of quality assurance development since its foundation in 1974. This innate shared commitment to quality has been continuously led, nurtured and sustained by the College's founder, directors, managers and staff through their commitment to College's learners' best interests, informed by best educational practice nationally and internationally.

Formative Years of Professional Training

As a provider of training in the 1970s and 1980s, the College initially prepared learners for the examinations of professional accountancy bodies: ACA, ACCA, CPA and CIMA, establishing an unrivalled reputation for learner success. The College's excellent teaching was supported by the College's development of bespoke teaching material, textbooks, manuals, question and answer packs, and related guidance notes. Lecturers were appointed following detailed reviews involving sample lectures to learners and staff. Once appointed, a new lecturer teaching a subject to an evening class from 6:30 to 9:30 pm, would be given feedback on how their class went at the end of the lecture by the programme director, on the basis of informal feedback from learners during their break. All lecturers were given detailed formal feedback on their teaching before the mid-point of each term (typically in week 4 or 5), based on the feedback forms completed by their students and shared with College's programme manager and director. This provided lecturers and the College with invaluable information to guide the teaching on the module for the remainder of term.

Fifty years on, these processes remain key cornerstones of the College's quality culture and commitment to learners and staff. They have also evolved to encompass both in-person and online provision, and have long since moved from paper-based forms to more sustainable and readily adaptable online processes.

In terms of its teaching, the College is proud of its ongoing reputation for learner success in the examinations of professional accountancy bodies, evidenced by the award-winning places of its learners in international examinations, and its established statuses as an ACCA Platinum Provider and CPA Goldstar Approved Licensed Provider. The College's commitment to excellent learning support material continues through its development of module handbooks to support lecture delivery across the College's faculties. It is further evidenced in the bespoke manuals it develops for professional bodies such as the Law Society of Ireland and in the publication of legal textbooks by the College's Clarus Press.

The College's development of its quality assurance procedures continues to benefit from its delivery of programmes leading to the awards of professional statutory and regulatory bodies. While these programmes were initially limited to accountancy and law, they gradually expanded to include other disciplines,

involving other regulatory bodies and accreditation agencies, for example: City and Guilds London Institute (CGLI) for computing and design programmes; the (UK) National Computing Centre; Pearson Education; and the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC). The list of accreditation agencies continues to evolve and now includes bodies such as the: Irish Institute of Pension Managers (IIPM), Mediators Institute of Ireland (MII), Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), Irish Institute of Legal Executives (IILEX) and other bodies.

The quality assurance processes and procedures of all these external professional and regulatory bodies directly inform the College's educational activities in terms of curricula, teaching, learning and assessment activities, ensuring their suitability and relevance to the learners involved.

Formative Year of Academic Programmes

The College's academic programmes began in 1991 with the design, development and delivery of the College's BSc (Hons) in Computing Science. This was followed shortly by the College's BA (Hons) in Business Studies and its BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance. All three programmes were validated by the University of Ulster, following their institutional review of the College, and were delivered in accordance with the University's quality assurance procedures.

Working directly with the University of Ulster was a hugely positive and supportive learning and development experience for Griffith College which transformed its understanding and application of quality assurance procedures for academic programmes.

As the College's programmes were fully integrated into the University's established quality assurance procedures, the College adopted related structures, mirroring those in the University's own programmes. Early developments included: the appointment of class representatives; external examiners; teaching, learning and assessment design; moderation of examinations; learner progression regulations and supports; annual programme reports; learner induction; graduation; and all related learner, programme and College-wide administration and management.

The College's design and delivery of academic programmes extended the nature of the College's responsibility to its learners beyond that of preparing them for the examinations of external professional bodies. Delivering academic programmes includes direct responsibility for the quality, relevance and integrity of module curricula, programme teaching and assessment, and the quality of the learners' overall learning experience.

The College remains forever indebted to the generous and fulsome support and encouragement it received from University of Ulster colleagues from across its many faculties, quality assurance and learner support departments, and governing body. Their guidance, procedures and practices, informed by years of their own development experience since their establishment as a new university in 1968, remain clearly visible in Griffith College's existing practices and will continue to inform practices into the future.

The College's degree programmes under the auspices of the University of Ulster were migrated to NCEA awards in the late 1990s.

Developments with NCEA, HETAC and NTU

Becoming a designated institution of Ireland's National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) in 1992 marked a major milestone in the recognition and development of the College's higher education programmes. The designation was awarded following NCEA's institutional review of Griffith College, affording it the same recognition, opportunities and responsibilities as other designated institutions, both public and private.

The College's development and delivery of new programmes in design and journalism leading to NCEA awards, aligned the College's educational practices on these programmes with those of other providers nationally. This involved the use of common standards and guidelines produced by the NCEA to guide higher education provision nationally, most particularly its Marks and Standards in relation to learner assessment and progression regulations.

Becoming a designated institution of the NCEA marked the beginning of Griffith College's membership and integration into Ireland's higher education community of providers. The College's inclusion gave it the opportunity to participate in, and actively contribute to national discussions and developments in higher education, through the many conferences and consultation processes managed by the NCEA and HETAC, its successor body.

Active roles undertaken by the College during this period include: Council membership of HETAC by the College's President; membership of HETAC's Programme Accreditation Committee (PAC) by the College's Director of Academic Programmes; leading the development of Ireland's Higher Education and Quality Network's (IHEQN's) guidelines and supports for international learners; and active participation in national consultation processes on policy documents, along with conference attendance, contributions and presentations.

During this period the College's quality assurance procedures continued to evolve, integrating national and international developments in higher education, for example the alignment of the College's programmes with Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and related sectoral awards standards, and the resulting specification and attainment of programme and module learning outcomes.

In addition to its NCEA awards, the College sought and secured approval from Nottingham Trent University (NTU) for undergraduate degrees in Law, and Business and Law, and postgraduate and masters' degrees in International Business Management. This association further advanced the College's quality assurance practices through the College's adoption and integration of NTU related quality assurance principles and practices.

Examples of Griffith College developments introduced and informed by NTU include: assignment handbooks for learners; grading systems for group work; annual showcase events for teaching and learning; participation in quality assurance conferences for linked providers to share best practice; annual institutional reviews (in addition to annual programme reviews); and related resources and developments from the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

The College hugely appreciates the warm and professional support provided by NTU's governing board, quality assurance staff, faculty members, verifiers and external examiners, across the University to Griffith College colleagues. The University members' willingness to engage in and advise on all aspects of Griffith College's activities from induction to graduation, in a supportive manner, advanced the College's own approach to quality assurance and enhancement. In particular, the University's practice of engaging independent verifiers who worked with external examiners to provide annual evaluations and guidance on the College's programme management and quality assurance practices was hugely helpful in developing the College's own practices. It also established the College's confidence to invite and engage openly with external consultants as critical friends to evaluate and advise on the College's educational projects and initiatives as opportunities and circumstances arose.

In 2006, the College's NTU awards were further validated as joint awards by HETAC and NTU, and later migrated to HETAC and QQI awards in line with prevailing national developments regarding international learners undertaking accredited qualifications in Ireland.

Developments with QQI and HEA

The development of the College's quality assurance and enhancement procedures continues as a provider of QQI programmes, building on the College's active engagement with QQI's management and staff, including new members, and many who have worked directly with the College in related roles in HETAC and NCEA.

Key quality assurance and enhancement developments undertaken or advanced since the establishment of QQI include:

- ▶ QQI's formal institutional review and recognition of Griffith College and its HETAC programmes, through QQI's national Re-Engagement process with HETAC providers. This provided for the seamless continuation and national accreditation of the College's HETAC programmes.
- ▶ QQI's devolution to Griffith College of a range of review and revalidation subprocesses relating to its existing accredited programmes, reflecting the maturity of the College's programme design, development, delivery and related quality assurance and enhancement procedures.
- ▶ The College's contributions to the development of QQI's national guidelines for microcredential programmes and the related validation processes, and the College's development and delivery of a range of microcredential awards.
- ▶ The extension of the College's QQI approved scope of accredited provision to include the quality assurance, enhancement, development and delivery of national apprenticeship programmes.

The College wishes to acknowledge the special role played by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in encouraging and supporting the development of the College's teaching, learning and assessment practices, and across the entire higher education sector.

The inclusive encouragement and opportunities they afforded to the College's teaching and research teams, informed and advanced the College's research, teaching, learning and assessment practices and the related alignment of its programme and module learning outcomes.

During the COVID pandemic, QQI supported all higher education providers, ensuring the continuation of the learners' programmes and qualifications. The inclusive manner in which QQI engaged with all institutions collaboratively, both public and private, in the interests of learners and the institutions was greatly appreciated.

The College also wishes to acknowledge the support provided by the Higher Education Authority, through its funding of QQI accredited training programmes under the Springboard Initiative, and the supports provided to the higher education sector by Revenue and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHRIS) during the pandemic.

The College continues to actively contribute to and benefit from QQI's national quality assurance development initiatives, for example in relation to fully online programmes, transnational programme delivery, and recent developments relating to the opportunities and challenges presented by generative AI.

Griffith College's QAE Development

Throughout the College's 50 years as a provider of programmes leading to professional awards, and its more than 30 years of designing and delivering undergraduate, postgraduate and masters' programmes, the College's quality assurance and enhancement procedures have evolved immeasurably in terms of their scope, detail and complexity. Despite their increased complexity, the College continues to be guided by the innate culture of quality shared by all members of the College and their commitment to the design and delivery of relevant accredited programmes to advance its learners interests.

Evidence of the College's commitment to, and internalisation of, quality include:

- ▶ Active engagement with the development of education policies and procedures by national, international accreditation agencies and professional regulatory bodies.
- ▶ Membership of educational governance bodies, with current examples including membership of ICOS and the Apprenticeship Alliance governance bodies.
- ▶ Commitment to the independent higher education sector, through its active involvement and support for the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) and its constituent Quality Assurance and Enhancement Forum (HAQEF).
- ▶ Membership of validation and review panels leading to QQI awards of other providers.
- ▶ Active participation and advocacy for higher education learners in relation to learning and disability supports, financial supports.

The intentional College-wide adoption of the term Quality Assurance and Enhancement or QAE as opposed to Quality Assurance (QA), establishes the context for quality as a means, not just for evaluation and assessment, but also for effecting continuous development. The College is grateful to the many speakers at QQI's Inaugural Conference on Enhancement for the insights that prompted this change in title and institutional focus, further facilitating the College's positive and purposeful quality culture.

Reflecting on the development of the College's quality assurance and enhancement over the last

50 years, three key contributory factors stand out:

- ▶ **Openness:** The College is always evolving and developing. It welcomes insights and new ideas and can readily evaluate and support the adoption of new practices. It actively seeks feedback from its learners, lecturers and its other stakeholders, viewing successes, disappointments and recommendations as opportunities for improvement.
- ▶ **Collaboration:** The College's development is greatly facilitated by its support and mutually welcomed integration of many other colleges and institutions since its foundation, and the equally close and inclusive relationship it shares with its collaborative partner institutions, with each member of the College's community bringing their own insights, expertise and aspirations for learners and staff alike. This sharing of experience between so many different disciplines, professions and award levels across the College and its collaborative partners, continues to enrich and enhance the College's activities, most particularly in relation to its teaching, learning and assessment practices.
- ▶ **Development Support and Engagement:** The College continues to benefit from the guidance and support provided to higher education providers by QQI, HEA, QAA, PSRBs and other related bodies, through their development and sharing of best practice, by means of national consultation processes and conferences. These benefits are realised by Griffith College through the active engagement of College members, across all departments, as participants, contributors and at times leaders of such developments.

All three factors reflect the College's long-standing and shared institutional culture. All three are key elements of the way Griffith College operates and will continue to support the College's future development.

Throughout its development, the College has also greatly benefitted from its integration into Ireland's higher education community, facilitated by NCEA, DES, HETAC, QQI, HEA, SOLAS, DFHERIS, ICOS and other bodies on an increasingly equal basis to that afforded to public providers. The College welcomes the recent extension of eligibility to the State's learning and disability supports for higher education learners to include Griffith College's learners. It will continue to advocate for its learners and academic staff to secure parity of access to that of public sector institutions in respect of certain other nationally funded educational and research initiatives and supports.



2.5 Institutional Review Context

The ISER process undertaken by the College in 2023/24 is the first institution-wide self-evaluation review to be undertaken as part of QQI's Cinnte reviews of public and private higher education providers, and follows the College's earlier inclusion in QQI's programme of Annual Quality Reports (AQRs). The College welcomes the findings and benefits arising from its own internal self-evaluation and looks forward to the evaluation, advice and recommendations of the international expert panel, with both informing the College's future application for Delegated Authority as provided for in recent Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Acts.

As outlined in section 2.4 above, the ISER follows many previous institution-wide reviews of the College since its foundation. These external reviews were undertaken by QQI and its predecessor bodies HETAC and NCEA; by the University of Ulster, Nottingham Trent University and Heriot-Watt University; and by a wide range of professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

The scope chosen by the College for this ISER is intentionally broad, encompassing the entirety of the College's educational and related activities as outlined in Section 2.3 above and in the College's related Institutional Profile (IP) document.

The College's overall approach to the review is outlined in Chapter 3 with detailed consideration of the College's self-evaluation of its activities presented in the subsequent chapters of this ISER.

3. APPROACH TO THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

As outlined in the Introduction, Griffith College greatly values this opportunity to undertake an institution-wide internal self-evaluation review of all its educational and related activities. It welcomes the recognition afforded to the College in undertaking a QQI Cinnnte review, in line with the norms of public higher education providers, and the ISER's potential to contribute directly to the College's further development and future application for Delegated Authority.

3.1 Comprehensive Scope

The scope chosen by the College for the ISER is intentionally comprehensive, covering all aspects of the College's educational and related activities. In particular, the scope of the review includes:

- ▶ QQI accredited programmes, ranging from NFQ level 5 to NFQ level 9, delivered by Griffith College from any of its four constituent campuses, in any delivery mode.
- ▶ QQI accredited programmes delivered in association with the College's collaborative partners (e.g., ESS Ltd., Innopharma Education, Pulse College).
- ▶ Professional training programmes leading to the awards of professional statutory and regulatory bodies.
- ▶ National apprenticeship programmes delivered in association with industry-based consortium steering groups.
- ▶ Programmes delivered for, and in association with industry partners, both accredited and non-accredited.
- ▶ Other educational and related activities undertaken by the College, for example through the College's Leinster School of Music and Drama; Clarus Press, Griffith Halls of Residence, etc., and the related educational and support environment provided for learners, staff and the College's entire community.

3.2 Review Process

The ISER process was enthusiastically embraced by the College's Board of Directors, Management Board, Academic and Professional Council and staff across the College. It was actively promoted by the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team to all members of the College's community of learners, lecturers, staff and other stakeholders. All members were invited and encouraged to contribute openly and fully to the review process and to

engage in the many opportunities arranged for individual and group participation in the process.

The different opportunities for reflective review, shared discussion, and feedback included:

Initial Phase

- ▶ Initial presentations to the College's various staff and management groups outlining the overall intended purpose of QQI's ISER process, the opportunities and expectations involved for the College, along with the schedule for different phases and events.
- ▶ Development and circulation of a comprehensive survey seeking feedback on the specific topics outlined in QQI's Cinnnte ISER review template, supported by focus group sessions with the various College-wide groups (e.g. Board of Directors, Management Board, Heads of Faculty, Heads of Department, Programme Directors, Programme Administrators, etc.) along with related sessions for various departmental groups (e.g. Marketing, IT Services, Learner Services, etc.).

Wider Consultation Phase

- ▶ Development of short bespoke surveys seeking specific actionable feedback on what processes Griffith College does well and should retain, and what processes should be changed, discontinued or further developed.
- ▶ Circulation and promotion of short bespoke surveys, for completion on an individual basis, to each member of the College's and collaborative partners' distinct groups of learners, lecturers, staff, graduates, employer groups and other key stakeholders.
- ▶ Focus group meetings with the College's and collaborative partners' various groups (e.g. heads of faculty, programme directors, faculty administrators) to identify shared actionable feedback regarding the College's processes.

Departmental ISERs

- ▶ Requests to, and support for faculty and departmental managers to undertake departmental reviews and complete self-evaluation reports related to their own specific area of responsibility. These reports followed the four-part presentation style used in QQI's ISER template of: Description; Evaluation; Identification of Effective Practice; and Challenges and Potential Future Enhancements.

College-Wide Specific Topic ISERs

- ▶ Requests to, and support for groups involved in the College-wide management and delivery of key specific educational activities and services identified in QQI's ISER template, to develop a shared related self-evaluation report.

Development of ISER report

- Development and circulation of the various sections within the College's ISER document to the different contributing individuals and groups, as the document evolved.
- Development and circulation of the full document to all in the College for final review and confirmation prior to its submission to QQI.

The ISER's administrative processes and related report were supported and coordinated by the College's QAED team. The supports included the creation, promotion and management of the various surveys; coordination and circulation of the notes of focus group meetings; circulation of survey findings from the College's learners, lecturers, staff, employers and other stakeholder groups, to support writers of departmental and specific topic ISER contributions; and the circulation of the College's overall ISER document for review and confirmation at various stages throughout its development.

As with all of the College's review processes, this ISER is based on the open, honest and informed reflections, feedback and recommendations of the College's learners, staff and entire community, with everyone's views welcomed, given, and received without restriction. This openness is facilitated through the surveys seeking feedback on either a named or anonymous basis, and the many opportunities for groups to provide feedback as part of focus group sessions and as contributors to departmental or specific-topic ISERs.

3.3 Ongoing Feedback Resources

While the College's 2023/24 ISER process involves a comprehensive evaluation of its activities as part of its first QQI Cycle review, in many ways the review processes also mirror the College's well-established review processes which continue to guide the College's development.

These established feedback processes include:

- learners' assessment of each module during each semester.
- learners' assessment of the College's resources and facilities at the end of each semester.
- lecturers' assessment of each module at the end of each semester.
- external examiner feedback at the end of each academic year.
- annual programme reviews.
- departmental reviews.
- College-wide annual quality reports.
- special purpose internal and external reviews as required.

The feedback received from these processes and the resulting actions and developments are managed on an ongoing basis by College members, both individually and collectively through the various committees and governance bodies (e.g. Board of Directors, Academic and Professional Council,

Management Board, Heads of Faculty, Programme Directors, QAE Subcommittee, HR committee, IT Committee, etc.)

These processes are further detailed in the following chapters of this ISER report.

3.4 Related Reviews

This 2023/24 ISER report reflects a particular time and stage in the College's overall development when a number of projects are underway and involve similar opportunities for College-wide reflection, review and development complementing those of the ISER process itself.

Four current projects in particular are worth noting:

- The College-wide review undertaken throughout 2023/24 with all stakeholders resulting in the affirmation of the College's core values, mission and vision, and the refining and updating of the College's strategic development.
- The ongoing renewal and refinement of the College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policies and Practices to include particular emphasis on the identification of College-wide Graduate Attributes, the incorporation of the College's policies on Generative AI, and the College's planned engagement in national higher education initiatives on learner success strategies.
- The College's recent and ongoing engagement with Advance HE to attain the Athena Swan Bronze award delivering on the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all members of the College's community.
- The College's development of 'THEMIS', the new bespoke Academic Management Information System to manage all learner records from admissions through to graduation, has resulted in its incremental introduction and significant review and testing of its functionality (while retaining the legacy system to run in parallel) to maintain core learner records.

3.5 Timing Context (2023/24)

The 2023/2024 ISER process is conducted alongside the College's other ongoing activities for its learners and staff alike. The review also coincides with a number of other strategic developments for the College as it celebrates its 50th anniversary with a series of public events; and the development of new and continuing programme provision for learners and staff of two higher education institutions: Dublin Design Institute (DDI) and St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland (SMSI) following their closure and termination of programmes.

3.6 ISER Team

The ISER process and related report, coordinated by the College's QAE team, reflects the considerations and evaluations of the College's entire community of learners, lecturers, staff and all other stakeholders who actively engaged in the process. The College is hugely grateful



for their active participation, support and engagement throughout the process, and looks forward to the College's further development in light of their evaluation and recommendations. The College would also like to thank QQI for their guidance, encouragement and support throughout the process.

The following chapters of this report, through their constituent sections, provide details of the College's self-evaluation review in accordance with the Cinnte Review template. To ensure coverage of the College's ISER process, and to minimise duplication, the evaluation of activities and developments are presented in the chapter (or section) that most applies, with occasional references made to and from other chapters (or sections).

4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY [OBJECTIVE 1]

4.1 Griffith College Mission and Strategy

Description

Griffith College was founded in 1974 to provide excellent training and support, initially to students seeking professional careers as qualified chartered accountants. Throughout its development, the College's range of programmes has increased significantly, while its core mission and strategy have remained focused on providing high-quality career focused education, targeted to meet the needs of its learners.

The College's mission is currently expressed as follows:

To provide, by living in the College's values, a world-class intercultural learning experience for a diverse body of students supporting their career success and impactful research output for the global community.

This retains the College's core focus on providing an excellent learning experience for students to support their career success, and reflects the increasing intercultural diversity of its students, and the College's commitment to advancing research activities and opportunities for students and staff alike.

The College's values, shared by its community of students, staff and other stakeholders were recently reaffirmed following an extensive College-wide review. The seven core values that characterise the College are listed below, with further information provided in the College's related Institutional Profile.

- ▶ Student-centred
- ▶ Academic Excellence
- ▶ Agility and Adaptability
- ▶ Career Focus
- ▶ Diversity
- ▶ Friendliness
- ▶ Responsible Stewardship and Financial Acumen.

The College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) arrangements are specifically designed to support the fulfilment of the College's mission and strategy. Evidence of this QAE alignment is provided throughout the various sections of this ISER report, for example in relation to College's student-centred approach to administrative activities from the students' enrolment and induction to their graduation and beyond; and in the College's commitment to academic excellence through its design and development of accredited career-focused programmes leading to nationally and internationally accredited programmes.

Evaluation

The College's QAE Manual details the varied and complementary ways in which the learner experience is supported and evaluated. These include long-established QAE processes where learners provide feedback during each semester on the quality of their learning experience on each module they undertake. This is followed by their end of semester assessment of the College's overall learning and support environment through the Services and Facilities Survey.

These evaluation mechanisms are complemented by the feedback provided by lecturers at the end of each semester and the feedback provided by the College's external examiners on an annual basis. The academic quality of the College's programmes is evaluated on an ongoing basis through annual programme reviews and external validations and reviews.

In 2023/24, prompted by the College's 50th anniversary, the College engaged with all its learners, staff and other stakeholders to identify the values people currently most associated with the College. The College-wide process was actively promoted and supported with surveys and focus-group sessions in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. Feedback from the more than 500 students who actively participated, identified academic excellence, student centredness, career focus, friendliness and diversity as the key values they most closely associated with the College.

In the individual surveys sent to learners and all staff, people commented positively on the management of the College, including how the strategy and development plans is providing a "sense of focus and clarity around the College's ambitions for the future." In the same survey, some of the strengths reflected the strategy and values of the College include:

- ▶ Institutional focus on the learner
- ▶ Institutional agility
- ▶ Innovation
- ▶ Striving for excellence
- ▶ Community engagement
- ▶ Welcoming
- ▶ Focus on EDI (and Athena Swan)

In 2023/24, prompted by the College's 50th anniversary, the College engaged with all its learners, staff and other stakeholders to identify the values people currently most associated with the College. The College-wide process was actively promoted and supported with surveys and focus-group sessions in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. The feedback from students throughout the College consistently identified academic excellence, student centredness, career focus,

friendliness and diversity as the key values they most closely associated with the College.

All groups commented positively about the College, welcoming the opportunity to engage in the College's "Values" project, and the related "sense of focus and clarity around the College's ambitions for the future".

Throughout the surveys and focus-group sessions, specific strengths identified by staff, learners and other stakeholders included the College's focus on learners; its institutional agility, innovation and striving for excellence; its community engagement; and its overall responsible stewardship assisted by strong financial acumen. All groups separately identified and valued the College's welcoming environment, and its support and commitment for equality, diversity and inclusion for all individuals and groups within the College's entire community.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College values and acts upon the feedback it receives, using it to direct the College's activities and resources for future learner cohorts. This is achieved by informing and supporting those directly involved with the findings in a timely and positive manner. For example:

- ▶ Mid-semester feedback from learners in relation to each module is communicated to lecturers by their Head of Faculty or Programme Director to guide their teaching, learning and assessment for the remainder of the semester.
- ▶ End of semester feedback from lectures is used by Programme Teams to inform programme delivery for subsequent cohorts.

The College evidences its response to the feedback it receives in a variety of ways, for example:

- ▶ End-of-semester feedback from learners in relation to the College's learning and support environment are formally responded to in a "what you said – what we did" type report issued to all learners following its approval by the College's APC and Management Board.
- ▶ Programme related evaluation is documented in annual programme reports containing action points for the following year, along with commentaries on how action points from previous years were addressed.
- ▶ Wider College-related evaluation is similarly documented in the College's Annual Quality Reports to guide the College's ongoing development.

Further details of the College's QAE arrangements and how they contribute to the College's mission and strategy are outlined in the following sections and chapters.

Griffith College has a strong reputation for advancing the interests of higher education learners more generally. The College was at the forefront of championing pastoral care in international higher education in 2008 when the President of Griffith College, Prof. Diarmuid Hegarty, chaired the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) sub-committee that developed the Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions. More recently, QQI released the

Code of Practice for the provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners, which modernised the earlier iteration and, in time, will formalise Ireland's regulation in the recruitment and care of international students. This support and advocacy on behalf of international learners continues through the membership of the College's International Director on the board of ICOS.

Griffith College has a uniquely strong reputation for providing protection for learners of other higher education institutions in times of crises. During the 2023/24 academic year, the College provided ongoing continuity of programmes for learners and staff of two higher education institutions: Dublin Design Institute and St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland, following their respective closure and termination of educational activities. The related IP document contains many other examples of similar supports provided by Griffith College to learners and staff of other higher education colleges.

The College greatly appreciates the support it receives from QQI and related professional and regulatory bodies, when providing continuity of programme provision for learners and staff from other institutions. The agility and assurance with which these new and ongoing arrangements are established and sustained reflects the maturity of the College's QAE and related management and organisational processes.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The areas for potential enhancement of the College's QAE arrangements to support the fulfilment of its mission and strategy are identified through the College's reflections on the feedback it receives on all its activities on an ongoing basis. These proposed enhancements are detailed, for example in annual programme reports, departmental reports and on a College-wide basis in Annual Quality Reports, along with progress on their implementation.

The areas for enhancement of the College's QAE arrangements at any given time, reflect the College's current stage of development in the related area, and are informed and influenced by changes occurring in higher education generally. They also reflect the College's key priorities for its overall future development.

Key College-wide proposed enhancements directly related to the College's mission include:

- ▶ The renewal and redevelopment of College-wide research activities across all faculties and departments, incorporating the research experience of new faculties and collaborative partners.
- ▶ Building on the success of the Graduate Business Schools' EU funded business and innovation projects in business and innovation.
- ▶ The ongoing development and refining of the College's policies and procedures in respect of Generative AI.
- ▶ The College's clear commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in policy, in practice and in providing facilitating spaces and welcoming environments where all College's members are respected and valued.

Details of many further specific enhancement plans are provided in the following sections and chapters of this ISER and in the related IP document.



4.2 Structures and Terms of Reference for Governance and Management of Quality Assurance

Description

Griffith College's governance and management structure comprises three related but distinct entities: the Board of Directors (BoD); the Academic and Professional Council (APC); and the Management Board (MB). These are described in chapter 3 of the Institutional Profile, and outlined in Figure 4.2.1 below. More detailed information on the College's governance and management of quality is provided in the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual, particularly in [Section A: Governance and Management of Quality](#).

The Board of Directors (BoD) oversees the financial stewardship, major capital expenditure, risk management, strategic planning, and overall management of the College.

The Management Board (MB) operationalises the College's strategic plans, and reports to the BoD on this endeavour, which includes operational management of resource requirements, budget allocation, marketing initiatives, operational reviews of faculties and departments, and overseeing staff provision. The MB also considers any recommendations or reports from other key standing committees (for example, reports from APC and its subcommittees) and, as appropriate, recommendations and reports by other authorities/individuals within the College, and externally. MB membership, which was reviewed and expanded in 2022, represents faculties, campuses and departments throughout the organisation.

The Academic and Professional Council (APC) is the primary academic governance structure of Griffith College, reporting to the Board of Directors. Underpinned by the [QAE Policy 1.1, 'Academic and Professional Governance at Griffith College'](#), the APC's remit is to drive the College's mission and strategy in programme design, development and delivery, and related College activities, through developing and embedding a culture

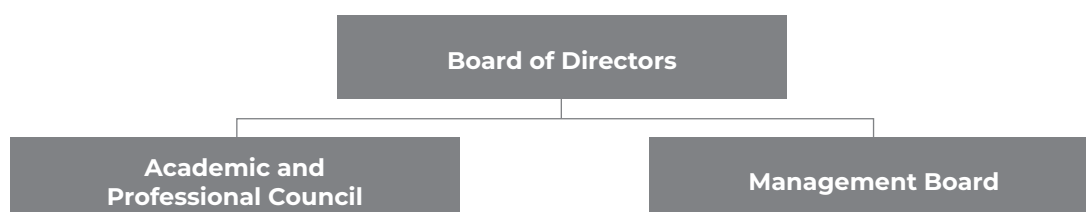


Figure 4.2.1: Griffith College's governance structure



Members of Griffith College's Management Board with Minister Simon Harris, TD, 02 February 2024

of quality enhancement based on the outcomes of robust ongoing reviews and analysis, and data-based decision making. APC reflects on the output from the implementation of the College's QAE processes and key feedback mechanisms, including feedback from learners, lecturers, external examiners, as well as the content of Annual Quality Reviews (AQR), Annual Programme Reviews (APRs), Faculty and Programme periodic reviews, etc. Since 2019, the BoD of the College has appointed independent external chairs for APC, requiring the individuals to hold significant academic governance credentials.

The membership of committees, including MB, means that governance is representative of the College's broad range of activities. Changes made to the membership of committees, including to the BoD and MB in 2022, and more specifically the establishment of the College's EDI working group, reflect the College's commitment to broad representation from across the College on committees and working groups, and its

support for equality, diversity and inclusion. The memberships and committee terms of reference were again reviewed during the comprehensive update and review of the QAE Manual in 2022/2023, and the current QAE Manual reflects these developments.

The schedule of meetings for boards, committees and subcommittees are set out for the academic year, in line with the College's [academic calendar](#). Appendix 4 provides the dates of meetings of Griffith College's governance and management bodies which have taken place over the past 3 years. All meetings are structured, with (specific standing item) agendas prepared, and minutes recorded (refer to Appendix 5 of this document for sample standard agendas of the APC and PD meetings). Minutes of individual meetings are shared for noting and/or escalated for action as necessary, for example, notes of MB meetings and minutes of subcommittee meetings are provided to APC, and minutes of APC and MB are presented to BoD, etc.



Figure 4.2.2: *Griffith College's operational and academic governance committees*

Within their distinct roles and responsibilities, the BoD; APC and its sub-committees; the MB; and other key committees and working groups support the achievement of the College's strategic objectives, through risk identification, analysis and management, of informed evidence-based decisions.

The College's approach to risk management and internal control is based on the following key principles:

- ▶ The BoD, with support from the APC (in relation to academic matters), has overall responsibility for overseeing (strategic, finance and business) risk assessment and management within the College.
- ▶ The MB supports, advises and implements policies approved by the BoD and APC.
- ▶ Strategic decisions, made by the College's BoD, MB and APC and other management bodies are made in the light of risk identification and analysis in advance of any decision being taken to proceed with a particular development, activity, partner, etc.
- ▶ An open and receptive approach to assessing, avoiding and minimising risk is adopted by the College and its management.
- ▶ Members of the College's BoD, MB and APC have direct responsibility for specific areas of risk management (e.g. GDPR, cybersecurity, academic integrity, etc.)

The College's overall organisation chart is provided on the [College website](#). The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department staff report to the Director of Academic Programmes. Staff within the department include a Head of QAE, three Project Managers (focused on programme development, QAE processes, and QAE policy and EDI), and two QAE Officers, as outlined on the [College website](#).

As previously described, the College's QAE standards have developed and evolved in line with the best practice within the sector, and informed by QQI guidelines. The College ensures that its system of governance protects the integrity of academic processes through a variety of processes including the following:

- ▶ [QAE Manual](#) and ongoing updates, its availability through various sources, and its use throughout the College supports the integrity of academic processes through regular adherence to established best practice.
- ▶ Academic QAE processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and review.
- ▶ Engagement with peers and partners, both collaborative and third-party.
- ▶ The College's 100% track record of successful validations, reviews and revalidations over the last five years.
- ▶ Robust academic integrity policies and the College's published statement on Generative AI, supported by training on academic integrity best practice.
- ▶ QAE subcommittee of APC (QAES) that considers academic processes and policies.
- ▶ A dedicated/identified QAE staff member as the contact for policy review requests, their interpretation, and advice and training on their implementation.

- ▶ QAED minute-taking training provided for all staff.
- ▶ QAED support for each reporting committee.
- ▶ Monitoring and review of processes (e.g. examination boards, annual reports, APRs from faculties, etc.).
- ▶ Policy monitoring and implementation reviews e.g. process reviews of academic appeals (2022/2023) and academic misconduct (2023/2024).
- ▶ Learner feedback implemented and actioned at module, faculty and campus level.

Evaluation

As part of the continuous process of evaluation and development, the governance structures in the College and their visibility have undergone some changes in recent years. This has been further supported in 2022/2023 with the reconsideration of membership and structure of the MB and APC sub committees (to support the relaunch of the [QAE Manual](#) for the 2023/2024 academic year). This review reflected on and updated each committee's terms of reference, membership, and reporting lines in consultation with all committees. Specific governance changes implemented at the time, and incorporated in the updated QAE Manual, include:

- ▶ Membership changes to the College's committees and governing bodies.
- ▶ Greater clarity on the differentiation between the QAE subcommittee of APC (QAES) and the operational QAE Department (QAED), plus agreement of membership.
- ▶ Inclusion of the previously ad hoc groups/committees for EDI and Education, Learning and Development (ELDG), and removal of all superseded committees.
- ▶ Review and update of the terms of reference of the Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC).
- ▶ Review of committee membership for representation – all representative seats were filled to include, for example, learners, FAs, PDs, HFs, collaborative partners and external representatives.
- ▶ A new process introduced with all minutes of academic committees provided to APC and MB, as relevant.
- ▶ Update of the [supplementary apprenticeship manual](#).

From feedback gathered through the ISER process, the consensus is that the College has an effective QAE Manual (policies, procedures, practices and guidelines) to support its organisation, management and governance, supported by clear reporting structures and oversight. Some of the key findings include:

- ▶ There is a significant and appropriate separation of responsibilities between the College's commercial and academic elements. This allows the respective teams to work together, with each team member knowing the clear boundaries of authority and influence as new projects and opportunities are explored. There is a clear separation of roles where, on behalf of the BoD, the MB manages business operations and APC manages academic provision. The APC has an independent Chair.

- ▶ There are procedures in place (supported by training) to manage proper record keeping of minutes, decisions and actions. The QAED provides secretarial support for key committees, including APC. QAE consideration is a standing item on each agenda of relevant committees.
- ▶ It is recognised that Griffith College's QAED goes beyond assurance and compliance in its governance and that it is appropriate and proportionate. However, the communication of QAED's enhancement role could be more consistently communicated to all staff and learners.
- ▶ While the workings of the BoD, MB, APC, and their subcommittees are clear for those who are members or who interact with them directly, there is a suggestion that there may still be too many committees. While the review undertaken in 2022/2023 resulted in a reduction of committees, the current governance structure can be difficult to follow for external members and learners not directly involved in the committees' detailed operations.
- ▶ Some ISER feedback identifies that APC currently operates as a structure that other parts of the College report into, and that there is scope for a more dynamic approach which encourages debate and discussion.
- ▶ Certain specialist programmes are managed by Programme Directors who are not part of a wider faculty involving related programmes. It is felt that they might not always have the same representation in the College's governance structures. This is an area that can be improved - there are pockets of very good practice in some areas and departments; but across the College, the management and governance structures are not always clear and applied consistently.
- ▶ There are pockets of very good practice in some areas and departments, but the overall organisational structure could be considered with a view to developing a more decentralised QAE structure, allocating responsibility, authority, and accountability in a clear and transparent manner to functional units.
- ▶ The QAE governance processes incorporate externality through the inclusion of the external examiners on examination boards, collaborative partners in the College governance processes (e.g. on APC and subcommittees), industry panel advice pre-validation of programmes, and external peers and stakeholder participation in panels for programme validation. The independent Chair of APC is appointed from outside the College.
- ▶ Across the College, campuses and partners, there is consistency in feedback and consultation with learners at module and campus level per semester. Staff are also consulted regarding their module feedback each semester. Learner and Staff module-level feedback feeds into the APR of each programme.
- ▶ While the College doesn't collect data on the implementation of all policies consistently, as an example, in 2022/2023 the College did a QAE check on the implementation of Academic Misconduct procedures (for semester 2 examinations). A review of the data showed that all departments are compliant.

The consultation undertaken with the College community as part of the ISER process has made it clear that while

the College's QAE governance structures are robust and fit-for-purpose, they are not always clearly and consistently communicated across the entire College community. Certainly, the more senior staff members, who are involved in College QAE governance processes are aware of the structures and the relationships between the various bodies. However, this perception is not reflected across all staff - some have experienced challenges in accessing information on the College QAE governance structures on the College website or in QAE documents.

This can perhaps be traced to the continuous development and growth of the College, and the scaling of processes that comes with it. What might have worked well for the College in the past, is not necessarily what will serve it best into the future as the College continues to grow and strengthen its QAE governance structures. Changes and developments at QAE governance level are not always communicated consistently to those who engage with it. A clearer and consistent process would address this. For instance, where strong interpersonal relationships (and informal communication) were previously the backbone of the College's QAE governance processes, as the College matures, expands and appoints more staff across its campuses, a more formalised, transparent and accessible approach to QAE processes is needed. Further work is needed to address gaps in communication with the wider College community and clarify communication and management to be scalable, providing replicable solutions, which do not require personal intervention.

There are several key individuals and decision-makers within the College who have significant institutional knowledge, and the succession and continuity planning of both their careers, and of those who work with them with potential to progress into their role, remains a strategic focus for the College. This is not just in planning for future retirement of staff, but in planning for QAE governance and management, EDI, and for the continuity of processes and work around annual leave; maternity, paternity and paternal leave; sick leave; disability and long-term illness leave; career breaks; research breaks and more.

While there is visibility and records of meeting minutes and actions within the QAE governance chain between committees, this could be more transparent and efficient with more active engagement to support good record keeping. For example, the process could be strengthened by agreed action-tracking within the minutes of meetings, agreed actions being shared more widely and consistently, more consistent annual reports and reviews of committee structure and activities, and with activities and resources agreed in advance instead of as needed. Additionally, feedback collected from the staff members during the ISER highlighted that further externality and extension of external stakeholder input could be integrated to support more effective QAE governance.

The College implements a responsible approach to risk management, seeking to recognise, assess and manage its exposure to risks. In achieving its strategic aims and academic mission the College, therefore, accepts a degree of risk commensurate with the potential reward within defined tolerances for risk agreed by the BoD for key areas. Multiple staff report that there are a number of mechanisms in place to manage and mitigate risk, including the core level of institutional and academic policies, procedures and practices required to provide programmes within QQI compliance.

There are multiple risk management approaches, and while there currently isn't a Risk Committee, or an updating of a Risk Register on a regular basis, the College's senior managers and BoD are cognisant of risk, and take care not to expose the College to risk. Examples of risk minimisation activities undertaken include:

- ▶ IT Services protection against cyber-attacks.
- ▶ HR policies and practices training for staff and the updating of staff / learner contracts.
- ▶ QAED management of QQI programme approvals and coordination of related marketing process timing.
- ▶ QAES oversight of due diligence on providers / training centre approvals, etc.
- ▶ PPRC and QAES monitoring of programme Certificates of Validation (CoVs) to ensure compliance.
- ▶ Financial, legal and other professional advice guidance in relation to major capital expenditure and investments (e.g. planning permission, infrastructure developments, college mergers, integrations, protection for learners (PEL) schemes, etc.).
- ▶ Engagement of external consultants (educational and other) to advise on proposed initiatives or to review and guide the further development of existing activities (e.g. departments, programmes, processes, etc.) as required and as opportunities present.
- ▶ Annual reviews of programmes, departments and the College's overall quality.

The College is confident in its self-reflective and self-critical approach to QAE and resulting remediation processes. In conducting its self-evaluation, the College implements annual review and monitoring and reporting, such as, APRs, reports from various groups (Retention, Learning Support, ELDG, induction, etc.), programme reviews and monitoring. Further information on the College's QAE self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes are provided in section 6.1. While the College implements regular ad hoc QAE self-evaluations and reviews, it currently does not have a formal framework for periodic, consistent faculty and department reviews. This process needs to be strengthened and formally implemented to ensure a consistent enhancement approach to quality assurance. Having formal review structures will improve the College's agility and responsiveness and further strengthen the College's capacity for critical self-evaluation and remediation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has and continues to shape academia. The College reviewed and updated the appeals process in semester two, 2023/2024. As a result of this review of the Monitoring of Academic Integrity and Misconduct policy, all faculties reported on the number and type of academic misconduct meetings held, detailing the alleged misconduct involved, the learners' admission or denial, the outcome of the meeting, the formal finding of the meeting and the penalty applied. Following this, the College has introduced principles of Using AI for Academic Purposes, and the faculties need to develop their own discipline specific faculty guidance for staff and learners. The College plans to adopt the [NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management](#), in semester one, 2024/2025 following consultation with all academic staff

specifically on academic integrity and academic misconduct policy and procedures.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

As indicated above, the membership of the College's governance structures, committees and working groups are subject to ongoing review. For example, changes to the College's MB in 2022 kept the size manageable by including rotational and non-rotational appointments for the weekly meetings, with certain MB meetings used to facilitate updates and presentations by members of the College's committees and key projects as required.

This practice offers flexibility, responsiveness and access to the College's various activities – existing and new – while also providing progression and development opportunities for potential future leaders of the College. To expedite decision-making and discussion by the MB, relevant issues are typically first considered by a relevant MB subcommittee, which makes a recommendation to the Board.

A secondary outcome of this ISER review in relation to the College's governance and management of quality assurance is the identification of QAED personnel as a source of guidance to support the proper and consistent implementation of the College's QAE policies and procedures. QAED sent a 'Meet the Team' email to all staff and collaborative partners to introduce each member of QAED staff, and the work activity that they support. This information is also provided on the [College website](#), within the wider QAE page and information. This communication has resulted in an uptake in staff contacting the QAED to seek clarification and advice in relation to QAE policy implementation. This engagement informs the development, enhancement and clarity of policies and procedures.

In semester two, 2023/2024, [the supplementary Apprenticeship Manual](#) was updated to align with the QAE Manual as a source document. As a continuation of the enhancement of the QAE Manual, the QAE page on the College website was also updated to make separate policies available, to include a 'Useful Resources' section. A new staff hub and learner hub were also added to make the policies more accessible by topic and to each separate stakeholder group.

QAE processes around the operation and management of examinations and assessments are especially robust. In addition, the College's approach and processes for the Monitoring of Academic Integrity and Misconduct policy is comprehensive and responsive. This is a constantly developing and evolving process, supported by several functional units across the College, including faculties, digital learning, learning support and library services. Developments and enhancements to support academic integrity include:

- ▶ The establishment of an academic integrity resource for identification of contract cheating (2022), that also includes a training course for staff on academic integrity and contract cheating.
- ▶ Provision of CPD to support staff wishing to change their assessment strategy (2021).
- ▶ Co-authoring of the NAIN generative AI guidance for learners, and adoption of NAIN viewpoints on processes.

- ▶ Support for student inductions to communicate risks and issues around academic integrity and contract cheating.
- ▶ Creation of a Moodle page about academic integrity.
- ▶ Provision of interactive workshops on academic writing, referencing and academic integrity for learners.

The College's QAE governance and management structures are accessible and sufficiently informal to ensure that people and managers are approachable. There are many opportunities to provide feedback. Poor practice can be challenged, and enhancements can be suggested and made.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The areas for potential enhancement in relation to the College's Governance and Management of Quality are outlined in the topics presented below.

- ▶ While many QAE governance committees work well, professional development and training, and clearer identification of roles and responsibilities (and process diagrams) could lead to a more efficient and visible operation of governance, including lines of management and communication. Training should be offered to all members of any committee, with particular focus on learner representatives. This would include induction on the Griffith College governance structures and processes, as well as training in good governance, clear communication skills and any other training identified.
- ▶ New staff induction can be bolstered with more information about QAE governance and communication lines outside of their faculty/department. Mentorship as well as a dedicated person in a central operations department with the responsibility for this task would also support this.
- ▶ Learner representation needs to be further reviewed to increase participation in QAE governance processes and enhance feedback. Training should be in place for all learner committee participants, and particular SU officers, with perhaps a mentor identified within the committee to support their learning and participation, and support continuity of representation (post-SU elections).
- ▶ Monitoring, review and reporting on QAE policies and procedures should be mapped out in advance, and implemented in a cyclical review to ensure consistent

review and alignment with best practice. This might facilitate more meaningful engagement and consultation, which could be better integrated into the existing QAE governance communication lines and increase its transparency. Further annual data gathering and analysis on key QAE processes such as, for example, appeals, complaints, academic misconduct, disciplinary meetings, would enhance overall reporting and confirmation of implementation of procedures.

- ▶ All QAE committees and boards should be linking activities, decisions taken, and reporting specifically to agreed strategic priorities.
- ▶ More external representation would be beneficial in various QAE committees and more generally including, for example, on the Ethics or Research Committees.
- ▶ The College needs to continue to build on its EDI strategies, and meet the Athena Swan criteria within the QAE governance and management framework.
- ▶ The formalisation of an audit and risk type sub-committee, and the finalisation of the Risk Policy, would support the College's future growth.
- ▶ Learner and staff feedback at module level feeds into the APR of each programme. It could be more proactive to enable more lecturing staff participate and also to hold more staff consultations at programme and faculty level.
- ▶ While the College has robust moderation processes, it would be beneficial to have more full-time qualified academic staff to manage the QAE operational workloads that are often completed by PDs. Additionally, a review of the workload of PDs and FAs would be useful to reflect on their assigned programmes and learners in the context of the increasing numbers and resource implications.
- ▶ AI is a major risk area for Academic Integrity. The College needs to prioritise this and be proactive, not only in response to any AI impacted academic integrity issue, but also to promote academic integrity and build awareness preventing academic misconduct. Faculties must be supported and resourced to build on the Principles of AI for Academic Purposes and develop their own specific Teaching, Learning and Assessment guidelines and policies around how staff and learners use AI.



*The first Pride event:
"Pride in Higher Education:
Empowering LGBTQIA+
People and Community"
panel discussion at Griffith
College, 08 May 2024.*

CASE STUDY: EDI Committee: Implementation, Embedding and Focus

The College's EDI Committee was formalised in the academic year 2021/2022 to strategically guide the policies, procedures, processes, and teaching and learning with a focus on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. The committee membership comprises staff and managers from various departments plus student representatives. Achievements since its establishment include:

► Governance Integration, Policy and Enhancements:

- Formalisation of the EDI committee within the College governance framework, including reporting at MB and the APC meetings.
- Development of the Learner Gender Identity and Expression policy, to allow learners to update their academic records to reflect preferred or legal names.
- Improved integration of EDI considerations into the College IT platforms.
- Introduction of gender-neutral bathroom facilities on each campus.
- Engagement with marketing campaigns and initiatives with a focus on EDI.
- Development of an EDI section on the staff intranet and a calendar of celebrations.
- Participation in Advance HE Irish HE Governance Forum in Dublin, May 2024.

► HR and Training Initiatives:

- The appointment of a dedicated HR staff member with specific focus on EDI matters.
- The delivery of training on dignity and respect, mental health, and related topics.

- Introduction of employee wellbeing initiatives, such as health insurance plans, mental health training and health initiatives.
- Development of staff and learner support guides on inclusive language, pronoun usage, and LGBTQIA+ supports.
- Organisation of employee experience events with a HR focus.
- Support the design and development of the staff intranet (focusing on UDL and accessibility).

► College Community Engagement, Events and Awards:

- Successful application for the Pieta House Amber Flag for Mental Health programme.
- Contribution to diversity considerations in academic event planning e.g. for induction and graduation.
- Establishment of annual celebratory events such as International Women's Day.
- Hosting of GBS Innovation and Enterprise Hub panel on AI ethics and biases.
- Organisation of the first Pride event: "Pride in Higher Education: Empowering LGBTQIA+ People and Community" panel discussion.
- Membership of Advance HE with access to additional EDI resources and training, enhancing advocacy efforts.
- Formal connection and partnership building with the HEI Queer staff networks, including receipt of an invitation to the Trinity Provost pride celebration.

These developments, supported by consistent resourcing and HR initiatives, underscore the College's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment.

4.3 The Documentation of Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

Description

Griffith College operates a documented approach to its Quality Assurance and Enhancement activities which are made publicly available as the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual or the [QAE Manual](#) on the College's website. Additionally, the College has developed the [supplementary QAE Manual for Apprenticeship Programmes](#), which meets the requirements of the [Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#) (QQI, 2016).

The College's quality assurance and enhancement strategy, policy and procedures are developed, updated and revised on a collaborative basis by the College's teaching and support staff across all faculties and service functions, and the College's learners and learner representatives, and is

informed by national and international accreditation agencies, including the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), (ENQA, 2015), and the lexicon and provisions of the NAIN Academic Integrity Guidelines (2021). These policies, procedures, practices and guidelines are formally approved through the College's academic governance processes, i.e. Academic and Professional Council (APC) and the Board of Directors (BoD).

This QAE Manual outlines robust, documented policies and associated procedures for Griffith College (faculty, staff and learners) and collaborative partners, for the assurance of the quality and standards of the College's educational activities. It describes the processes involved and provides policies for College activities such as: programme provision, application and admission, progression and assessment, quality assurance evaluation and review processes, accreditation and achievement, all the way through to graduation and reporting.

This most recent version of the QAE Manual, which was approved by APC in September 2023, arises from a significant consultation and review process undertaken in the academic year 2022/2023 to align it with the latest national and EU regulatory standards for higher education. It also includes new policies and procedures adopted by the College's APC, along with updates and refinements to other policies and procedures.

The QAE Manual contains the following sections to describe the College's quality assurance and enhancement strategy, policy and procedures:

- ▶ Section A: Governance and Management of Quality
- ▶ Section B: Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
- ▶ Section C: Programmes of Education and Training
- ▶ Section D: Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
- ▶ Section E: Teaching and Learning
- ▶ Section F: Assessment of Learners
- ▶ Section G: Support for Learners
- ▶ Section H: Information and Data Management
- ▶ Section I: Public Information and Communication
- ▶ Section J: Other Parties Involved in Education and Training
- ▶ Section K: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The College is committed to implementing and monitoring these policies and procedures in a fair, transparent and accountable manner.

The QAE Manual, chapters and sections are extracted for use – and are provided as individual documents on the staff and learner hubs on the College website, with supportive forms also provided.

The QAE Manual remains a living document, allowing it to be used and refined by staff and learners on an ongoing basis to ensure its continued effectiveness. Recommendations for amendments and improvements are welcome and are considered on a collaborative basis with proposed enhancements presented to the broader College community for consultation, before being considered by the College's QAE Subcommittee (QAES) and presented to APC for approval.

In the event of there being any approved amendments during an academic year, the impact of the change is considered to determine the most appropriate implementation date – either immediate, requiring an instant updating of the College's current QAE Manual and website, or for introduction at the commencement of an academic year, when its implementation is scheduled appropriately to allow for all College documents and communications to reflect the change.

Many policies are largely driven by QQI's requirements, and this is appropriate. Many external agencies, including awarding bodies and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), stipulate rules and regulations in respect of their awards. These processes, which are normally managed within the faculties, complement and extend those requirements already outlined in the College's QAE Manual, serving to add further precision in respect of specific procedures, for example, those relating to admission and advancement criteria.

Where the College provides a programme leading to the award of an external agency or PSRB, as outlined in section 6.6 of the Institutional Profile, it is understood that the QAE measures used to govern the programme include all those prescribed by the external agency, in addition to those described in the College's QAE manual. These two sets of requirements are typically retained as distinct documents, rather than seeking to integrate the requirements of external agencies into the College's QAE Manual.

Where the QAE requirements of a particular external agency differ in some respect from those outlined in the College's QAE Manual, those conditions stipulated by the external agency take precedence over the content of the QAE Manual for College compliance in respect of the associated programmes.

The College continues to develop its QAE processes in the light of experience gained in delivering its programmes, the feedback from learners and other stakeholders, the direction provided by external parties, guidance from national and international advisory bodies, for example in relation to teaching, learning and assessment, and its wish to continue to enhance the quality and effectiveness of its programme provision, in line with its mission and objectives.

Evaluation

The quality assurance and enhancement strategy, policy and procedures are considered fit-for-purpose. They were reviewed as part of the College's reengagement process with QQI, which completed in 2019. Following some further updates between 2019 and 2022, the QAE Manual was comprehensively reviewed and re-presented considerably updated in 2023 to align with the latest national and EU regulatory standards for higher education, and developments within the sector particularly the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The review of the policies concluded with the following outcomes:

- (i) minor edits (formatting, spelling, minor edits to membership (e.g. correction of job title/role name, updating membership) (58 instances),
- (ii) major edits (update to terms of reference, change to policy process) (3 instances),
- (iii) new policies identified as necessary, and included (4 instances), and
- (iv) no edits, because the policies were approved in the previous 12 months (3 instances).

Pre-2023 the College had two documents – one with Policies and one with Procedures – the section numbering across both documents was complementary, but there was a lack of clarity as to which publication hosted specific documents. The Forms and Supplementary operational documents were presented in an additional document. The 2023 update combined these documents to create a single QAE Manual.

The College's supplementary [QAE Manual for Apprenticeship Programmes](#) was approved by QQI in 2021, as part of the College's extension of scope to include provision of apprenticeship programmes. This document was updated in 2023/2024 to incorporate changes made to the QAE Manual, and to reflect College developments since its first approval.

The combined document of College's QAE policies, procedures, practices and guidelines provides a comprehensive indexed linked (large) set of documents, and these continue to evolve and reflect ongoing self-evaluation processes and external developments. For example, some ISER feedback indicated:

There will always be room for improvement and changing environment will always give rise to new requirements which have to be incorporated. That process of constant review is important.

The sheer scale and volume of the QAE Manual document (currently over 300 pages without appendices) provides an accessibility challenge in itself. Therefore, the QAE department (QAED) has extracted individual sections to the staff and learner hubs on the College website, to facilitate access. However, further simplification of access is required to make the document truly accessible.

The staff hub needs to be more interactive. There is an A-Z of policies and relevant documents. However, at present the QAE policy document is a 434-page PDF. It could benefit from being fully interactive.

The ongoing extraction of individual documents (on their update) has proven to be time-consuming and technically challenging, and the QAED team has worked with the Digital/Content team to develop processes to make this more responsive and effective.

The College has found the process of striking a balance between 'QAE speak' and accessibility within policy documents to be challenging when the documents align with the College's Terms and Conditions, effectively being the contractual small print for learners. The complexity of documents was also specifically remarked on in the ISER process, for example:

In general, we feel they are robust and fit-for-purpose, however policy and procedure documents would benefit from more user-friendly language and a summary page as they can be quite lengthy.

The College is considering this request in the context of the broader review of the accessibility of the policies and procedures, and how best to universally design them for all stakeholders.

In addition, in consideration of the time required for consultation on and approval of documents, the College is also reflecting on how best to manage the general review and updating of policy and procedures, and facilitating discussion and feedback from staff, learners and collaborative partners.

However, there are a range of stakeholders, and differing views. So, policy approval is cumbersome and takes time. This though might not be possible to remedy as effective policy needs buy in from all related parties. There is at the moment an updating of a number of policies in the College to ensure that these are fit-for-purpose, with a tailback of policies that merit updating

The College's agile approach often leans away from a reliance on policy / structure in favour of identifying and responding to opportunities. Further work is needed as we scale.

The College is currently considering developing a documentation review framework where specific policies would be scheduled for presentation to the various committees monthly (e.g. faculty administrators, programme directors, heads of faculty, etc.) for their consideration to make the enhancement process more proactive and focused. This communication process would also support the ongoing effort to remove obsolete versions of forms from individual files, and support staff training on policies.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College identified the following effective practices in relation to its documentation of quality assurance policy and procedures.

- ▶ The College is open to enhancement and development of its policies, procedures, practices and guidelines, through consultative and inclusive processes.
- ▶ In general, policies are not subjected to radical change, but gradual, effective innovation.
- ▶ The College has been agile in its approach to quality enhancement and has been open to inputs from staff and learners in this area.
- ▶ The ongoing work to move the policies fully online and make their navigation easier, through the staff and learner hub is a positive initiative.
- ▶ Relevant policies are reviewed by a legal expert prior to their introduction.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The College identified the following areas for potential enhancement of its documentation of quality assurance policy and procedures.

- ▶ To apply the principles of universal design to the QAE Manual and enclosed policies, procedures, practices and guidelines to support their accessibility, and their interpretation and use by all stakeholders. The use of graphics, visual media and artificial intelligence may support this endeavour.
- ▶ The College's QAE Manual is relevant and currently reviewed at regular, reasonable intervals, but would benefit from a scheduled process where specific policies/sections of the QAE Manual are presented to the various committees on a monthly basis (e.g. faculty administrators, programme directors, heads of faculty, etc.) for more proactive and focused enhancement.
- ▶ Training on some of the QAE policies and processes would also be welcome by the various groups. While the QAE Manual is available, and there is an awareness about it and the details and policies it upholds, it would be useful to hold further themed training sessions based on faculty and programme needs throughout the year.
- ▶ Training relating to EDI themes should be made available to all staff e.g. unconscious bias, addressing racism, what is diversity, how to be an ally to LGBTQIA colleagues and students, and including training on the specific QAE policies relating to EDI implementation and ownership.



4.4 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Description

The Recruitment Process

Griffith College recruitment processes are guided by the College's HR Recruitment and Selection Policy. The HR Department utilises Bamboo HR, a comprehensive online HR management application, for recruitment management and advertises vacancies both internally and externally.

Recruitment responsibilities have traditionally been distributed, with the College's HR Department managing the recruitment of all full-time staff and non-academic part-time staff, while heads of faculty recruit part-time lecturers with support in relation to their contracts and payments provided by HR and the College's Finance Department.

Recent job advert templates have been updated, ensuring a refreshed and celebratory approach to attracting candidates.

Staff Management and Development Overview

Griffith College places a strong emphasis on management practices that enable managers to effectively lead their teams. The following sections outline the College's staff management process, focusing particularly on HR policy accessibility, self-service options for HR forms, and staff training initiatives. Staff management development policies are supported by the following:

- ▶ **HR Policy Accessibility:** All HR policies have been updated to ensure they are easily accessible to all staff members, promoting transparency and understanding of the College's expectations and procedures.
- ▶ **Self-Service Options:** The introduction of self-service options for HR forms has streamlined administrative processes, allowing staff to access and complete necessary documentation efficiently.

- ▶ **Staff Training (General):** Frequent and relevant training sessions are provided to all staff and employees on key topics, including:
 - Effective management practices
 - Leadership development
 - Compliance with institutional policies.
- ▶ **Staff Training (Academic Staff):** Details of the training and development support provided to academic teaching staff, for example in relation to teaching, learning and assessment pedagogies are presented in various other sections of this ISER report and in the related IP document.

Role-Specific Onboarding Programmes

The College has developed targeted onboarding programmes tailored to different roles within the organisation. These programmes have proven highly effective in integrating new employees into their respective roles, providing them with a clear understanding of their responsibilities and fostering a sense of belonging from the outset.

Effective Probation Management

To ensure that new members are effectively supported throughout their initial onboarding period, and throughout their first six months at Griffith College, the College implements a robust and comprehensive probation management process, which is supported by the HR Probation Policy.

The probation management process ensures that, rather than having one formal meeting at the end of the probationary period, that formal check-ins at two, four and six months are scheduled between the line manager and the new staff member, complementing their ongoing operational day-to-day interactions. These opportunities for formal shared reflection, feedback and guidance on a timely basis, assists new members in settling in to the College, becoming effective in their everyday tasks, and gaining confidence in their ability to contribute reliably to the work of others within their team or across the College, and to succeed in and enjoy their career with the College.

Performance Management for Part-Time Lecturers

Performance management for the College's part-time lecturers is structured to ensure continuous improvement and quality teaching in accordance with the principles of effective performance management. As indicated in section 6.2, the process involves the following:

- ▶ Learner Feedback Surveys: Learners provide feedback on their lectures through survey, once per semester.
- ▶ Review and Action: Survey results are reviewed by the relevant Programme Director and Head of Faculty. Based on the feedback, necessary actions are taken to address any issues and enhance the teaching experience.

Communication of Policies

Anticipated to launch soon, Griffith College's new staff intranet, which will provide controlled access to staff policies and documents (currently available on the Staff Hub on the College website), will represent a significant milestone in enhancing accessibility to training resources. This centralised platform will empower staff members with convenient access to a wealth of learning materials and support tools, promoting a more efficient and collaborative learning environment across the institution.

CPD (Continuous Professional Development)

Griffith College actively promotes and supports staff in their continuous professional development (CPD). This is evidenced in a number of ways, including:

- ▶ All full-time members of staff wishing to undertake academic or professional programmes offered by the College may do so at a discounted rate of 50% of the programme fee. Further reductions (of up to 100%) may also be applied in circumstances where the training leads to qualifications related to the staff member's specific responsibilities on behalf of the College.
- ▶ The College provides a Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development (MAELD) and related embedded postgraduate diploma and certificate awards at NFQ level 9. These programmes, and their constituent modules are provided free of charge to all staff teaching on the Colleges' QQI accredited programmes, including those in association with its collaborative partners.
- ▶ The College's Teaching and Learning Department provides a schedule of fortnightly CPD sessions in higher education pedagogy and related topics throughout both academic semesters, along with the block-release delivery of modules from its MAELD programme (e.g. Research Supervision, Work-Based Learning, Learning Analytics)
- ▶ Staff are provided with opportunities for increased involvement and advancement in the College (e.g. through participation in committees, working groups, training sessions, social events, etc.)
- ▶ The College provides funding in relation to conference attendance, professional development events, and other development opportunities that may arise.
- ▶ Lecturing staff members are actively encouraged to pursue advanced postgraduate and doctoral studies related to their particular discipline. In the case of full-time lecturers, the College assesses each application

for financial support on its merits, considering budgets and the needs of the College. The College seeks to support such applications up to a level of 50% of the fee involved, with discretion to provide additional support of up to 100%, depending on the particular circumstances involved (e.g. length of service, role occupied, relevance of qualification, etc.).

- ▶ The College has established a structured policy and application process for staff seeking professional development support. This transparent process outlines clear steps that staff members can follow to access necessary resources, ensuring fairness and consistency in supporting their ongoing growth and development initiatives.

Diverse Training Portfolio

Griffith College also offers a broad range of training programmes covering essential topics such as mental health awareness, promoting dignity and respect, and enhancing leadership capabilities among line managers. These initiatives underscore the College's commitment to fostering the professional and personal development of its staff members, and provide a nurturing and supportive learning culture, ensuring that staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to thrive in their roles, and contribute effectively to the College's shared mission and values.

Evaluation and Impact Measurement

The College evaluates the effectiveness and impact of all its internally and externally delivered training initiatives based on the valuable feedback and insights gained from participants and other stakeholders alike. This assesses how well the training programmes meet their intended objectives allowing subsequent sessions to be delivered either unchanged, refined, or discontinued.

Commitment to EDI

Griffith College is a welcoming and friendly place to work. Equality, diversity and inclusion is a key commitment in Griffith College, ensuring everyone treats others, and is treated with dignity and respect. In Spring 2024, Griffith College joined the membership of Advance HE with a commitment to pursuing the Bronze Award for the Athena SWAN, a framework for advancing equality in higher education, which will be led by a College-wide representative Self-Assessment Team.

Working closely with the EDI Committee, recent developments have included:

- ▶ The appointment of a dedicated HR staff member responsible for EDI.
- ▶ The delivery of training on dignity and respect, mental health, and other relevant topics.
- ▶ Introduction of employee wellbeing initiatives, health insurance plans, mental health training and health initiatives.
- ▶ Development of staff and learner support guides on inclusive language and pronoun usage, along with a guide on LGBTQIA+ supports.
- ▶ Engagement with the design and development of a staff intranet with a focus on UDL and accessibility.

Evaluation

Griffith College's formal recruitment process is robust for both full-time staff and non-academic part-time staff, applying well-established procedures and practices, and using Bamboo HR to manage the formal documentation involved. Interviews and other selection and recruitment processes are conducted in an open, respectful and effective manner with the direct involvement of departmental line managers supported by members of the College's HR team.

The identification, recruitment and selection of part-time lecturers continues to be primarily undertaken by Heads of Faculty and Programme Directors who assess the candidates' discipline-specific expertise, teaching ability, industry experience, research skills and required qualifications.

The extent and nature of the teaching and assessment hours allocated to lecturers involved in the delivery and assessment of the College's programmes are governed by approved Certificates of Validation, with programme and module payment rates determined and reviewed annually by the College's MB and BoD.

Once appointed, part-time lecturers are supported within the faculty in relation to their teaching and related educational roles, with support also provided by the College's IT Services, DLD and Teaching and Learning Departments as detailed in section 5.1 and other sections of this report.

To date, Heads of Faculty and Programme Directors have operated largely independently of the College's central HR department in relation to their appointment of part-time and guest lecturers. Heads of Faculty and Programme Directors typically rely on administrative support provided within the faculty, for example in setting up interviews, mock lectures, reference checks, etc. and issue contracts and related terms and conditions using the College's standard contract templates for part-time lecturers and an associated fee schedule in accordance with the rates agreed for the programme.

While direct faculty involvement in the recruitment of part-time lecturers is essential in determining the suitability of candidates, the current decentralised recruitment and onboarding system, results in certain administrative inefficiencies and inconsistencies, for example in relation to the faculties' scheduling and location of interview meetings, mock lectures and the timeliness of related communication with candidates.

As the College's HR Department has been expanded with the appointment of additional HR professional staff, the College proposes to revise its existing practices for part-time lecturer recruitment, with faculties and the HR department working closely together to ensure greater consistency for all concerned.

By adopting a more integrated and formalised approach, and addressing current gaps, the College expects to further strengthen its recruitment practices.

Recruitment Management

The use of Bamboo HR provides a centralised system for managing recruitment processes, ensuring consistency and efficiency in handling applications, communicating with candidates, scheduling interviews, and maintaining records.

The successful recruitment of 62 full-time staff members in 2023 indicates a functional and effective recruitment system for full-time positions.

By advertising vacancies both internally and externally, the College maximises its reach, attracting a diverse pool of candidates while also providing career advancement opportunities for existing staff. The job advert templates have been updated to reflect Griffith College's values and milestones, presenting a refreshed and appealing image to potential candidates.

Recruitment Process

The recruitment policy outlines clear steps and responsibilities for the College's HR team, ensuring that recruitment practices are standardised, fair, and transparent. This includes:

- ▶ Ensuring equity and non-discrimination in recruitment practices.
- ▶ Providing support to managers in preparing job descriptions and conducting interviews.
- ▶ Coordinating all job advertisements and managing the selection process.

The HR Department's recruitment of full-time academic and non-academic staff is well-structured, and involves:

- ▶ Job posting and advertising on appropriate platforms.
- ▶ A defined composition of interview panels.
- ▶ A detailed selection process including shortlisting, phone screening, and multiple interview stages.
- ▶ A mock lecture model used for recruiting lecturers. This is an effective tool to assess candidates' teaching abilities, presentation skills, and subject knowledge. The Mock Lecture Assessment Form ensures a thorough evaluation process.
- ▶ Reference checks and issuance of employment offers.

The process for the recruitment of part-time lecturers by heads of faculty needs to be more clearly defined. More and better integration and collaboration between HR and heads of faculty regarding part-time lecturer recruitment could enhance consistency and fairness in recruitment across faculties.

Continuing and ongoing training for all staff involved in the recruitment process on updated recruitment practices and non-discrimination policies would help maintain the College's high standards across all recruitment activities.

The Onboarding Process

The College's formal onboarding and related training supports for all staff roles need to be enhanced. Onboarding supports for lecturers at faculty level, which would include support resources for Faculty Administrators and Programme Directors would assist and support onboarding for all concerned. The College's Teaching and Learning Department's Teaching Champions initiative could be further leveraged to provide a lecturer support for new members and the potential for sharing of learning is huge. However, it needs resourcing both on the ownership and administrative side.

Additionally, the development of a more formalised mentoring or “buddy” programme for new members could also support their onboarding and integration process,

Staff Management

Griffith College’s focus on effective management practices, accessibility of HR policies, and comprehensive training programmes supports a well-managed and capable workforce. By enhancing leadership development and continuously improving the performance management process, the College can further strengthen its staff management and development efforts.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College identified the following effective practices in relation to its staff recruitment, management and development:

- ▶ **HR Policy Accessibility:** All HR policies have been updated to ensure they are easily accessible to all staff members, promoting transparency and understanding of the College’s expectations and procedures. The development of the staff hub, and the pending release of the staff intranet will further strengthen access.
- ▶ **Self-Service Options:** The introduction of self-service options for HR forms has streamlined administrative processes, allowing staff to access and complete necessary documentation efficiently.

- ▶ **Staff Training:** Frequent and relevant training sessions are provided to all staff and employees on key topics, including:

- Effective management practices
- Leadership development
- Compliance with institutional policies.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The College identified the following areas of potential enhancement of its staff recruitment, management and development:

- ▶ **Develop a Formal Recruitment Process for Part-Time Lecturers:** Establish a clear, standardised process for the recruitment of part-time lecturers. This should include guidelines on job postings, selection criteria, interview panels, and record-keeping. HR should collaborate with Heads of Faculty to ensure consistency with Griffith College’s overall recruitment policy.
- ▶ **Regular Training and Updates:** Implement regular training sessions for all staff involved in recruitment. Focus on best practices, unconscious bias, and legal compliance to enhance the overall effectiveness and fairness of the recruitment process.

CASE STUDY: Lecturer CPD: Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development (MAELD)

The MA in Education, Learning and Development (MAELD), with embedded certificate and postgraduate diploma programmes, has been designed to meet the needs of educators and practitioners who support adult learners. College lecturers, including those with collaborative partners, may complete the embedded certificate and postgraduate diploma with full financial support from the College. Newly appointed full-time lecturers are encouraged to complete at least the Certificate within two years of their appointment.

The programmes have been designed to create a collaborative, reflective community of practitioners, across all campuses, with programmes delivered in a structured, flexible and blended modality. They provide an opportunity for lecturers to build on their existing knowledge, skills, competencies, and share their practices, whilst also engaging with contemporary research, and support tools and resources.

Individual modules are also offered as CPD opportunities to all staff. For example, to support staff engaging with learner research and dissertation supervision, current or potential dissertation supervisors (undergraduate and postgraduate), may complete the ‘Supervision of Research’ module (5 ECTS). This programme is offered during academic semesters and as a pre-semester/summer school, to facilitate optimal staff engagement and support.

The programme has been successful in enrolling Griffith College staff over the past number of years. There were 19 staff members enrolled in an ELD programme (MAELD

or embedded certificate or postgraduate diploma) in September 2023, and 17 in February 2023. Owing to the modular and staged nature of the programme, five Griffith College staff graduated with the MAELD in 2023, with another five staff due to graduate in November 2024.

Impact

- ▶ The increase in registrations for each intake suggests that the free provision of the MAELD is meeting the CPD needs of lecturing staff within Griffith College.
- ▶ Staff are registering for modules that they find most relevant to their TLA progression and career plan.
- ▶ Some Lecturers who are seeking accreditation have progressed through the programme, completing the certificate, postgraduate diploma and finally the masters.
- ▶ The College’s institutional knowledge of TLA best practice and UDL has been significantly enhanced as a result of staff participation.
- ▶ The ‘Supervision for Research’ module provides specific guidance and support for the College’s teams of dissertation supervisors across all its postgraduate and masters programmes.
- ▶ The community of practice is enhanced as staff meet and work with peers across the College – from all campuses and collaborative partners – as well as external participants.

- ▶ **Feedback Process and Mechanisms:** Introduce feedback mechanisms for candidates and interviewers to continuously improve the recruitment process. This can help identify areas for improvement and ensure a positive experience for all parties involved.
- ▶ **Leadership Development:** While current training programmes are robust, there is a need to focus more on leadership development to nurture and develop the next generation of competent leaders and managers within Griffith College.
- ▶ **Performance Management:** An effective performance management process is conducted on a quarterly basis, ensuring feedback and goals are timely and actionable. However, continuous enhancement of this process is recommended to maintain its effectiveness and to keep it aligned with best practices and the evolving needs of the College.

4.5 Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation

Description

The Programme Development team at Griffith College is a dedicated unit within the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department (QAED) that coordinates and manages the programme development and approval process of the College's externally accredited programmes and other College-recognised programmes. In collaboration with academic and administrative stakeholders, the team is committed to maintaining and developing innovative, and sustainable, programmes that meet the diverse needs of learners and align with the College's academic standards and strategic objectives. The team is responsible for:

- ▶ Preparing documentation to ensure that programmes comply with QQI's accreditation requirements for the following processes:
 - Programme review and revalidation ([QAE Manual, Section C-3.11](#))
 - Programme validation under devolved responsibility ([QAE Manual, Section C-3.12](#)), and
 - Programme validation without devolved responsibility ([QAE Manual, Section C-3.13](#))
- ▶ Preparing documentation to ensure that Griffith College Professional Academy courses comply with the College's internal and non-formal accreditation processes.

QAED maintain a programme development tracker, which is circulated at monthly APC and Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC) meetings. The contents of the tracker are informed by QQI's QHub provider platform, the College's Annual Quality Reports (AQRs), and the individual programmes Certificates of Validation (CoVs). The purpose of the tracker is to ensure that all internal stakeholders are aware of the most imminent programme review processes and their statuses, and new programme validation processes for the current academic year. The tracker also includes future work to flag the breadth of programme development activity ahead and to ensure timely commencement of processes.

At regular intervals, usually twice per annum, the programme development team meet with senior members of the

QQI quality assurance team to discuss the revalidation and new programme validation process pipelines, and to determine whether the validation processes are completed under devolved responsibility or not. The programme development team creates a working folder on OneDrive for each programme team undertaking a (re)validation process. All templates, process documents and examples of best practice are shared with programme teams at least one year before their respective CoVs expire and a meeting held with each team to explain the documentation workflows and requirements.

Programme Development and Approval

The programme development process is guided by [QAE Manual – Section C– 3.1 Programme Proposal Procedure](#). This procedure applies to all new programme proposals, whether academic or professional, of any duration, and whether formally accredited or non-accredited. The purpose of the process is to determine:

- ▶ the strategic fit with the faculty and the College's strategic direction.
- ▶ the relative market demand for recruitment purposes.
- ▶ the programme learning outcomes and expected learner profile.
- ▶ the academic coherence of the programme as a whole.
- ▶ the internal capability to fully develop the programme.
- ▶ the resource (human and otherwise) implications of delivering the programme.
- ▶ the appropriate mode(s) of delivery.
- ▶ compliance with external requirements for validation/ accreditation. and
- ▶ the financial viability of the programme.

Programme proposals are first brought to the PPRC, which meets monthly. The PPRC includes representatives of the QAE team in addition to finance and marketing (both international and domestic), nominees of the APC, the Head of Griffith College's Professional Academy, and an industry advisor. The initial proposal is outlined in [QAE Manual- Appendix 1 Programme Proposal Form](#) and gives information about the target market for the programme, the proposed model(s) of delivery, outline costings, and academic details.

A bespoke programme proposal form has also been developed by QAED for short, non-formally accredited programmes. The Programme Director or Head of Faculty who has submitted the proposal form is invited to attend the meeting to respond to any queries.

Normally a programme proposal may be discussed on multiple occasions before a decision of PPRC is referred to both APC and the Management Board (MB). Initial approval gives rise to further development of the proposal, with an emphasis on the academic content, financial arrangements, and the viability of the programme market. The PPRC may recommend approval of the proposal, request further information, or recommend that the proposal not be approved. PPRC recommendations are forwarded to the MB and APC for their consideration and decision-making.

The MB is charged with evaluating the programme proposal in terms of resource implications, budgetary allocation, and strategic fit with College's overall development. The APC considers the academic merit of the programme and can make a final decision as to whether to approve the delivery of the programme (in the case of a non-accredited programme) or to submit it for validation (for a validated programme), for example to QQI or a PSRB.

The process of submitting a programme for validation by QQI is governed by [QAE Manual, Sections C-3.12 and 3.13](#). These procedures also facilitate the College's activities under devolution of responsibility (DR) from QQI for validation sub-processes, which has afforded the College some additional responsibilities for arranging and managing independent evaluation panels within the College's existing scope of provision. A separate procedure outlines the process for the validation of programmes where devolution of responsibility does not apply.

For programme review teams, the approval process is slightly different and was introduced in 2022 to formalise the beginning of programmatic review processes. Teams must complete the [Programme Review Team Proposal Template \(available from the QAE Department\)](#), which outlines high level information about the performance of the programme(s) and any changes or recommendations to be considered during the review process. Akin to the programme proposal procedure set out above, the PPRC, APC and MB review the proposal for approval or refusal, or request further information, as necessary.

Once either programme review or validation processes are formally approved, they are transferred to the tracker maintained by the programme development team. The programme team continues the wider development of their programmes in consultation with key stakeholders such as marketing, finance, learners, teaching and learning department, graduates, external examiners, industry and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), where applicable.

Programme Validation under Devolved Responsibility

For new programmes, the team must submit all documentation to the programme development team for a pre-validation check to determine whether the proposed programme addresses the validation criteria and programme description, and accords with the guidelines in QQI's General Programme Validation Manual.

These pre-validation checks result in either:

- ▶ the document being approved for submission to critical self-assessment, or
- ▶ the document being returned to the programme team to address any specific weaknesses highlighted by the programme development team.

If the document is passed, the programme development team in consultation with the Director of Academic Programmes may elect for a critical friend (internal or external academic), and independent from the proposing faculty or department, to complete a critical self-assessment against QQI's validation criteria. Based on these findings, the programme proposal is either recommended for submission to QQI or is returned to the programme team for further development based on any weaknesses outlined in the critical review.

Once all validation documentation is satisfactory, the programme development team recruits a suitable panel of external independent assessors – in agreement with QQI – to participate as independent evaluators about eight weeks before the proposed panel event. The panel consists of at least six members, including a QQI-trained Chair and Secretary / Report Writer. The other members include two academic experts in the programme's discipline area, an industry expert and a learner representative, usually drawn from [NSTEP's pool of quality assurance reviewers](#). The application, which includes the Provider's Programme Descriptor Document, and all supporting documentation is then submitted to QQI for pre-screening via QHub.

Once screened, QQI formally invites the College to proceed with the independent evaluation. At this point, the Programme Development – Project Manager agrees a suitable date with the panel members to convene, either online (virtually) or make a site visit, and circulates all programme documentation via SharePoint two weeks before the panel date to ensure they have an appropriate period to review the documentation pack. The event is held in accordance with QQI guidelines and QQI are invited to observe the event too.

During the build-up to the panel, a mock panel event is convened by the Director of Academic Programmes with support from other QAED members. This preparatory event with the programme team focuses on curriculum design, the level of collaborative engagement throughout development and on the teaching and learning strategy adopted. The mock panel provides an opportunity for module leaders to gain invaluable experience and helps to identify any areas for improvement to ensure a consistent approach on the day.

Where possible, the programme development team allows six weeks for the post-panel process to be completed in time for the next available PAEC (Programmes and Awards Executive Committee) meeting. The programme development team aims for a four-week turnaround of the draft Independent Evaluation Reports (IERs) with the panel chair and secretary – resulting in two weeks to satisfactorily complete the response and sign off. Upon receipt of the IERs, a factual accuracy check is performed by the programme team with any gaps addressed by the secretary before sending on to QQI for screening. The programme development team then supports the programme team to satisfactorily complete their formal response (PER C) to any conditions and recommendations of validation outlined in their reports.

During the panel's IER drafting period, the programme team uses this time to track and highlight all documentation updates to support their response, and to ensure that both QQI and the panel receives an easily navigable set of response documentation. Any changes to the initial feedback received during the panel event is addressed on receipt but usually only relates to rewording of the original condition or recommendation. Finally, once QQI is satisfied with the programme team's response, a Confirmation of Acceptance (PER D) is shared with the panel chair for sign off and all the post-panel documentation is submitted via QHub for the next available PAEC deadline.

Programme Review and Revalidation

The programme review and revalidation process is similar in many respects to the procedure described above, but it

CASE STUDY: Griffith College Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC)

The PPRC was established in September 2019 to provide early and considered evaluation of programme proposals by a variety of internal and external stakeholders. The PPRC replaced a less-formal system for evaluation of programmes previously undertaken within the College.

PPRC provides a forum for the discussion of new programme ideas generated by programme teams, which are detailed in proposal forms outlining the rationale, target learner, MIPLOs, TLA strategies for the programme, and evidence of stakeholder demand.

The PPRC is also responsible for overseeing, monitoring and reviewing the performance of existing College programmes and has established a positive line of communication with programme teams to ensure timely and proactive support.

In its first year, the PPRC received 22 programme proposals. The committee has maintained its relevance over the five years with 25 proposals presented to PPRC in 2023/2024.

Impact and outcomes include:

- ▶ Creating a forum for proactive, constructive and supportive evaluations for new and existing programmes.
- ▶ Designing and refining separate new programme proposal and programme review forms to better inform committee evaluations.
- ▶ Streamlining stakeholder workloads while still valuing contributions and embracing data-driven decision making.
- ▶ Increasing PPRC influence and transparency through formal reporting structures.
- ▶ Enhancing the College's planning and governance activities for programme development by providing teams with a systematic and inclusive process.
- ▶ Adding oversight of non-framework programmes to the remit to ensure quality.

is guided by a Terms of Reference (TOR) completed by the programme team and submitted by the QAE programme development team for QQI approval. The final TOR must include the list of proposed panellists for the independent evaluation event along with their expert details and declaration of no conflict.

In contrast to the procedure outlined above, Griffith College can conduct the panel review event and post-panel process before completing the revalidation application to QQI on QHub. Please see section 6.2 of this document for more information on the College's Programme Review and Revalidation processes.

Griffith College Professional Academy – Non-accredited courses

In recent years, the programme development team in consultation with Griffith College Professional Academy (GCPA) and the Academic Administration team has developed new internal processes to document and review professional course proposals. All professional courses follow the College's existing programme proposal and review process with a bespoke proposal form presented to PPRC, MB and APC. Once approved, professional programme champions collaborate with GCPA to complete a programme document, which is largely based on QQI's microcredential template. The programme development team reviews the completed template in terms of its rationale, target learner, course content, schedule and assessment strategy before either:

- ▶ Requesting an internal panel with relevant academic and industry expertise to assess the proposal in more detail, or
- ▶ Approving the professional course to run.

Once the course is formally approved, QAED informs the Head of Academic Administration who in turn creates a course offering on THEMIS. From proposal to approval, the lead-in time is typically six to eight weeks and aligns with GCPA's strategy to be agile and flexible in the ever-evolving short courses market. Thus far, this enhanced approach to

professional course development has resulted in 17 new or revised offerings in two years.

Evaluation

Mission, Strategy and Learner Needs

Griffith College has a consistent structure in place for each programme development project from initial proposal stage through to the formal accreditation process – each phase of programme development aligns with the College's institutional mission and strategy.

At programme proposal stage, the information requested focuses on the academic and business rationales for the programme, which aligns with:

- ▶ Academic excellence in curriculum design in terms of proposed programme learning outcomes, and the assessment strategy, integrity and accessibility for learners.
- ▶ Career focus – target learner, programme content, industry informed and graduate attributes.
- ▶ Responsible Stewardship and Financial Acumen – data-driven evidence across competitive review, financial viability, stakeholder demand and resource implications.

At PPRC stage, the institutional mission is threaded through their Terms of Reference, with a major part of the committee's role to evaluate each proposal for its contribution to the ongoing enhancement of the College's curriculum, the learning experience and academic standards, by considering emerging trends, learner needs and the job market. All PPRC recommendations are then communicated to MB and APC for further analysis to determine whether the programmes are the right fit for the College and ultimately approved.

Once proposals are approved, the natural motivation for faculties to develop academically excellent, industry relevant and learner-centred programmes coupled with QQI and institutional template criteria ensure that mission, strategy and learner needs are effectively aligned.

Griffith College's ambition to grow, remain agile and adapt to educational and sectoral needs are embedded in its programme development culture. The breadth and diversity of its suite of programmes consistently demonstrates how the College evolves. In recent years, the College and its collaborative partners have designed accredited programmes in new areas such as healthcare support practice, bar management, psychology, and scoring for film, TV and interactive media.

For future growth and relevance, the College must continue to respond to market analysis (domestically and internationally) and ensure that industry relationships are strengthened across all disciplines to inform future developments.

Robust, objective and transparent

The QAE mechanisms for the approval and management of programme development are clearly structured, inclusive and representative of all academic and administrative units in the College, with all decisions communicated through formal channels.

The PPRC communicates all decisions to the respective programme proposers and via the meeting minutes to the APC, MB and BoD. Similarly, MB and APC communicate their decisions to BoD to ensure that all outcomes are transparent and integrated to inform all determinations made by the College.

Through the committee memberships above, the approval mechanisms ensure that broad, cross-institutional perspectives are included in all decision making. Also, where further information is requested from proposal teams, individual members of the PPRC offer their support to enhance proposals whether from a QAE, academic, industry or marketing perspective.

All new programme proposals are evaluated by PPRC according to the same criteria, and where weaknesses are identified, actionable and supportive feedback is communicated to fill these gaps. Generally, programmes are not rejected until all options are explored, however where no viable option is identified, the outcome is dealt with sensitively and supportively. Since September 2019, the PPRC has received more than 70 formal proposals for committee consideration and only eight have been refused.

The College's commitment to programme development continues to grow with dedicated roles recently filled in Limerick, Cork and the Graduate Business School (GBS). The aim is to enhance the pipeline of well-researched, in-demand proposals for consideration with several proposals already in development.

Maintaining programme development timelines between programme teams and the QAE team is challenging due to workloads, however recent updates to the PPRC proposal form aim to narrow the gap between the proposal requirements and QQI template requirements. The redesigned proposal form is based on QQI's new template (June 2023) and emphasises the fresh focus on teaching and learning modalities (asynchronous vs synchronous), Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and graduate attributes.

Programme Development Process

The programme development team has successfully coordinated and managed a series of successful programme

(re)validation processes over the past six years, which include new processes relating to micro-credentials, apprenticeships, and Griffith College Professional Academy (formerly Short Courses).

In doing so, the team has continued to elevate its faculty and departmental support across all aspects of programme development informed by regular review of their procedures. Since 2020, the programme development team has successfully coordinated and managed 40 (re)validation processes – see Appendix 4 for more details of Griffith College (Re)Validation Panel Events: 2020 to 2024. During that period, the College has had a 100% programme approval rate. The programme development procedures are comprehensively adhered to with the collective institutional expertise informing each programme, for example:

- ▶ **Research** is informed by domestic and international marketing analytics and feedback; industry, learner and staff survey data; domestic and global sectoral reports and skills forecasts.
- ▶ **Curriculum design** is informed by the Teaching and Learning department (including learning technologists and learner support team) in relation to the programme learning outcomes and assessment design in collaboration with the module leaders and programme champions. Universal Design of Learning (UDL), assessment integrity and marking schemes are fully embedded in this process.
- ▶ **Resources** are informed by library team and include the course resources, including latest books, open educational resources, digital resources and academic research and writing supports.
- ▶ **Professional approval and accreditation** are coordinated by QAED members who liaise with professional bodies and QQI as necessary, with industry specifications and requirements clearly incorporated into course design.

Through the programme development team's participation across many functions in the College, the team benefits from both formal and informal feedback to enhance its programme management processes.

Internal Stakeholders

Interdepartmental / cross-faculty collaboration feedback is positive with continuous improvements incorporated into programme development activities year on year. An internal review of programme development process which was reported on in January 2023 highlighted:

The (programme development) team's consistency, responsiveness, knowledge, and friendliness; helpful advice on data collection, patience, and support despite heavy workloads.

The internal review also suggested enhancements relating to:

- ▶ Project planning, tracking and progression
- ▶ Communication channels
- ▶ Standardisation
- ▶ Designated programme development 'champions'
- ▶ Interdepartmental engagement.

Over the last two years, the programme development team has incorporated these enhancements into their processes resulting in focused (review or validation) programme team meetings that systematically outline the documentation, data, and stakeholder engagement requirements. These sessions also focus on:

- ▶ realistic project scheduling in line with institutional workloads and QQI deadlines,
- ▶ engagement with marketing, finance, teaching and learning, and careers departments; and relevant professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies,
- ▶ data analysis and collection training using the Institutional Analytics Dashboard,
- ▶ best practice sharing.

External stakeholders

Independent panel feedback is strong, evidenced by fewer conditions included in their validation reports in recent years and regular commendations regarding the levels of staff engagement, the quality of documentation produced and the conduct of (re)validation processes. The College also benefits from open and respectful engagement with QQI in relation to:

- ▶ project tracking and scheduling
- ▶ exceptional process requests – they are always discussed in detail with appropriate approaches explained and agreed
- ▶ mutual appreciation for programme development workloads.

Overall, the programme development function operates at a high level despite the increasing workload thanks to greater resource allocation, growing experience among the team and consistent enhancements to the management of processes year on year.

Professional Approval and Accreditation / PSRBs

The College has many established relationships with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) across the Business, Design, Engineering, Graduate Business School, Journalism and Law faculties as well as the Leinster School of Music and Drama (LSMD).

For any programme seeking PSRB recognition or approval, the respective body's existing rules and requirements are thoroughly examined and aligned during the programme's development. In the College's experience, these specific rules typically complement and extend those requirements already outlined in the [College's QAE manual](#) and serve to add further precision in respect of specific procedures, for example, those relating to admissions, curriculum areas, staff qualifications, modes of delivery, placement or experiential hours, or progression criteria. The QAE team works with faculties to ensure all requirements are aligned.

When the College offers a programme that leads to a certification by an external agency or PSRB, it uses the quality assurance and enhancement measures required by that agency, along with those in the College's own QAE manual. These requirements are usually kept as separate documents instead of combining them into the College's QAE manual. If the QAE requirements of an external agency are different from those in the College's QAE manual, the College must

CASE STUDY:

Microcredentials at Griffith College

The College defines microcredentials as short, accredited courses designed to meet specific education and skills development demands of learners, employers, and support organisations. QQI facilitates the College's validation of microcredential programmes, arising both from modules of its validated programmes and for newly created bespoke special purpose awards (5-30 ECTS credits), using a streamlined approach.

The development of microcredential awards at the College provides opportunities for learners to access funded education and training through programmes such as the Human Capital Initiative (HCI), Springboard+, Skillnet Ireland, etc. and to enhance the skills and knowledge of the workforce of the future.

Feedback received demonstrates the importance of the College's microcredential portfolio in supporting the workforce of the future:

'The industry project forced me to review current practices in my own organisation and consider how the adoption of MMC could improve performance and efficiency and reduce time and waste ... It is a real tangible benefit for me and my organisation.'

Certificate in Strategic Co-ordination and Collaboration for Modern Methods of Construction graduate, developed by Griffith in collaboration with the Construction Professional Skillnet.

As can be seen in Appendix 2 of this ISER document, the College currently has 47 QQI-validated microcredential-type programmes. By continuing to forge strong industry partnerships, the College can further enhance its microcredential portfolio and build on its strengths in their development.

follow the external agency's requirements for the related programmes.

Whenever feasible, the PSRB approval process is conducted in line with the QQI (re)validation process. PSRB representation is usually sought to participate on the validation panel, as deemed appropriate.

In recent years, the College has launched two new apprenticeships in the healthcare and hospitality sectors. In developing these programmes, external consultation was sought, and due diligence performed to support the policies and procedures to be followed in the management and delivery of apprenticeships. These are now covered in the College's dedicated [QAE Manual for Apprenticeships](#).

In autumn 2023, the College successfully revalidated its first apprenticeship evidencing the independent peer support and acknowledgement of the QAE standards maintained by the College.

Online delivery demands

The College's online resource provision is well advanced with award-winning blended programmes being delivered since 2016. Over these years, the Digital Learning Department (DLD) have compiled an extensive catalogue of bespoke training

materials for lecturers to enhance their online delivery skills and for learners to adapt to the different technologies. The library has also expanded its digital collections and provides remote access to academic resources.

The increased demand for online technologies in programme delivery and assessment has resulted in the development of additional flexibility in [QAE](#) procedures to accommodate their introduction and an institutional commitment to increase the number of blended offerings across faculties and departments. The latest cycle of programme reviews has included additional blended programmes in the Computing, Law and GBS faculties. More learning technologists and IT staff have been introduced with the College ready to support further recruitment for the roll out of more blended offerings going forward.

In 2022, the College submitted a fully online programme proposal to QQI for consideration under a pilot scheme however this was put on hold pending the publication of a national policy. In 2024/25, the College aims to complete this process by engaging with QQI's [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes](#) to inform new institutional policies and procedures.

In terms of resources, further investment in current technologies and hardware, interdepartmental training and time is required to accommodate the pace of change in online delivery. Currently, blended delivery compares well with traditional forms of learning and learners take the same assessments. Online proctored exams have been piloted but are no longer supported at present due to integrity challenges.

Overall, the College has a committed team of experts adapting to the new demands with further QAE developments to be formalised to ensure a smooth transition period for staff and learners alike.

Short programme demand

For QQI-validated microcredentials, the validation process is onerous for the programme development team (operationally and financially) especially for a three-year certificate of validation. In 2020/21, the QAE team supported QQI in developing their microcredential procedures by piloting several microcredential processes.

This experience supported the development of the College's microcredential programme validation procedures, which have led to many other successful microcredential processes – especially with collaborative, industry-led partners. These standalone awards have performed well.

In general, many of the microcredentials are viewed as constituent modules of the College's major awards and they remain difficult to promote separately. Recent revalidation processes have incorporated microcredentials as minor awards in agreement with QQI. This is preferable and leads to five-year terms of validation too.

GCPA are responsible for developing the College's short, professional courses (not on the NFQ). These College subjects these courses to the same QAE procedures as formally accredited microcredentials, which ensures consistency in programme delivery for all stakeholders. The GCPA team are under pressure to balance day-to-day operations with programme development, but the approval process has been

enhanced to ensure relevant courses get to market within two months, where possible. The professional course space is competitive, and agility is key to its success. Professional courses are also subject to review at regular periods to ensure relevance.

Collaborative Programme Development

A number of the College's QQI-accredited programmes are delivered on a collaborative or partnership basis. The College's current collaborative partners are:

- ▶ [ESS Ltd.](#)
- ▶ [Innopharma Education](#)
- ▶ [Pulse College](#)

Griffith College is the first provider, and these partnerships are managed in accordance with the College's QAE policies and procedures, which were developed in collaboration with QQI. Specifically, [\(Section J\) 11.2 – Arrangements for collaborations, external partnerships and second providers](#) sets out the policy in full.

In accordance with the College's QAE Manual and scope of practice, collaborative and transnational programme validation processes are usually managed by QQI in full. However, due to the relationships and institutional experience in completing processes with (in particular) ESS Ltd., Innopharma Education and Pulse College, QQI has formally approved several validation processes under devolved responsibility with partner institutions. The programme development team always views these instances as exceptional and as an acknowledgement of the College's robust QAE structures.

For programme validation processes without devolved responsibility, the Programme Proposal Procedure is followed in full before programmes are formally approved (or rejected). Following this, all standard validation steps are followed as outlined in [\(Section C\) 3.13 Programme Validation Procedure without Devolved Responsibility](#).

Procedurally, collaborations are similar to the College's faculties and share many processes in common – admissions / registration / examinations and they are also represented on APC and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Subcommittee (QAES). The programme development team have built strong collaborative relationships with ESS Ltd., Innopharma Education and Pulse College over the years and the success of the programmes are testament to this.

Work-integrated Learning

Griffith College employs a multi-faceted approach to embed work-integrated learning (WIL) into programmes. Here are some key strategies and practices:

WIL is embedded within programme curriculums as a core component, where possible. This involves designing programmes where theoretical knowledge is intertwined with practical application. At award stage, many of the College's capstone modules focus on this combination of theory and practice. Industry-informed case studies are also used to simulate real-world problem solving. Furthermore, programme teams clearly define and align learning outcomes of both academic and work-integrated components to ensure learners gain relevant knowledge and skills.

In the College's Journalism, Film and Design programmes (level 8), learners are supported by faculty members to gain work experience (non-credit bearing) through designated coordinators. These coordinators ensure that work placements are integrated with their academic requirements, and they also provide support to learners and employers. These faculties provide flexible scheduling options to accommodate the varying demands of work placements and academic requirements. The BSc (Honours) in Computing Science programme designates 30 ECTS to work placement with alternative assessment arrangement in place for those who do not get placed.

The College's experience of developing and running apprenticeships has enhanced the institutional policies and procedures for WIL – see [QAE Manual for Apprenticeships](#). These policies clearly outline the roles and responsibilities for WIL, and expectations for learners, faculty and industry partners. The College also provides dedicated support for learners who need assistance to resolve any issues that arise during work placements. For apprenticeships, the College has also adopted Mahara, ePortfolio software, for managing the achievement of learning outcomes in the workplace.

The College continues to develop programmes that ensure graduates emerge work-ready with professional portfolios, simulated work experiences through projects and case studies, as well as immersive experiences in the context of work placements. Looking ahead, the College needs more designated work placement co-ordinators and industry liaison personnel to develop internship opportunities across faculties, while a designated interfaculty forum for sharing assessment best practices could further inform the College's WIL approaches.

Devolved Responsibility

The College has consistently demonstrated its capacity and capability to manage independent evaluation reports under Devolved Responsibility (DR) objectively, with appropriate resourcing, and through well-established procedures. Following multiple validation events, the College's governance, operation and management arrangements have proven that they are suitably robust for discharging these devolved responsibilities.

The Programme Development team coordinates and manages these processes, which are similar to the programme review and revalidation processes. This prior review experience has been helpful in terms of nominating panellists for QQI approval, liaising with chairs and agreeing on appropriate IER deadlines. The feedback from internal programme review teams has enhanced these practices too.

Through DR, the College has been able to broaden its network of experts for panel involvement, nationally and internationally. This greater QAE network has helped to foster good relationships with other HEIs and has also helped the team to benchmark their QAE practices against other private and public institutions in Ireland and abroad. This peer feedback is invaluable and improves internal practices.

The programme development team has greater empathy with the panellists and their workload too, particularly the secretary / report writer, which has led to improvements to the management of IERs.

For example, the team offers to provide pro forma IERs to panel secretaries to support their workload. This is circulated at the end of the panel day and includes basic programme information, the list of panel attendees and is formatted in line with the Griffith style to assist with completion. Members of the Griffith QAE team have also participated in many (re) validation processes for other institutions and recognise the importance of helpful gestures like this.

Overall, the College has learned the importance of maintaining strict internal controls for validation processes. In 2017 and 2018, now more than five years ago, the College had two unsuccessful validations with programmes rejected for validation on different grounds. This led to a strategic rethink and improved resourcing. Currently the programme development team is operating at a high level despite the increasing workload thanks to greater resourcing, growing experience within the team, and consistent enhancements to process management year on year.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College identified the following effective practices in relation to its programme development, approval and submission for validation:

Programme team engagement

- ▶ Planning, tracking, and scheduling: one year (minimum) lead-in time for validations, progress check-ins, regular feedback and flexibility.
- ▶ Working folders: templates, documentation checklist, guidelines and examples of best practice shared.
- ▶ Formal initiation processes: through PPRC, MB and APC ensures transparency and early engagement from all stakeholders.
- ▶ Empathy: mindful of faculty team priorities, workload, and stress levels; tailored supports per team where necessary.

Project metrics

- ▶ On-time delivery: adhering to PAEC deadlines to ensure panel events are held in time to close out on post-panel processes (typically allowing six weeks)
- ▶ Project quality: every process adheres to same level of quality and expectations
- ▶ Benchmarking: comparing the College's processes with industry standards and best practice
- ▶ Project management: transparent team communications, roles and responsibilities clear, internal project tracking accurate, file management effective and prioritised.

Panel process

- ▶ Network: Broad pool of experts to nominate for panels, NStEP-trained learners.
- ▶ Communications: professional, supportive, inclusive and informative.
- ▶ Documentation: bespoke SharePoint circulated for all panels two weeks before panel date; consistently commended for its quality, breadth, structure and accessibility.
- ▶ Mock panels: prep sessions help to orientate the lecturing team, particularly those unfamiliar with the panel event.

- ▶ Post-panel close out: responses to panel reports are actioned immediately with equal consideration dedicated to conditions and recommendations; all post-panel document changes highlighted and mapped to support sign-off.

Collegiate

- ▶ Cross-institutional support: knowledge sharing among QAE peers.
- ▶ Panel participation: chairing and report writing to support external QQI processes.
- ▶ Knowledge sharing: documentation / template best practices; active collaboration; informing QQI-related research and developments.

Areas for Potential Enhancements

The collective institutional experience has also recognised the need for further enhancement to overcome challenges, as suggested below:

Efficiency

- ▶ New programme development is often delayed due to alternative priorities, lack of programme champions, and delayed internal approval processes. Stricter timelines and prioritisation are required.
- ▶ Communication: ensuring programme development updates and approvals are communicated to all College staff.
- ▶ Knowledge sharing: promoting collaboration between programme proposal teams to reduce common pitfalls; providing training for proposal teams and faculties.
- ▶ Reduce timelines: decision-making delays can demotivate programme teams and improved adherence to procedural commitments supports positive engagement.

Resourcing

- ▶ Support levels through programmatic reviews or validations are inconsistent across faculties. Dedicated and trained staff are required to ensure a greater and more focused programme development experience and a better outcome for learners.
- ▶ QAED has certain pinch points during the year (e.g. Spring semester) where mounting workloads and documentation delays lead to mistakes and burnout. Tailored training with existing staff would help to alleviate these pressure points.

Industry engagement

- ▶ The institutional network is underused and harnessing this collective expertise would improve the levels of industry engagement for future programme development processes.
- ▶ Active industry engagement across committees and industry-focused events will help to enhance curriculum development and employability for learners / graduates.
- ▶ A dedicated industry research unit would help to inform programme development and to identify new and relevant opportunities in the ever-evolving job market.

Professional development

- ▶ Programme development workload reduces the opportunities for peer learning at sectoral conferences, symposiums, and workshops.
- ▶ Additional time to conduct research and develop within the team is required.

Training and communication

- ▶ Faculty attitudes around programme review and validation can be quite negative as the level of time commitment, research and documentation is onerous. To improve the culture around the process, dedicated rather than ad hoc training is required.
- ▶ Letting the College community know what the programme development unit does. It's simple but with long gaps between faculty review cycles of up to five years, and staff turnover, it would be useful to reintroduce the programme development function at regular intervals so that the extent of supports and services is clear.
- ▶ Prioritising post-panel evaluation sessions with programme teams while it is still fresh in their minds to find out what worked well, what did not and how QAED can continue to improve services across the College.

4.6 Access, Transfer and Progression

Description

The College has extensive access, transfer and progression arrangements in place, guided by the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). These ensure fair and fit-for-purpose access for learners to the College's programmes. The College has agreed quality assurance procedures with QQI in respect of the recognition of prior learning, both credited and experiential, in line with QQI's Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (Restatement 2015).

Where appropriate, learners accessing the College's programmes may enter with advanced standing. This is managed in accordance with the College's [QAE Manual: Section C, 3.7 Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure](#). Graduates of the College's programmes can progress to other national and international awards.

The individual programme listings on the College's website provide detailed information to prospective applicants regarding:

- ▶ Entry requirements and any assessment or prior learning procedures required for entry.
- ▶ Transfer and progression routes into and from programmes and details of any regulations governing transfer and progression.
- ▶ The English language level required for access to the programme.
- ▶ Documentation required from international learners applying from abroad or residing in Ireland.

Access

All applications to the College's academic programmes are managed by Griffith College's Admissions Department in line with the QAE procedures previously agreed with QQI.

CASE STUDY: ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING – Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial and Systems Engineering

The College's Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial and Systems Engineering is a one-year, part-time, NFQ level 7 programme that provides participants with key management, transversal, and leadership skills for use in production and service industries.

The programme entry requirements require applicants to have previously met the prescribed learning outcomes for engineering awards at NFQ Level 6. Since its initial validation in 2015, the programme has fully embraced the College's processes for RPL and each intake welcomes a large cohort of learners who utilise this process. This includes skilled tradespeople and others with experience in the manufacturing industry, enabling a range of diverse learners to become professional industrial engineers.

Applicants who wish to use their prior experiential learning to access the programme must complete a structured

APEL form where they demonstrate, via written examples as evidence, their personal attainment of learning outcomes, with support and guidance from the faculty. This approach to completing the APEL form provides consistency for the applicant to measure their learning and experience against the appropriate NFQ Level 6 outcomes, and flexibility for the programme team to recognise the many paths and learning experiences which can accumulate for an applicant to reach the necessary level of attainment.

This APEL process requires communication between the faculty, the admissions department, the Springboard office and the APEL subcommittee, and demonstrates a best practice approach for the consistent, process-oriented, and learner-centred application of APEL procedures.

There is appropriate separation of responsibilities between the College's Admission Team and the Marketing and Sales Teams.

The College accepts all qualifying applicants who meet the academic entry requirements stipulated for the programme, subject to the minimum and maximum number of learners required for the running of a programme and offered intakes under the approved Certificate of Validation issued by the awarding body.

Applicants without the academic entry requirements may also apply for entry to the programme. All applications involving the consideration of Accredited Prior Learning (APL) or Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), are managed by the College's APL / APEL committee in accordance with its approved QAE procedures. The College welcomes applicants from a range of entry routes, including:

- ▶ **Standard Entry:** Applicants who meet entry requirements as per QQI approved programme document.
- ▶ **APL Entry:** Applicants who have already been awarded certification for a formal programme taken at another institution or training organisation. This prior learning can be recognised and may entitle applicants to admission to a programme, either directly, with exemptions from some parts of a programme, or with advanced academic standing within a programme.
- ▶ **APEL Entry:** Allows applicants to have their previous non-formal and/or informal learning considered.
- ▶ **Mature Entry:** Applicants who are 23 years of age or older on 1st January can apply directly to Griffith College for entry to full-time education the following autumn. Griffith College is committed to providing equal access to education and equal opportunities for mature learners.
- ▶ **CAO (Central Applications Office):** Prospective learners under the age of 23 who wish to apply for full-time study are eligible to apply through the [CAO](#).

Transfer and Progression

Griffith College facilitates both internal and external programme transfers and progression for learners. The College is dedicated to helping learners advance within the institution by providing clear information to learners, from NFQ levels five to nine, showing clear pathways for their academic progression. For learners transferring from other institutions, the College ensures a smooth transition by conducting a thorough review of their previously attained credits, and/or learning experiences. This evaluation is performed by the admissions team in collaboration with the Programme Director, Head of Faculty, or an external expert, as appropriate, to uphold the College's academic standards and requirements. Transfer applications involving the consideration of Accredited Prior Learning (APL) or Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) are managed by the College's APL / APEL committee in accordance with its approved QAE procedures.

Internal progression is facilitated by Griffith College where learners are offered opportunities to progress from their current programme. For example, entrants onto a NFQ Level 6 programme may, upon successful completion, progress to a Level 7 or 8 programme, and onwards to postgraduate study. Progression information relating to each programme can be found on each programme's webpage. Many awards contain embedded exit or stage awards, which facilitate learners who cannot (or do not want to) complete the award they originally joined, for example a learner enrolled for a master's programme may exit with a postgraduate diploma upon successful completion of 60 ECTS. These programme structures provide a framework for learners, often in extenuating circumstances, to attain awards and provides future access, transfer and progression (ATP) opportunities.

Progression and completion rates are monitored throughout the academic year, using tools such as Moodle reports, the College's Attendance App, and its Institutional Analytics Dashboard (Microsoft Power BI). Completion and progression rates of learners are managed within faculties and detailed each year in Annual Programme Reports (APRs), completed

by the programme director and reviewed by the Director of Academic Programmes, QAED, T&LD and APC.

Evaluation

The College's policies and procedures in respect of ATP are clear and fit-for-purpose. Information for prospective applicants about access and progression is clearly available on each programme's webpage on the College's website. Maintaining current information and providing links to the latest policies is essential for accurate provision of information. Internal research indicates there is a clear understanding of policies and procedures in respect of ATP, including recognition of prior learning (whether formal, informal, or experiential). This is evidenced by an increase of viable APEL candidates being processed in recent intakes, as faculty, admissions officers and marketing staff fully understand the requirements for the execution of these processes.

The College is an active member of RPL Practitioner Network Ireland. This group is supported by the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), the National Forum for Teaching & Learning (NFTL), and QQI. This ensures the College's RPL activities are informed by a community of practice encompassing national and international practitioner and policy perspectives.

The College promotes inclusivity and broad access to higher education for all learners. For example, Griffith Institute of Language offers a Certificate in International Foundation Studies, QQI Level 5, one-year programme which helps learners develop the skills required to succeed in a third-level setting. Graduates of the programme can progress directly onto NFQ level 6 programmes offered by Griffith College and

similarly to related NFQ level 6 programmes in Ireland's public universities and other higher education providers.

Griffith College has several longstanding, successful articulation agreements with higher education institutions around the world. The College's articulation processes are robust, with a clear understanding by faculties, admissions teams and marketing officers regarding the documentation and processes required to determine appropriate transfer and progression routes for learners from partner Colleges. QQI reference documents, NARIC and the NFQ provide the grounding for these processes and procedures. The College is an active member of the Erasmus+ network, supporting student and staff mobility and actively promoting international mobility and internationalisation. The College welcomes hundreds of learners every year to Semester-Abroad programmes, where flexibility and openness are key. The College offers over 200 modules on a semester-abroad basis, whereby learners can register for modules across all academic disciplines. These learners add richness and vitality to the overall student body.

While inward mobility of learners is very strong, outward mobility has only happened on a limited basis to date. This is caused by both lack of opportunity, and low learner motivation to date. One example of recent success with outward mobility is the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP). These intensive learning experiences are highly successful in terms of both learner experience and achievement of learning outcomes. However, the continued development of outward mobility structures and opportunities for learners is an area that needs enhancement.

The College has experienced year on year growth of applications, registered learners and staff. With this growth comes a heightened need for greater consistency across faculties in areas such as: review of nonstandard applications;

CASE STUDY: Griffith College applying ATP policy to support learners under PEL process

Following the sudden closure of Dublin Design Institute (DDI) in June 2023, Griffith College was approached by QQI to support the DDI applicants and learners who were left in a very uncertain and stressful situation. This request to the College was made by QQI in accordance with its remit under the [Protection of Enrolled Learners \(PEL\) legislation](#).

In collaboration with QQI, the College established a support framework for DDI learners and applicants; which included learners who had (just) completed their studies but were yet to graduate, as well as those who were mid-programme, and recent applicants.

In summer 2023, the College's Design Faculty, together with their colleagues in marketing, admissions and international office, worked closely with impacted 'DDI learners' to establish supports and pathways allowing them to complete their awards. Open evenings followed by one-to-one consultations were held with impacted learners to identify access, transfer and progression solutions for all concerned.

The Design Faculty extended its schedule of programme provision, within the scope of the Certificates of Validation, to provide opportunities for the DDI cohorts of learners – new and existing learners – to continue their design studies flexibly, either part- or full-time. These tailored timetables resulted in all DDI learners being facilitated to access/transfer to Griffith College.

Impact:

- ▶ This was an innovative application of the College's ATP policy and APL processes to the benefit of learners who otherwise would not have had a pathway to graduation and accreditation.
- ▶ Forty former DDI learners transferred to graphic communication design and interior design programmes at the College.
- ▶ Fifty DDI learners graduated from their DDI programmes, at Griffith College's graduation ceremony in 2023, with invited former DDI staff members present.

CASE STUDY: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REPORT: Progression pathways for learners outside of assessment

The Graduate Business School Experiential Learning Report (ELR) is a progress pathway for learners who progress from the MSc or Postgraduate Diploma in International Business Management and MSc in Accounting and Finance Management programmes onto the MBA pathway. To join the MBA track learners must be able to initially evidence at least six competencies.

The ELR is then expanded as learners progress and document their achievement of 42 individual competencies, across six dimensions, showing evidence of the specific management skills they've assimilated through workplace experience and education. The overall purpose of this process is to ensure that learners are effectively self-reflecting and recognising the specific competencies that they have and then act to build on these competencies, both in their work experience and their academic programme.

In 2022/23, Graduate Business School (GBS) redesigned the ELR form for accessibility (as seen below)

Impact:

- ▶ Learners value how accessible the ELR form process is, with clear guidelines and objectives.
- ▶ Learners benefit from insights gathered from the process.
- ▶ Supervisors have a more focused structure that offers a more critical analysis of learners' competencies.
- ▶ The redesign has led to a significant increase in learners progressing onto the MBA (from 8 to 15 in 2023/2024).

approach to APL and articulation agreements; induction of new learners; and communication across internal departments.

There have been several significant enhancements to the College's ATP practices in recent years. These include:

- ▶ Implementation of updated English language requirements across multiple approved tests. In particular, the introduction of minimum component scores required has resulted in learners entering programmes with a higher level of English ability in all reading, writing, listening and speaking sections.
- ▶ Increased resourcing of the College's central admissions team. This department now includes three dedicated team members. Continuous training and upskilling of admissions staff is ongoing, particularly through ECCTIS training days and webinars. This enhanced knowledge base has resulted in increased efficiencies in processing applications from multiple countries, while upholding admissions requirements in accordance with QQI, other awarding bodies, and College's regulations for all programmes
- ▶ Greater use of data to monitor and report on learner progression and completion rates. A central annual analysis of retention across all multi-stage academic programmes is carried out each year, with the information provided to individual faculties and presented to the Academic and Professional Council (APC).

- ▶ Increased number of flexible learner pathways, including use of blended delivery, opening access to a wider, more diverse, learner population.

The lack of integration between the College's three key systems used for ATP, Scholar, THEMIS, and Moodle, as well as the learner attendance system, poses some challenges. This creates constraints on data monitoring, sharing, and reporting, requiring greater manual work to create appropriate and accurate reports.

Technological developments have presented greater challenges for the admissions team in verifying external documentation. AI and other tools for the enhanced production of fraudulent documentation submitted by applicants, can slow down admissions procedures.

As the breadth of disciplines on offer in the College grows, there is a need to balance the unique needs of individual programmes and their learners, with consistent and fair ATP procedures. This includes consideration of the increased number of countries from which applications are received, the increase in nonstandard applicants/APEL candidates, and the increase in collaborative partnerships and apprenticeship programmes.

These challenges are actively investigated and addressed within the College's QAE structures, and through interdepartmental cooperation between faculties, the admissions office and the Global Engagement office. Enhancements to address the current and future challenges are further detailed below.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College's identified the following effective practices in relation to access, transfer and progression:

- ▶ Information for prospective applicants about access and progression is clearly available on each programme's webpage on the College's website. This information is current and maintained.
- ▶ The introduction of English language minimum component score requirements across multiple approved tests has resulted in learners entering programmes with a higher level of English ability in all reading, writing, listening and speaking sections.
- ▶ The College promotes inclusivity and broad access to higher education for all learners through a number of flexible learner pathways.
- ▶ The Griffith Institute of Language Certificate in International Foundation Studies (QQI Level 5, one-year programme) which helps learners develop the skills required to succeed in a third-level setting provides an opportunity for learners to access programmes at the College, and to progress to programmes with other third-level providers.
- ▶ Griffith College has several longstanding, successful articulation agreements with higher education institutions around the world, with established processes to determine appropriate ATP routes for learners from the partners' programmes.
- ▶ The College is an active member of the Erasmus+ network, supporting student and staff mobility and actively promoting international mobility and internationalisation, and welcoming hundreds of learners every year to Semester-Aboard programmes.
- ▶ The College is an active member of RPL Practitioner Network Ireland. This ensures the College's RPL activities are informed by a community of practice encompassing national and international practitioner and policy perspectives.
- ▶ The College uses data to monitor and report on learner progression and completion rates with, for example, annual analysis of retention across all multi-stage academic programmes provided to individual faculties and the aggregate data presented to the Academic and Professional Council (APC).

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The College is committed to ongoing enhancements of access, transfer and progression for both internal and external learners. Areas identified for further development include:

- ▶ The ongoing THEMIS project will move admissions processing to a more modern database which will streamline processes, and integrate systems, to improve efficiency and user experience. This will lead to even quicker turnaround times, while still upholding admissions requirements.
- ▶ While continuous upskilling of admissions staff is ongoing, to keep up with various industry changes e.g., increase in potential AI documentation forgery and how staff can spot and prevent it, an expansion of the pool of staff who can make informed decisions

in relation to advanced entry is needed, to enable the College to manage the growing number of non-standard applications. This can be facilitated through greater sharing of best practice across faculties by more experienced members of staff.

- ▶ The development of an enhanced master list of entry requirements, expanding on current resources to include a broader range of countries. This comprehensive list will detail award titles and minimum grade requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The updated list will be shared with both international and domestic recruitment teams, enabling them to access information quickly and efficiently. This is especially relevant in the context of the widening reach of the College's applicant pool, for example recent growth in markets such as South America and Southeast Asia for example.
- ▶ While all admissions to the College's programmes and those of its collaborative partners are handled centrally by Griffith College's Admissions Team, the application processes for collaborative partner programmes and apprenticeships are at times independent and/or distinct from standard Griffith College procedures. Greater consistency is needed in these cases. For example, learners applying to these programmes can encounter difficulties, particularly with the documentation to evidence meeting entry requirements, which can take a long time to acquire.
- ▶ The need for more support for some cohorts of learners (e.g. part-time or blended) is an area for continued enhancement, which will be aided by the development of the [Learner Hub](#) on the College website.

4.7 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Description

Griffith College has a thorough process to ensure the integrity and approval of all learners' results. Details can be found in the College's [QAE Manual, Section F: Assessment of Learners](#) and the [Student Handbook](#).

The process begins with the assessments, designed by the faculties and programme teams in line with Programme Documentation, through to marking and internal moderation, to review by the appointed external examiner and final approval of results at the Examination Boards.

The following steps in the procedure have been implemented to ensure integrity of results.

- ▶ All assignment titles are approved before given to learners.
- ▶ All assignments are submitted by learners through Turnitin and checked for any evidence of plagiarism. Lecturers are trained in how to identify plagiarism with additional supports available, including regular CPD sessions on academic integrity and misconduct.
- ▶ All examination papers are externally reviewed in advance of the examinations. The College uses a system of blind examination papers, so only the Examinations Office is aware of which exam papers will be used for a given sitting.

- ▶ The College implements a system of blind marking. Examination numbers, which are distinct from each learner's student number, are assigned to learners and used for all examinations. This ensures the identity of each learner's script is concealed from the marker.
- ▶ Learners' results for assignments, examinations and projects are input into the College's student database (THEMIS) by the relevant lecturer and a QAE process of checking all results is conducted by the faculty administrators to ensure no errors occur in the allocation and recording of learner results and grades.
- ▶ The Examinations Office carry out a QAE Check to ensure that the number of results entered correspond with the number of learner submissions/attendance at the exams.
- ▶ All assessments are internally moderated and reviewed by an external examiner.
- ▶ All results are formally approved at the Examination Boards in the presence of the faculty, the examinations office and external examiners.

The College's QAE assessment procedures are upheld throughout the processes:

Confidentiality:

- ▶ Authorised staff have access to data related to their roles.
- ▶ Sensitive information is protected from unauthorised access.
- ▶ Only authorised personnel can access Component Mark Sheets (CMS), Broadsheets and Release results to learners.

Integrity:

- ▶ Data is accurate and unaltered.
- ▶ Preventing unauthorised changes is a priority.

Availability:

- ▶ Lecturers, learners and staff can access data when required.
- ▶ Balancing availability with confidentiality and integrity is essential for a reliable and secure data environment.

Evaluation

The integrity of results is of paramount importance for Griffith College and its learners. The College, therefore, ensures that results released to learners are an accurate representation of the learners' academic performance.

The reports submitted by external examiners at the end of each academic year support the assertion that the processes outlined are functioning as intended and the integrity of learners' results is being upheld. External examiner input gives perspective on how a programme is going and learners' individual and overall programme performance.

The following can be identified:

- ▶ The use of Turnitin is a vital tool and remains an essential component in identifying plagiarism in learners' work. Proactive engagement with learners on this issue is also critical.

- ▶ The implementation of blind examination papers safeguards the College's standard of assessment and learning.
- ▶ The practice of blind marking is a further critical element that ensures impartiality in the marking of all scripts.
- ▶ External examiners' reviews of examination papers, assignments, exams scripts and results preserve adherence to independent standards.
- ▶ QAE procedures ensure the avoidance of errors in the allocation of grades to learners.
- ▶ The protection of sensitive information from unauthorised access is imperative. The creation of staff roles with restrictions on access to data has secured this.
- ▶ These roles also restrict the ability to modify data and ensure data integrity.

In addition to the above, the College has a robust system to manage the updating of results following Assessments and Examinations Boards where necessary.

The post-exam board requests process has been designed to be efficient and responsive, ensuring that any issues that arise due to reviews, rechecks and appeals are addressed promptly. This process includes clear steps and timelines for handling requests, providing academic staff and administrative support confidence in the system.

- ▶ All post-exam board requests are processed through Change of Result Form. This ensures accurate and transparent information is recorded.
- ▶ Timely updates are made to Learner results. Clear guidelines are available in the Student Handbook and QAE Policy and Procedure.
- ▶ Post-exam board requests are processed within the stipulated 2-day period.
- ▶ Improved quality assurance checking procedures have led to a reduction in changes to learner records.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The most obvious and immediate challenge to preserving the integrity of learners' results is that presented by generative AI. The rapid developments within this area, particularly over the past two years, have raised serious concerns over academic integrity and whether existing assessment practices are sufficiently robust. The challenge remains to navigate this issue sensibly.

The College is committed to ensuring that assessment remains valid but, equally, that any assessment mechanism is appropriate for the learners to demonstrate their achievements of learning outcomes, for example, while a move to oral assessments could reduce or eliminate the challenges of AI for some assessments, a more comprehensive range of alternative assessment approaches may be required to assess many module learning outcomes. Continuing to tackle this issue effectively is paramount in maintaining the integrity of the programmes provided by Griffith College.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

Griffith College has implemented robust procedures to ensure the integrity and approval of all learners' results, and these policies and procedures are available to all relevant staff.

The College has established processes to support the integrity and approval of learner results to uphold the highest academic and educational standards, while enhancing the learner experience. Areas of effective practice include:

- ▶ The College's use of a system of blind examination paper selection, so only the Examinations Office is aware of which examination paper will be selected and used for a given sitting of each module (from the externally reviewed papers submitted by the lecturer). This practice has proven hugely effective in maintaining the integrity of the assessment process.
- ▶ Many faculties are trying to alter their approach to assessment to maintain academic integrity and further engage learners.
- ▶ The significant and ongoing work done on the Griffith College approach to AI, and the College's stance on AI detectors, including the use of technology to identify plagiarism.

- ▶ The College's steadfast commitment to quality and the integrity of its assessments and assessment systems informed by its external examiners and by its active engagement in higher education developments nationally and internationally.

Potential Future Enhancements

While it is apparent that the procedures involved in ensuring the integrity of learners' results are working well, there are areas that could benefit from improvements.

The External Examiner process, whilst thorough, could benefit from a review to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practices.

While the process is functioning as it should, the College must remain vigilant in the face of emerging technologies and conduct regular reviews of its processes to maintain the integrity of all learners' results.

CASE STUDY: Enhancing the Examinations Appeals Process and its Implementation

In January 2023, QAED conducted a process review of its Examination Appeals procedures. The entirety of the process including learner application, escalation, communication, disciplinary hearings, and decision-making, was reviewed after the release of exam results in January/February 2023. The review also evaluated the implementation of the process compared to the written procedure as presented in the QAE Manual.

The resulting report shared how the procedure is currently implemented; intra-departmental communications; stakeholders, the outcomes of the appeals, the data and record keeping implications, and the recruitment and support of Appeal Panel members.

The report reflected on all 12 appeals processed in January/February 2023, to ensure a variety of appeal types and circumstances, namely, those that did not initially appear to meet the criteria of an appeal but were progressed following re-appeal (with additional information), those relating to alleged academic misconduct cases, those involving appeals of exam board decisions, and those involving learners who were academically withdrawn (following desk-based review).

The QAED staff surveyed all involved in the process including individual members of academic staff, programme management, academic administration, examinations office, QAED managers of the process, and appeal panel members and chairs to evaluate what was working, what could be enhanced, and to seek any recommendations for enhancements, with the findings under both heading shown below.

Evaluation:

- ▶ Learners who are appealing an academic misconduct finding in a continuous assessment do not need to wait until after the exam boards appeal. A rolling process with more immediate response can be implemented.
- ▶ The scheduling of Appeal Panels would be improved by the identification of a standing panel of members at the start of the academic year.
- ▶ The gathering of evidence for an Appeal Board should include the academic or faculty response to the appeal.
- ▶ Appeal Panels are not limited to upholding or denying appeals- they can recommend alternative outcomes.
- ▶ The process for communicating decisions to Academic Administration and relevant faculties has also been templated and streamlined.

Enhancements:

- ▶ The appeals process is more efficient and responsive to both the learner and the appeals panel.
- ▶ The application form has been updated to support a better understanding by the learner of what is involved. QAED plans to make this available online in 2025.
- ▶ The relevant faculty is consulted before the Appeal Hearing takes place.
- ▶ A dedicated email address has been introduced to support the efficiency and confidentiality of the process.
- ▶ Training for all academic staff and Appeal Panel members will be formalised.
- ▶ Reviews of the policy need to be conducted on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant in the context of the impact of AI on academic integrity.

The College identified the following proposals with potential to enhance the integrity and approval of its learners' results, along with their expected outcomes.

Proposal:

- ▶ Comprehensive Review: Conduct a detailed review of the entire External Examiner process to identify areas for improvement.
- ▶ Stakeholder Feedback: Gather feedback from external examiners and faculties to understand opportunities for enhancement.
- ▶ Process Standardisation: Standardise External Examiner process to ensure consistency across all programmes.
- ▶ Online Submissions and Reviews: Move towards digital submission and review processes to increase efficiency and reduce turnaround times.
- ▶ Training and Resources: Provide additional training and resources for external examiners to ensure they are well-equipped to perform their duties effectively.

Expected Outcomes:

- ▶ Quality Assurance and Enhancement: More consistent and reliable assessment standards.
- ▶ Efficiency Gains: Reduced administrative burden and faster processing times.
- ▶ Improved Communication: Clearer guidelines and expectations for all stakeholders involved.

Challenges will be encountered, particularly in respect of the rapid development of AI. Continuing to address this issue is critical in maintaining the College's academic integrity.

There is also an acknowledgement of potential enhancements through adjustments in the current system, such as updating the External Examiner processes to an online basis and work on this already begun.

4.8 Information and Data Management

Description

Griffith College is committed to maintaining the highest standards of data and information management, to ensure that data is reliable and secure, that it meets the needs of the College's QAE commitments, that its confidentiality and integrity is safeguarded, and that compliance with data legislation is maintained.

The College uses a wide range of data management platforms to manage and analyse data, including but not limited to, systems for:

- ▶ Learner Lifecycle Management/Student Information System (S.I.S.) – Admissions, Registration, Exams and Assessment.
- ▶ Programme Management
- ▶ Alumni Management
- ▶ Exam Paper Management
- ▶ Financial Management
- ▶ Timetabling and Room Management
- ▶ Attendance Management

- ▶ Library Management
- ▶ HR Management (HRM)
- ▶ Learning Management System (LMS)
- ▶ Property Management System (PMS)
- ▶ Advertising and Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- ▶ Digital Asset Management
- ▶ Data Analytics

A more comprehensive list of software and platforms in use in the College is maintained in the [IT Service Catalog on the College's website](#).

The College has invested heavily in a digital transformation programme over several years, focusing on the removal of legacy, siloed platforms, replacing them with modern, interoperable platforms, delivering new Attendance Management, HRM, PMS, and CRM platforms, with a keystone project developing a next generation Student Information System (THEMIS) due for completion in academic year 2024/2025.

The College commenced on a journey to develop an 'Institutional Analytics dashboard' circa 2017/2018 which provides a host of reporting and analytics dashboards for use across core academic functions of admissions, registration, exams and assessment, as well as other areas such as finance, service departments etc. This includes dashboards designed specifically to support QAE processes - the Services and Facilities Survey analytics dashboard, academic integrity dashboard, and the Annual Programme Report dashboards. Data analyses of results are used to assess student engagement and performance in relation to cohorts and programmes, and to types of assessment. These are complemented by third-party tools such as Turnitin academic integrity reports, and by internal regular and ad hoc reports circulated to stakeholders including Academic and Professional Council, Heads of Faculty, Programme Directors, and External Examiners.

The College's digital marketing and national admissions teams use a customised online analytics platform, Looker Studio to monitor and track the performance of digital marketing campaigns. The insights from this data are used to inform future campaign activity across digital channels. The roll-out of HubSpot CRM since its initial introduction in 2016 and, in particular, the hiring of a dedicated CRM Executive in 2023, has allowed for a substantial scale-up of CRM operations and admissions activities.

The College has chosen three senior staff members from the MB and BoD (each with a proven track record and experience in data protection matters) to run the Data Protection Office. This trio of staff brings a broad range of skills and expertise in their roles. This allows the data protection office to assess each request or query from a range of viewpoints and provide a year-round, responsive service to both internal and external data protection stakeholders.

The College inducts all new staff on data protection training with an external provider (Legal Island via the HRM platform - BambooHR) and has developed its own Data Protection and Cyber Security Awareness training course on Moodle to

complement this. These courses aim to strengthen College staff members' collective knowledge in these areas (given the pivotal role human nature plays in data protection) to better support the College in defending its data and systems.

Evaluation

The College utilises a suite of systems to manage learner data across its campuses in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick in an effective manner. The College prioritises data governance and GDPR compliance, continuously refining policies and practices to meet legal standards and best practices in data handling and security. It will continue to focus on cybersecurity and the protection of College data from unauthorised access.

While the integration and effectiveness of legacy and modern systems present ongoing challenges, the College remains steadfast on its digital transformation journey and is dedicated to ensuring data accuracy, reliability, and accessibility through heavy investment in people, processes, policies and platforms (hardware and software).

Robust security measures, including multi-factor authentication and encryption, and safeguarding sensitive information, are supported by regular GDPR training for staff. The emphasis on data validation and updating ensures high-quality data for academic operations and reporting, reinforcing the institution's commitment to excellence in educational management.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Office (DPO) implemented extensive communications in the run up to the introduction of GDPR in May 2018 and in the six years since. This has created a strong data privacy culture within Griffith College. The DPO must however ensure an ongoing commitment to training both for

new and existing staff to keep data protection top of mind within Griffith College.

The [data protection section of the College's website](#) provides a wealth of information and guidance on privacy best practice.

The College's records' retention schedule complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and is grounded in the GDPR principles of data minimisation and purpose limitation. It is maintained and updated by the DPO.

Collaborative Partner Agreements include a commitment by all involved parties to adhere to data protection best practice in all organisational obligations under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data Protection Agreements (DPAs) are in place with all third-party data processors.

There is a considerable challenge upcoming, as for all organisations, with the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies by the College and its staff. The DPO has worked closely with Griffith's Special Advisory Group on AI towards the development of an initial policy on the use of AI technologies within the institution.

The DPO has placed particular emphasis on ensuring that Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) are undertaken for all proposed and potential new projects involving the use of personal data, including pre-DPIAs to advise if a full assessment is required.

IT Services

Users have the benefit of reliable and secure College systems both on and off campus. Role based, least privilege access is administered through robust onboarding and offboarding procedures with multi-factor authentication (MFA) enforced on account creation.

CASE STUDY: Artificial Intelligence and Higher Education

In the context of information and data management, the speed at which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing means that significant attention needs to be given to how it is considered within the higher education sector. There is potential for AI to ease administrative burden, generate suitable content, and streamline processes, but there is also the potential of it compromising academic integrity, issues of data use and ownership in the context of compliance, GDPR and ethics.

In response to this, Griffith College has set up an ad hoc AI Special Advisory Group (AI SAG) to oversee the College's AI policy for institutional and academic use of AI. On behalf of the BoD, the AI SAG is responsible for ensuring that AI technologies are implemented ethically and effectively within the College, to align with best practices and regulatory requirements, in this ever-evolving space.

AI SAG Outcomes

The outcomes of the AI Special Advisory Group to date include:

- ▶ Research conducted on the current understanding and use of AI for all staff.
- ▶ Two documents: 'An Institutional Policy on AI Use' and 'Control Principles for Academic Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence)' drafted to support faculties in the development of their teaching, learning and assessment guidance for lecturers and learners.
- ▶ AI Usage Guidelines published and continuing consideration and advice on the use of AI in academia.
- ▶ Academic integrity resource/page created for College staff, providing resources and guidelines for promoting and upholding academic integrity. The page is also informed by the latest QQI updates on academic integrity, facilitated by the National Academic Integrity Network.
- ▶ Continued maintenance of dedicated AI resource (in place since late 2022) to support teaching, learning, and assessment.
- ▶ The provision of online research, guidelines, and best practice resources for integrating AI tools and technologies into the educational process.

The Systems Operations and Security Operations teams monitor network and server infrastructure to ensure reliability and availability. Daily checks are performed on data metrics which inform the team if issues are present or could present soon, allowing mitigating actions to be proactively taken. Vulnerability management is monitored weekly with patching applied to minimise risks.

Policies are documented and enforced, supported by SOPs and an extensive internal documentation system (IT wiki). IT Services also apply account level and device level policies to ensure the integrity of data.

Enterprise grade backups are performed on server infrastructure following best practice management lifecycles. Critical information is couriered off-site to a secure location with tape backups encrypted and stored in fireproof safes.

Migration of data between legacy systems and modern management platforms is a significant challenge, resulting in increased operational overhead. Extensive monitoring and occasional manual intervention are required to ensure tasks run smoothly and data are consistently sent and received by the College's disparate systems.

The combination of COVID-19 enforced remote working and teaching pivot, and the deteriorating global threat landscape has put significant strain on the College's IT resources in recent years. The College has met this challenge through a combination of additional resourcing, training and upskilling, and an emphasis on employee satisfaction driving high retention rates. However, it is anticipated that maintaining sufficient skillsets and resources will remain a challenge.

Academic Administration

The College rigorously adheres to data governance frameworks, including GDPR compliance, and continuously reviews policies, procedures, and practices to ensure alignment with legal requirements and industry standards for data handling, storage, and sharing. These practices include

the timely processing of Change of Results (CORs) forms and Learner Request of Amendment form (LRAF), that are under continuous improvement always adhering to updates in the sector.

The effectiveness and integration of legacy and modern systems present ongoing challenges, as referenced above.

The College places a strong emphasis on data validation, verification, and updating to ensure high-quality data for academic operations, educational verification and reporting. The accuracy, reliability, and completeness of data managed within Academic Administration meet rigorous standards.

Academic Administration currently manages assessment papers through the Better Examinations System, ensuring a high-level of confidentiality and security. However, there is potential for improvement in the coming years to incorporate proctored online examinations, which would enhance flexibility and accessibility for students.

The College has implemented QAE policies and procedures compliant with GDPR practices to safeguard assessment materials, ensuring they are securely stored to maintain their integrity and reliability. Comprehensive measures are in place to address any breaches of security. Assessment evidence is securely retained for a period of five years, with clear protocols established for the safe transfer of such evidence when necessary.

Ultimately, the College's practices comprehensively support academic delivery and learner outcomes. The assessment of data-driven insights plays a pivotal role in enhancing learning effectiveness, engagement, retention rates, and overall academic performance.

Sales, Marketing, and Finance

The College has made significant progress in its use and roll-out of HubSpot CRM since its initial introduction in 2016. In particular, the hiring of a dedicated CRM Executive in 2023

CASE STUDY: Bespoke Academic Management Information System (THEMIS)

The College is developing a new Academic Management Information System to manage all learner records from admissions through to graduation (to replace the existing system, 'Scholar'). This bespoke system, 'THEMIS', has been supported by an investment of over €2m to date, with a final budget forecast of €3m. THEMIS is currently being introduced on a phased basis in key academic areas. To ensure integrity of learner data, while incrementally introducing the new system and testing its functionality, the College has also retained the Scholar system, to run in parallel and to maintain core learner records. It is planned that THEMIS will be used exclusively for the 2025/26 academic year (and the Scholar system will be retired).

Learners are facilitated in accessing their records via MyTHEMIS, the College's student portal, which acts as the central resource for learners' online interactions with the College. These include:

- ▶ Online Registration
- ▶ Online Payments
- ▶ Exam Results (enables learners to review specific marks per attempted questions, as well as, per module results, and their overall examination performance)
- ▶ Faculty contact details
- ▶ Links to other systems and services.

THEMIS is used to populate a variety of reports that inform practice and decision-making, including programme review reports, annual programme reports, learner progression and retention reports. As it is further embedded into College activities, and its functionality developed, THEMIS is increasingly being used to provide enhanced reporting and analysis.

has allowed for a substantial scale-up of CRM operations and admissions activities. Recent projects have included a Fall out of Basket facility, delivering a targeted email to applicants who have started but not completed the online application form on Griffith.ie; and dedicated, faculty-specific workflows with targeted and engaging content.

Further work is needed in integrating the various pools of data that exist across the College's marketing and communications activity. These include enhanced integration of data between social media, website, CRM and other digital marketing platforms.

The establishment of a digital asset management system, PhotoShelter, has significantly increased both governance of and access to the College's suite of marketing and communications imagery.

The introduction of Looker Studio as a dedicated analytics platform for digital and marketing executives has significantly improved their access to relevant and timely data on the results from digital marketing campaigns. The platform will benefit from further work to fine tune the information being presented to internal users.

The Institutional Analytics Dashboard (Microsoft Power BI), developed in conjunction with the College's IT department, has greatly improved admissions officers' access to real-time data on application pipelines for the autumn and spring intakes. They have also significantly assisted management in accessing top-line data for reporting purposes. Further work will be undertaken to fine tune and enhance the data provided; a new development for the autumn 2024 intake includes greater granularity regarding applicant stage and delivery mode.

The Global Engagement Office manages a vast amount of data relating to international applicants and learners from the enquiry and application stage through to post-registration. The team correspond with students and agents, primarily by email, on an ongoing basis. As correspondence is managed using Outlook, data risks are high in terms of accurate data, the use of carbon copy versus blind carbon copy, etc.

The integration of THEMIS will help to ensure accurate and up to date data and provide secure communications with applicants and agents.

The concept of GDPR is noticeably alien to stakeholders outside of Europe. It can be challenging when family members of an international applicant contact the College requesting information in respect of the status of an application. However, the College applies the same privacy principles to non-EU citizen data as it does to EU citizens.

Finance analytics are provided through DivePort, a self-service administrative portal interface that delivers dashboards to track forecasted budgets against actual budget and is available to the College's faculty heads and service department managers. DivePort provides users with a variety of dashboards, reports, charts, and detailed transaction data to facilitate financial decision making and allocation of financial resources. The data provided through the portal is also used for faculty reviews of each programme and assists in evaluating new programme proposals.

Data provide through the DivePort systems provide vital insights into the financial performance of programmes,

departments, faculties and the College as a whole and enables management to make evidence-based strategic decisions on resource allocation, expansions and possible acquisitions.

The level of engagement in the use of data provided to faculty heads and department managers for the purpose of managing their respective departments' resources and budgets varies significantly and is a challenge. To improve the level of engagement, the finance department recently ran an initiative to upskill managers by running a number of training sessions on "Finance for Non-Financial Managers" and will continue to work in this area to improve engagement.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College identified the following effective practices in relation to its information and data management.

Data Analytics

The College's Institutional Analytics Dashboard was noted as best in class following a sector wide review by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and was shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Use of Educational Technology / ICT Initiative of the Year category in the annual Education Awards in 2020. It continues to provide significant value and insights across a range of activities, both academic and operational.

Security & Data Integrity

Best practice in security and data integrity is achieved in many areas. Enterprise-grade encrypted backups are performed according to the IT Services backup schedule with critical data couriered off-site to a secure location. Redundant storage and compute clusters provide reliability and availability of data. Monitoring and auditing of core systems ensures accountability and transparency. The Security Operations (SecOps) team implement best practice across many security domains such as patch and vulnerability management, the use of AI-based Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR), an incident response (IR) retainer with a leading security provider, and documented disaster recovery plans and IR playbooks.

CRM

The College has invested significantly in its customer relationship management (CRM) platform which is overseen by a dedicated CRM executive. The CRM provides over 30 individual workflows to communicate course and faculty-specific information to applicants, enquiries and open day attendees.

Academic Administration

The College places a strong emphasis on data validation, verification, and updating to ensure high-quality data for academic operations, educational verification and reporting. The accuracy, reliability, and completeness of data managed by the Academic Administration team meets rigorous standards.

One key aspect is the registration lockdown process, which secures student registrations and minimises errors by implementing strict deadlines and verification checks. Further practices involve meticulous scrutiny of assessment processes to maintain consistency and fairness. This includes regular audits and reviews to ensure alignment with internal policies and external regulatory standards, such as those set by QQI and other accrediting bodies.

Finally, the College continuously refines its QAE procedures to incorporate feedback and adapt to technological advancements. This proactive approach ensures that the institution remains at the forefront of educational excellence, providing a secure and reliable academic environment conducive to student success and institutional growth.

Data Protection

The DPO has undertaken 23 Data Protection Impact assessments on new systems being considered by the College. This systematic approach to identifying risks protects individuals' privacy rights by addressing how their data will be processed and stored, enhances data management and processing practices to prevent breaches and misuse, and demonstrates transparency and accountability to stakeholders and regulators.

The creation of a Data Protection Hub on www.griffith.ie/dataprotection gives staff and learners a 'one-stop-shop' covering all aspects of data protection and privacy.

The DPO have fostered an environment that is encouraging and welcoming of the reporting of data breaches, ensuring that all breaches are investigated appropriately, and that recommendations and enhancements are delivered to minimise future data breaches.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

Looking ahead, the College identifies areas for further development, including enhancing system integration, ensuring data quality throughout the system replacement and migration processes, and continually improving system functionality. These efforts, along with those listed below, underscore the College's commitment to better support academic delivery, enhance learner outcomes, and drive overall academic and operational excellence.

- ▶ Completing the development of and transition to the College's Next Generation Student Information System (THEMIS), supporting robust governance processes and providing a unified source for learner data, allowing the sunsetting of the legacy SIS as planned in 2024/25.
- ▶ Replacement for the siloed, legacy timetabling and room resource management platform (CMIS).
- ▶ Elimination of silos by replacing outdated systems with modern alternatives that have open APIs, as the College advances its digital transformation projects.
- ▶ This will consolidate platforms, enable integrations, create new opportunities for process automation and innovative workflows, and provide additional insights through data analytics.
- ▶ Additional automated email workflows to provide more granular applicant communications content at programme level, using the HubSpot CRM platform.
- ▶ Integration of data analytics platforms to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for marketing campaign data.
- ▶ Procurement of an Online Examination Proctoring Platform.
- ▶ Leveraging machine learning and AI in predictive analytics to improve data-informed decision making and timely interventions.

- ▶ Ongoing communication and awareness training on data protection and cybersecurity.
- ▶ Consideration to be given to the creation of a Compliance Officer in the College given the growing impact of GDPR, the EU AI act, and other regulatory measures.
- ▶ Consideration to be given to the creation of a Programme Management (IT) Officer given the growing scale and complexity of programme offerings.
- ▶ Consideration to be given to the creation of a dedicated Data Management role to further enhance and support the College's ongoing and increasing reliance on data management and analytics.
- ▶ Regular GDPR audits by faculties and departments, particularly as the College continues to expand in scale and scope.
- ▶ Aligning the College's Global Engagement Office's activities with both the requirements of the GDPR and with relevant local data privacy legislation in international markets where it operates.
- ▶ Adding QR codes for letter verification purposes, e.g. validation of offer letters for INIS.
- ▶ Continued investment in learning and development, both of IT staff, and the wider staff population.
- ▶ Collaborating with government bodies QQI, INIS, etc. to encourage the introduction of more secure data transfer protocols (e.g. secure APIs) and transition away from legacy data sharing arrangements (e.g. email attachments, telnet, FTP).
- ▶ Developing training and templates to assist faculties in creating their own specific guidelines for teaching, learning, and assessment in semester 1 of 2024/2025. These guidelines should be based on best practices and align with the AI knowledge and skills that graduate students will need for their intended industries or fields of work.

4.9 Public Information and Communications

The College is fully cognisant of its responsibilities to ensure that information provided to the College's student body, staff, and wider external audiences, must be easily accessible, digestible and transparent. The main platforms for the dissemination of information and communications are the Griffith College website, the College Prospectuses, student/learner handbooks and e-bulletins, in-person forums, and content created for distribution through social media channels.

Griffith College Website

Griffith College's website, www.griffith.ie, is the primary vehicle for communicating the College's programmes, regulations and activities to existing learners, applicants, staff members, and a range of other important stakeholders. The College is committed to providing accurate, engaging and timely information, working within the parameters outlined in the College's quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) guidelines.

Externally, the website is used by prospective students, parents, guidance counsellors, academic partners and agents, to name just a few, to inform them in considerable detail about the College's offerings. The content is presented in such a way that it is accessible to all users, with a particular focus on ease of use and clarity of language. The programme pages detail key facts, such as validating bodies and NFQ and credit levels, an overview of the programmes, module outlines, delivery modes, delivery locations, entry requirements, alumni testimonials, fees, and progression pathways. Examples of programme pages are available as follows:

- ▶ [undergraduate programme page](#)
- ▶ [postgraduate programme page](#)

Learner Hub

The [College's Learner Hub](#) is hosted on the College website and is a central repository for key information that a learner might need as they go through their student journey. It is an easily accessible source of material outlining academic supports, learner policies and procedures, learning support services. A "Quick Support" tool directs students to information sources via a keyword search. The Learner Hub also provides access to the College's [QAE Manual](#) as the central point of information in respect to the College's policies, procedures and guidelines.

Griffith College Prospectus and Marketing Materials

Every year the College also produces a hard copy prospectus for distribution at Open Days, education fairs and exhibitions. As the 21st century proceeds, the dissemination of information is becoming more focused on digital formats, however, the appeal of the hardcopy brochure endures as a promotional tool at in-person events. In addition, it is very visually appealing with a strong emphasis on high-quality imaging and colourful presentation, which allows the College to present its campuses in a very favourable light. As the College embraces sustainability, it will continue to reflect on the future of printed materials.

The Global Engagement Office distils the relevant programme information into a real-time interactive "[Quick Programme Guide](#)" (QPG) for consideration by international applicants. This publication is available on the College

website and provides up-to-date programme details at a glance, for those which are available to international students.

Open Days, Recruitment Fairs, School Visits

Other communication activity includes on-campus open days, local outreach with schools and guidance counsellors, attendance at key education fairs such as Higher Options in Dublin, and a range of local initiatives with community partners. When it comes to recruitment activities internationally, as previously, with sustainability in mind, the College needs to be cognisant of the implications of long-haul travel and identifying alternatives where possible.

Student Handbooks

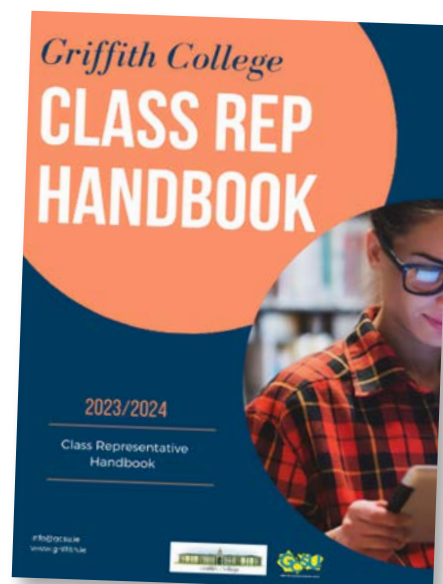
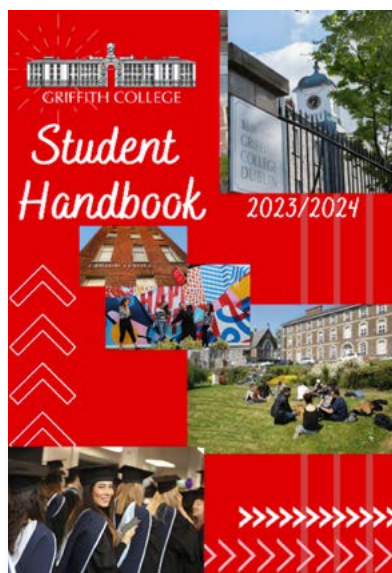
The College produces a general handbook ahead of every new academic year which sets out procedures, rules and regulations, and guides students in a signposting manner. The handbook is envisaged as a source of information for students to reference intermittently over the course of any given academic year. The Handbook is complemented by associated Programme Handbooks which give more in-depth detail on module outlines, faculty-specific regulations, etc.

The Student Handbook is generated annually, with the link for the 2023/24 edition available [here](#). The Student Handbook for the academic year 2024/25 is currently in development.

Social Media

The College utilises social media to disseminate information throughout the student body and beyond. This ranges from faculty-specific information and academic items of interest, alerts about supports available to learners, and details about activities and outings promoted by the Students' Union and Student Activities teams. The Griffith Halls of Residence (GHR) social media account is both an information source and an effective tool to further foster its student community ethos. The domestic and international student recruitment departments use social media to highlight the College's key characteristics, and to promote events and activities that would appeal to prospective and current students.

Platforms used by the College include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, X and YouTube. The College currently has more than 102,000 followers across its main social channels. In addition, there are a range of other offline and online



Examples of College printed communication materials

CASE STUDY: Student Life: Onboarding Videos and Global Ambassadors (peers) supports for learners

Starting college can be very daunting for learners, especially if moving from home. To address student needs before they arrive, and when settling in, the Global Engagement Office has developed resources to support student onboarding – namely, a series of informative digital media and a Student Ambassador Programme.

These short, animated videos provide a range of bite-sized information to help students adjust to life in Ireland and Griffith College, and to source support as and when they need it. Videos on practical day-to-day topics such as: [How to apply for a PPS Number](#); [Your Arrival in Ireland](#); [Ordering Letters](#) are available for public access. The GEO continues to expand the range of video topics available.

The [Griffith College Global Student Ambassador Programme](#) promotes diversity and inclusion across all campuses. The programme encourages an interchange of ideas between students of different nationalities and areas of study so that they get the most from their student experience. They also generate a collection of video content documenting their day-to-day lives within the parameters of certain themes. Student Ambassadors give prospective and pre-arrival students a taste of student life in Ireland and inspire existing students to expand their interests and activities, to make the most of their time as a Griffith College student.

Samples of Student Ambassador digital material follow:

- ▶ [American animation student in Dublin](#)
- ▶ [A week in the life of a #Montenegrin student in Dublin](#)
- ▶ Malaysian student in [GCC](#)
- ▶ Must-see [in Ireland](#)
- ▶ GHR's resident [event](#)
- ▶ A day in life [of an Indonesian student](#)
- ▶ Dedicated Griffith Global Engagement Office Youtube channel [with all onboarding and Ambassador videos](#)

channels in use to reach existing learners and potential applicants, including radio, TV, print, outdoor, cinema, podcasts, online video, digital audio and other relevant digital channels.

The [Griffith College Dublin- YouTube](#) channel is a repository for key information for existing learners and new incoming students, containing a selection of short, animated videos, informing students in a visually appealing format as to how deal with the practicalities of life in Ireland. More details on the Global Engagement Office (GEO) YouTube channel content are provided in the Case Study below.

Griffith College's Global Student Ambassadors also generate video content (VLOGs), and by documenting their day-to-day lives within the parameters of certain themes, the learners give prospective students a taste of student life in Ireland and inspire existing students to expand their interests and activities, and to make the most of their time as a Griffith College student.

The College also uses social media to promote on-campus events and support themed activities relevant to College life. A recent example of this is the Pride event and Pride month social media content, where Pride-themed content was shared throughout June 2024 on Instagram and TikTok. The posts covered the range of LGBTQIA+ books available in the Griffith College library, the journey/history of Pride in Ireland, a celebration of Pride activists, and a collection of interesting Pride shows to watch.

Campus Connect

In 2021, the College's Global Engagement Office (GEO) partnered with Campus Connect, an online student community platform, to bring students together using

informal networking chat groups, ahead of them commencing as registered students in the College. A few months out from the start of each semester, students are invited to the platform and encouraged to network and make friends with fellow applicants, with whom they have common interests. The online interactions are moderated by GEO team members and there are regular Live Chat sessions where applicants get the opportunity to reach out to the team and other primary points of contact in the College faculties and service departments. The outcome for the active users is a sense of belonging before they begin their studies in the College from this personalised communication channel.

Use of WhatsApp

The GEO has introduced WhatsApp as a key form of communication with applicants and learners. Learners have understandably high expectations in terms of customer service, and the responsive nature of WhatsApp makes it a very effective communication tool. The feedback indicates that students are reassured with the real-time element of their interactions, and the informality of the communications is considered a genuine advantage. It is a very positive enhancement to the existing services offered, but the nature of the immediate response requirements can put pressure on the team during busy periods.

Data Analytics

A new analytics platform, Looker Studio, delivers real-time metrics to ensure that digital campaign activity is data driven. The Institutional Analytics Dashboard (on Microsoft Power BI) provides detailed information to marketing and admissions officers on the progress of all applications, from initial application stage through to learner registration. The

College undertakes national brand tracking surveys on an annual basis to ensure its marketing remains relevant and impactful and to monitor trends in overall brand awareness in the Irish market.

Alumni and “GC50”

The College has an Alumni Office, operated by an alumni officer and a content executive, who oversee communication to the College’s more than 40,000 global alumni, utilising a dedicated communications platform – Griffith Alumni Network. The team are currently working closely with the President’s Office to manage the suite of activities marking the College’s 50th anniversary (GC50) throughout 2024.

Evaluation

College Website

As stated, the website is the College’s most powerful communication tool. As such, it is an ongoing challenge to regularly review the information to ensure it remains current, informative, attractive, appealing, and, most importantly, accurate. There are opportunities for the College to further optimise communication elements within the website and these will continue to be explored

There is scope to develop stronger communication around the ownership of programme pages on the web. The owners of various sections of the website may not necessarily be adept at writing in an appropriate style for public communication, therefore training or alternative supports may be required. The College should be encouraging the more effective use of Digital Content Champions to focus on their own areas of expertise in a proactive manner. In addition, there may be opportunities to broaden the focus of the website whilst continuing to recognise its core role as a marketing and communications platform for the College.

Learner Hub

The College’s Learner Hub is an increasingly important communication source and can be greatly enhanced and promoted to complement the learner journey. The Hub can serve to present essential learner information, that is currently disseminated across the website, using a centralised location for enhanced accessibility. The Hub would benefit from central ownership too to ensure it can reach its full potential and make a greater impact.

QAE Manual

When a policy is introduced or updated, stakeholders are often not alerted, leading to key users being unaware of new material they should acknowledge. Additionally, the visibility and distribution of the QAE Manual could be further enhanced with an additional focus on plain language and universal design principles to encourage better institutional engagement.

Campus Connect

A substantial amount of input is required from staff members to keep the channels of communication open and flowing freely, so that can be a challenge. This app/platform should be made available to all learners to support peer engagement and a spirit of community on campus.

Student Handbook

The College has used the same format for the Student Handbook year-on-year so the content and format are

overdue a revamp to keep everything fresh and attractive, and to ensure its relevance so that the content will get optimal use and exposure amongst the student body. The QAE summer 2024 project to review and update this publication with the direct engagement of the Design Faculty’s Graphic Design Students, heralds a most exciting recreation of the publication for September 2024.

Programme Information Post-Programme Review

Programmatic reviews present a valuable opportunity to highlight the positive improvements and enhancements made to programmes. Effectively communicating these enhancements will ensure that returning learners, new incoming students, and both internal and external stakeholders are fully aware of the positive changes.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The dissemination of correct and accessible information is of utmost importance within the College. The various departments across the College are populated with passionate communicators who have wide-ranging skillsets, whose role it is to ensure that the relevant stakeholders can access what information they need, easily and in a digestible manner.

The internet is undeniably the most powerful sales tool for most businesses. In academia, however, it is crucial to balance resources between attracting new students and addressing the communication needs of existing learners. The College is committed to continually enhancing its operations and is acutely aware of the risks associated with remaining static. This commitment is particularly important in a rapidly evolving communication landscape, where staying current can be challenging.

The College is in the enviable position of being in an ongoing state of growth and development, so resources are constrained at times. However, as long as those who are responsible for all areas of communication remain motivated and committed, in line with QAE policies and the College strategy, the College messaging will be in a good place.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The collective institutional experience has also recognised the need for further enhancement to overcome challenges, as suggested below:

- ▶ Consider how the QAE Manual could be more accessible both in format and in promotion.
- ▶ As the College has grown exponentially in the last 20 years, it has perhaps reached the point where it needs a dedicated Communications Officer to manage all internal and external communications.
- ▶ It would greatly enhance communication with learners to have the Campus Connect app/platform available to all learners and not just new incoming students.

4.10 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

The principles, policies, procedures, practices and guidelines by which Griffith College identifies, secures, and manages peer relationships with the broader education and training community, both in Ireland and abroad, are

outlined in the [QAE Manual – Section J: Other Parties Involved in Education and Training](#). These ensure that any College affiliations are organised with reputable bodies and are subject to appropriate due diligence and internal and external QAE procedures.

The College's peer relationships within the broader education and training community include the following:

- ▶ Collaborative partnerships.
- ▶ Professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and related associations.
- ▶ Involvement with consortia to support the development and management of the College's apprenticeship programmes.
- ▶ International mobility and articulation agreements/partners.
- ▶ Interactions with industry, (plus engagement of/ with advisors to liaise with industry) to support and contribute to relevant College processes and initiatives such as industry advisory boards, programme development, funding and grant applications, and work-based learning initiatives.
- ▶ Engagement with external experts, for example, in the process of preparing for a validation event, planned development in procedure, or a large-scale review (e.g. re-engagement).
- ▶ Involvement in a wide range of professional and sectoral networks.

This section of the ISER focuses on those parties directly involved in the learners' academic experience i.e. collaborative provision, apprenticeships, work placements, articulation agreements, PSRB recognition, while the remaining relationships are considered in other sections of the ISER, for example, interactions with industry stakeholders (sections 4.5, 4.11 and 6.2), and independent panel members (section 4.5 and 6.2).

Description

Collaborative Partners

The College's collaborative provision of programmes is guided by [QAE Manual, Section J-11.2 Arrangements for collaborations, external partnerships and second providers](#). This policy was reviewed in 2019, prior to re-engagement, to ensure consistency with QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012). This policy provides the basis for the College's existing collaborative agreements with ESS Ltd., Innopharma Education, and Pulse College/Windmill Lane Studios.

The policy re-states the College's strategy to further extend and develop its range of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards. New arrangements are considered if it is determined that they would be congruent with the College's mission, ethos, and capacity. The benefit to learners, the College and its partners are considered. Such arrangements are subject to a great deal of due diligence work by the College to assess the reputation, and academic and financial standing

of prospective institutions. Once the due diligence is completed with a positive outcome, the College approves the collaborative agreement through its MB, APC and Board of Directors.

The operation of each collaboration is prescribed within a collaborative agreement. The collaboration, and each programme within the individual agreements, are managed by a joint management committee, comprising key members of the College's management, and those of the collaborative partner provider. Each management committee reports to the appropriate bodies in the College, and in the respective collaborative institution, for example, there is a standing agenda item on the APC agenda for Collaborations- Updates (item number 7, refer to Appendix 5.1 of this document for more information). The College's collaborative arrangements are the subject of regular review by the MB and APC.

Collaborative Partner Agreements include a commitment by all involved parties to adhere to data protection best practice in all organisational obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data Protection Agreements (DPAs) are in place with all third-party data processors.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

The College has established relationships with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Where the College provides a programme leading to the award of a PSRB, it is understood that the quality assurance and enhancement measures used to govern the programme include all those prescribed by the external agency, in addition to those described in the College's QAE manual. These two sets of requirements are typically retained as distinct documents, rather than seeking to integrate the requirements of particular external agencies into the College's QAE manual.

If the QAE requirements of an external agency extend beyond those in the College's QAE manual, the requirements of the external agency take precedence for compliance for the associated programmes.

The College recognises and welcomes the ongoing contribution made by the external legislative and educational agencies in enhancing the development of the College's own activities, and commits to embracing and championing national and international educational developments and development opportunities amongst its staff, learners and the wider educational community.

Programmes within the Griffith Institute of Language (GIL) are subject to ACELS accreditation, and the GIL is a member of the new ELE Ireland group, a quality-driven, experienced and globally respected group of international English Language Education schools.

In March 2023, the College reported to QQI on the PSRBs which are connected to the College's QQI-validated programmes, identifying the nature of the relationship – approval, recognition for membership, requirement for membership, registration, etc. – and the person of contact within the PSRB.

The College ensures all its PSRB programmes meet industry regulatory requirements and assist career progression. Accreditation from relevant professional bodies is carefully

maintained and strong relationships exist for individual programmes, as shown in Table 4.10.1 below. These PSRBs engage with the College to approve, accredit, and/or recognise for membership the programmes or graduates of programmes as appropriate to their own terms of reference.

The College's School of Professional Accountancy is an ACCA platinum tuition provider, and a Gold-Star CPA qualification provider. The College delivers a wide range of professional accountancy training programmes leading to Accounting Technicians Ireland (ATI), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and CPA Ireland qualifications.

Griffith College Limerick offers an MBA programme validated by Heriot-Watt University (HWU), and HNC/HND in Engineering programmes from the Business Technology Council (BTEC).

The Law School provides both the Law Society of Ireland's entrance exam (FE1) and the Honorable Society of Kings Inns' preparation courses.

International Mobility and Articulation Agreements

Griffith College is committed to increasing and enhancing its involvement with international partners to support learner progression both inwards and outwards. Such partnerships can range from formal transnational collaboration to articulation agreements for learners seeking advanced entry to programmes based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in their own countries.

The College is an active member of the Erasmus+ network, supporting student and staff mobility and actively promoting international mobility and internationalisation. Additionally, specific initiatives such as the funding of learners at the College by Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), a scholarship funding agency which operates under Malaysia's Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, provides an added dimension to inward mobility.

The College welcomes hundreds of students every year to Semester-Abroad programmes, where flexibility and openness are key. Semester-Abroad students add richness and vitality to the student body. The College offers over 200 modules on a semester-abroad basis, whereby students can register for modules across all undergraduate academic disciplines.

In addition, the College has participated in outward mobility programmes. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed progress in this regard to a certain extent. However, students have been participating in Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) in conjunction with the Graduate Business School. These intensive learning experiences have been highly successful in terms of the student experience and learning outcomes.

The College's guidelines for development of articulation agreements for advanced entry to accredited programmes, for formal collaborations, and for articulation agreements are detailed in the College's QAE manual.

Table 4.10.1: *The Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies which approve, accredit, and/or recognise for membership programmes Griffith College (with host faculty)*

Faculty	Relevant Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) ▶ CPA Ireland ▶ ICA (Institute of Chartered Accountants) ▶ Teaching Council of Ireland
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) ▶ Design and Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI) ▶ The Interiors Association (IA) ▶ The Institute of Creative Advertising and Design (ICAD) ▶ International Society of Typographic Designers (ISTD)
Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineering
Graduate Business School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) ▶ Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) ▶ Irish Institute of Pensions Management (IIPM)
Journalism and Media Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ European Journalists Training Association (EJTA) ▶ National Union of Journalists (NUJ) ▶ Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII)
Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Honorable Society of Kings Inns ▶ Mediation Institute of Ireland ▶ International Mediation Institute ▶ Irish Professional Mediators Organisation ▶ Irish Institute of Legal Executives (IILEX)
Leinster School of Music and Drama (LSMD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Speech and Drama Teachers of Ireland (SDTI)

The use of Ireland's NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres Network) allows for examination of awards made in international partner countries. The College's QAE manual requires partners to submit detailed course documents regarding their syllabi, assessment, reading list, academic quality procedures in terms of access, progression, and award classifications, etc. This documentation is used by Griffith College to establish the specific access, transfer and progression arrangements to apply in respect of any potential articulation agreement.

Consortia to support the development and management of the College's apprenticeship programmes

The College is involved with the development and delivery of national apprenticeship programmes. Apprenticeship programmes involve the education and training of apprentices in both on-the-job and off-the-job settings, jointly between employers and the College. Apprentices have twin roles, firstly as learners on programmes leading to nationally accredited awards and secondly as employees where they combine their work duties with related on-the-job mentored training and development.

Various institutions and governance bodies work collaboratively to ensure the quality of Griffith College's apprenticeship programmes for learners and employers alike. The roles and responsibilities of each of the

institutions and governance bodies listed above with respect to apprenticeship programmes are detailed in the [Griffith College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual: Policies, Procedures, Practices and Guidelines: Apprenticeship Programmes](#).

The College has structured the apprenticeship programme to distinguish which learning outcomes are delivered in the classroom setting and which are delivered in the workplace setting. Apprentices and workplace mentors are provided with detailed module information to aid their understanding of what knowledge, skills and competencies they need to develop in the workplace.

The achievement of workplace learning outcomes is managed using a structured ePortfolio system (Mahara), which sets out the required evidence for each workplace learning outcome. Apprentices upload their evidence to the ePortfolio. This ePortfolio also provides a mechanism for communicating with workplace mentors and for providing them with programme information.

The workplace mentors are provided with initial training and support to provide them with the knowledge and skills to mentor apprentices and to use the College's ePortfolio system. The workplace mentor assesses apprentices work as uploaded on the ePortfolio on a pass or fail basis, and

CASE STUDY: Integration of Collaborative Partners at Griffith College

Griffith College currently delivers QQI accredited programmes with three separate Collaborative Partners, namely ESS Ltd., Innopharma Labs and Pulse College. In all cases, Griffith College is the first provided and the programmes are governed by the College's QAE manual.

Collaborative partners are selected after thorough due diligence, and QQI approval for an 'extension of scope' is required for each new arrangement. Details on the College's collaborative partners are available on the [partner section of the College website](#).

A legally binding Collaborative Agreement is established to manage each arrangement. The Agreements state that the lecturing and management teams in both organisations will cooperate to ensure the smooth delivery of a specific list of programmes, to ensure the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes in a consistent manner, regardless of learners' campus. It also commits both parties to the academic management of the programmes being governed by the policies, procedures, practices and guidelines set out in the College's [QAE Manual](#).

To facilitate this arrangement procedurally, collaborations are treated similarly to the College's faculties, as follows:

- ▶ Collaborative partners share many of the College's academic processes— admissions, registration, examinations, learner/ lecturer feedback, etc.
- ▶ The College's QAE Department, in consultation with QQI, manage programme validation and revalidation events for collaborative partners.
- ▶ Learners enrolled on collaborative programmes have identical access to the College's learning support services and related resources (e.g. Learning Support, Learner Engagement, Careers and Employability Office, LinkedIn Learning)
- ▶ Collaborative partner staff who are teaching on collaborative programmes are issued with a identical supports to their Griffith College colleagues, with free access to the College's MA in Education, Learning and Development, its embedded awards and constituent modules and LinkedIn Learning
- ▶ Collaborative partners are represented on the College's APC and its Quality Assurance and Enhancement Subcommittee (QAES). Faculty Administrators and Programme Directors are included in their respective Griffith College monthly peer meeting groups.
- ▶ Collaborative partners are reflected on the College website as [partners](#), but also as a [faculty](#).

The College has built strong collaborative relationships with these partners over the years and the continued success and ongoing growth of our collaborative programmes are testament to the commitment of all parties involved.

provides effective feedback. College staff oversee the overall completion of these elements, and Module Leaders provide additional feedback where relevant and grade the work.

Evaluation

Collaborative Partners

There are clear written recorded memoranda of understanding (MoUs) for all collaborative partner agreements.

The College regularly reviews these memoranda to ensure arrangements remain compliant, for example, following the introduction of the GDPR in 2018, the College attached an annex to all memoranda to govern data processing, and following a validation event the schedule is updated to reflect the most current list of programmes to which the MoU applies, and the necessary strategic and management criteria for the ongoing successful operation of the collaboration.

Additionally, following a condition at a recent validation panel, the College reviewed the pre-existing consortium agreement and updated it to provide for clearer, transparent information to learners, and the collaboration partners. The status of the partners, and their roles and responsibilities, was clarified and made more explicit within the Agreement.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

In line with ILEP / ACELS regulations, GIL has a responsibility to have accommodation available for students in the form of host families. In recent years this has proven to be difficult, and in some cases it has impacted the recruitment of students. GIL has worked hard to identify accommodation providers and have extended the database of host families in Cork, Dublin and Limerick. GIL also facilitates learners in booking external English language exams for those who are

on a 25-week programme, or who are progressing to an academic programme. Once the International Education Mark has been approved, GIL intends on applying to be accredited members with EAQUALS.

International Mobility and Articulation Agreements

Rigorous procedures are followed to ensure quality assurance with international articulation partners. The use of NARIC allows for examination of awards in international partner countries.

The processes in place to support International Mobility and Articulation are considered effective from the College's perspective. The College integrates articulation partners into its communications and processes as though they are another faculty, with their students able to access the full suite of Griffith College programmes.

GIL has seen an increase in the collaborations between partner universities and the College's English Language programmes. GIL would like to develop and increase collaborative partnerships with other HEIs across Ireland to facilitate greater progression opportunities for graduates of the College's Certificate in Foundation Studies programme.

Consortia to support the development and management of the College's apprenticeship programmes

The QAE policies for the College's apprenticeship programmes provide clear guidance regarding the involvement of third parties in programme delivery. These policies also outline the key positions that industry representatives hold on the programme's board. The roles of the consortium steering group are defined in these QAE documents, which provide a framework to ensure that all parties, both internal and external, are aware of their roles within the QAE space.



Pictured (L-R) at the launch of the Certificate in Strategic Co-ordination and Collaboration for Modern Methods of Construction at Government Buildings are Paul Healy, Chief Executive, Skillnet Ireland; Professor Diarmuid Hegarty, President, Griffith College; Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Aine McManus, Head of Faculty, Graduate Business School, Griffith College; Tom Parlon, CEO, CIF.

During the 2023 revalidation of the Higher Certificate in Healthcare Support Practice event, the panel commended the programme team for 'their listening to stakeholders, how they have adapted and developed the programme since its initial validation are exemplary'.

Throughout their apprenticeship programme, each apprentice has a designated workplace mentor. The availability of qualified workplace mentors in organisations continues to be an issue within the buoyant economy, where a significant staff churn leads to mentor changes, which interrupts the continuity of apprentice training in the workplace. It can also lead to apprentices changing employer. The College provides training for mentors to support them in their role, and to assure consistency of

support for learners. At times, it has proven challenging for the College to get participation in this training. The College has identified instances where mentors who did not attend this training were found to be less supportive of their apprentices. The level of feedback from mentors is variable and could be improved.

The extensive number of steps required from employers to participate in apprenticeship programmes can be onerous, creating a barrier to their involvement. The programmes' recruitment teams have experienced many employers who say they love the programme but once they hear the work required from employers they drop out of the conversation.

CASE STUDY: Employers as Partners in Education

While the College has restated its Mission and Values in 2024, its purpose remains very much unchanged and learner-centred, with the aim of providing career-focused education that prepares students for their futures, and employers with current and relevantly qualified employees.

In response to the question 'How well do you feel recent graduates are prepared for the workforce?' in the recent ISER survey to employers, employer/industry contacts' comments included:

"It varies but in general they are reasonably well prepared especially where the student has had some placement as part of their educational programme."

"Need to improve on communication and be given more 'business simulation' classes."

"Not particularly, my degree offered very little to prepare me for the real world."

While the obvious opportunities are presented through apprenticeships, work placement and industry-based projects and dissertations, Griffith College has also addressed this employment readiness within its programmes by introducing real-world opportunities such as the following:

Projects within the Design Faculty

- ▶ Graphics students worked with GBS HUB and Network Ireland, rebranding for female entrepreneurs, that included a sustainability element.
<https://businessplus.ie/enterprise/network-ireland-and-griffith-college/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZLXqDtO0ng>
- ▶ Graphics students worked with COLAB, a Dublin-based sustainable packaging company, to create innovative sustainable packaging.
https://www.instagram.com/p/Cy0WJZIR7IC/?img_index=2
- ▶ Interior Design learners collaborated with Kube Kitchens on a practical design and fit-out proposal for their showroom at the Beacon South Quarter, Dublin.
<https://www.griffith.ie/blog/griffith-college-interior-architecture-students-shine-in-kube-design-competition>
- ▶ SIG Workplace Ireland: Interior Architecture and Design students worked on a multi-disciplinary office project, covering current workplace trends.
<https://www.griffith.ie/blog/griffith-college-interior-architecture-design-students-shine-in-sig-ireland-collaboration>

Annual opportunities within the Law faculty

- ▶ Griffith College is invited to select one learner to participate in the Chief Justice Summer Placement Programme in Ireland
<https://www.griffith.ie/blog/chief-justices-summer-placement-programme-2024>
- ▶ A number of learners complete Brehon Law Internships (Summer Programme) in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and Court of Common Pleas Philadelphia, USA.
- ▶ The faculty facilitates a Student Free Legal Aid Clinic (FLAC) where learners work alongside legal professionals in providing legal advice through an annual conference.
<https://griffith.ie/about-griffith/news/law-faculty-griffith-college-host-2022-student-free-legal-advice-clinic-flac>

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College identified the following effective practices in relation to Other Parties involved in Education and Training:

- ▶ The operation of each collaboration is prescribed within a collaborative agreement. The collaboration, and each programme within the individual agreements, is managed by a joint management committee, comprising key members of the College's management, and those of the collaborative partner provider. However, significantly, the College integrates collaborative partners into its communications' processes as though they are another faculty, with partner staff sitting on committees and attending CPD events, and students able to access the full suite of Griffith College programmes.
- ▶ The processes in place to support international mobility and articulation are considered effective from the College's perspective. Rigorous procedures are followed to ensure quality assurance with international articulation partners. The use of NARIC allows for examination of awards in international partner countries. Partners submit detailed course documents to support the College's review of their access, progression, and awards.
- ▶ In Apprenticeship programmes, the ePortfolio system works extremely well providing a structured approach to the workplace learning and access for all relevant staff to apprentice's ePortfolio evidence for the purposes of monitoring their progress and assessment. The IT learning curve associated with using an ePortfolio is steep. However, this has been overcome through the provision of regular training sessions on how to use the system, with further one-to-one training provided where necessary.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The collective institutional experience has also recognised the need for further enhancement to overcome challenges, as suggested below:

- ▶ Partnership MoUs require that collaboration management meetings are scheduled, with specific membership from both partners (reflecting academic and QAE management). Participants suggest that these partner meetings could involve more College (and partner) staff to enhance ongoing communications.
- ▶ The College provides training for employer-based mentors to support them in their role. At times, it has proven challenging for the College to get employer staff to participate in this training. A review of the communication and resources which need to be provided to make this mentoring process more effective would greatly support this ongoing practice.

4.11 Research, Enterprise and Innovation

Description

Griffith College has a range of established quality assurance and enhancement procedures and processes in place to support the research, enterprise and innovation activities of its students and staff. These involve teaching and support staff, within and outside the faculties, external partners and related resources.

The College's library staff provide direct support and comprehensive resources for learners undertaking research projects and dissertations as part of their undergraduate, postgraduate and masters' programmes. They also actively support staff in advancing their own research activities to support their teaching, further qualifications and research publications.

Learners undertaking capstone research projects and dissertations are provided with detailed project and dissertation handbooks to assist them in their research activities. They are also supported with formal classes provided by faculty and library staff on how to conduct research effectively and efficiently, with specific guidance on how to use the College's suite of physical and online research resources. Masters' students are further supported with a bespoke module on Research Methods in the semester before they undertake their dissertations.

The College's management of research projects and dissertations was initially informed and guided by the established structures and processes used by the University of Ulster and Nottingham Trent University programmes, and has continually evolved under HETAC and QQI through the engagement and peer-review of external examiners and dissertation supervisors, nationally and internationally.

The College's research management processes include:

- ▶ Ethics Committees to review the suitability of research proposals
- ▶ Structured development, support and regular scheduled meetings between learners and supervisors to review progress
- ▶ Assessment moderation of learners' projects by different supervisors
- ▶ Interim presentations by learners throughout their research projects
- ▶ Viva voce assessments in the case of all undergraduate capstone projects, and all postgraduate research modules and masters' dissertations.

These processes are used to support all learners undertaking research projects and dissertations, including the College's QQI-validated dissertations by practice, where learners research and develop industry-based projects and related innovation initiatives.

Learners undertaking enterprise and innovation activities are supported by:

- ▶ Non-disclosure and intellectual property agreements between them, the external organisation and the College
- ▶ Work placement contracts between them, the external organisation, and the College
- ▶ Detailed QAE procedures in the case of the College's apprenticeship programmes with industry consortium steering groups (CSGs)

Evaluation

Griffith College's programmes are designed, delivered and supported by a team of 725 staff, with many of the College's full-time and part-time teaching staff having direct industry experience and continuing industry involvement. Their

ongoing participation with industry developments ensures the relevance and currency of the College's curricula, and assists in the learners' preparation for employment.

In addition to the lecturers' individual connections with industry, the College also has established links with various industry and professional bodies, for example:

- ▶ Programmes developed in association with ISME, Ireland's Small and Medium Enterprise Association
- ▶ Professional programmes designed in association with the Irish Institute of Pension Managers (IIPM), the Irish Institute of Legal Executives (IILEX), and the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineering (IISE) leading to both QQI accredited awards and professional membership of the related institutions.
- ▶ National apprenticeship programmes delivered in association with industry consortium steering groups, for example Nursing Homes Ireland and the Vintners Federation of Ireland.

In recent years, the College's enterprise and innovation activities have been significantly advanced through the EU funded projects undertaken by the College's Business Innovation hub. Brief summaries of three of the current projects follow below, with further information available on the [College website](#).

- ▶ **SMART4FUTURE** is a collaborative effort aimed at revolutionising education through innovation and enhancement of support structures. Backed by a consortium of eight partners, SMART4FUTURE is strategically positioned to reshape the educational landscape. The consortium, comprising six higher education institutions, a dynamic business accelerator, and two influential companies, is designed to drive sustainable innovation and empower learners and entrepreneurs.



- ▶ **AI4VET4AI**, co-funded by the European Union into June 2027, addresses the growing demand for skilled workers in the AI field, focusing on fostering an AI-savvy workforce throughout Europe. This project aims to contribute to the digital transformation of the EU labour market by integrating innovative teaching content and methods into VET (Vocational Education and Training) curricula across 11 European countries and 18 EU NUTS2 regions, enhancing the skills and understanding of AI among VET learners and educators.



- ▶ **AI2MED** looks to Artificial intelligence (AI) to revolutionise the healthcare sector by offering the potential for faster diagnoses, reduced errors, and cost savings for patients. Recognising the profound impact AI can have on healthcare, the European Union has co-funded AI2MED, a collaborative effort running from 2024 to 2027, involving 11 institutions across 7 European countries.



Established in late 2022, the College's Business Innovation Hub team has grown from one to seven researchers in 18 months, generating €650k in current and future funding, and working with national and sectoral industry representative bodies to support the development of 16 Irish companies, including three registered graduate start-up businesses.

The College greatly welcomes the opportunity to participate in these EU funded projects along with other international higher education providers, both public and private, and looks forward to advancing these and other projects in the future.

In relation to national research funding opportunities, the College's legal status as a private independent higher education institution, greatly restricts the participation of its staff and learners as the College is precluded from most nationally funded research schemes for higher education. College staff members continue to undertake funded research on an individual basis in association with publicly funded institutions, and where smaller research opportunities exist that are open to both public and private institutions.

The College would like to acknowledge the openness and inclusiveness of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and the opportunities it afforded Griffith College research staff and students to undertake funded research, both as leaders and members of project teams. It regrets the current position of its successor body SATLE – the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education, to restrict the opportunities for participation of its research staff to roles as associate members of research teams led by publicly funded institutions.

Notwithstanding the current challenges, Griffith College continues to support the research activities of its staff, for example: by providing funding for staff to obtain doctoral qualifications; attend and deliver papers at conferences; and by acknowledging and celebrating their research activities at Annual Research Showcase Events, both within the College and along with other private independent higher education providers as part of HAQEF, the Higher Education Colleges Association's collaborative quality enhancement forum.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College's Research, Enterprise and Innovation activities are aligned with higher education practices nationally and internationally, through the College's engagement with its many external examiners and research supervisors from other institutions, and through the increasingly reciprocal roles played by Griffith College staff on behalf of other institutions.

As part of the formal review and revalidation of its postgraduate and masters' programmes by external panels, the College intentionally includes separate consideration of its research dissertations and support processes. The College welcomes the opportunities provided by these peer-review processes to continually enhance its research supports for learners and staff. It also appreciates the many commendations it receives from panels in relation to the rigour and comprehensiveness of the College's structured support and regular engagement processes for learners throughout their dissertations.

Examples of other effective practice undertaken by Griffith College in relation to its research activities include:

- ▶ The retention of viva voce assessments for all learners undertaking research projects, dissertations or dissertations by practice, regardless of the number of learners involved in any cohort, ensuring the continued integrity of the College's summative assessments.
- ▶ The specially designed postgraduate module on Research Supervision within the College's MA in Education, Learning and Development. This module and the entire suite of MA modules are provided free to all teaching staff and supervisors.
- ▶ The College's ability and agility to readily appoint and support new supervisors, in response to emerging technology and industry developments, ensuring the currency of research undertaken by its learners.

Examples of effective practice undertaken by Griffith College in relation to enterprise and innovation initiatives include:

- ▶ The development of industry-based QQI microcredential awards in Modern Methods of Construction in association with Construction Industry Federation (CIF).
- ▶ The rapid development and delivery of QQI microcredential awards in association with the Irish Hotel Federation, to support HR managers relaunching their hospitality businesses post COVID.
- ▶ The free online delivery of the College's Certificate in SME Management to business owners, in association with the ISME and supported by industry mentors, throughout Ireland's national COVID lockdown periods.
- ▶ The development of a specific module on Work-based mentoring to support managers in their supervision and assessment of staff on apprenticeship programmes.
- ▶ The active engagement of the College's Business Innovation Hub staff and postgraduate students with the Guinness Enterprise Centre, and with national, regional and sectoral business networks.

CASE STUDY: #GameOn Innovation Bootcamp

The #GameOn Innovation Bootcamp 2023, organised as part of the SMART4FUTURE project, was a resounding success in fostering innovation and sustainability within academic and industry spheres. This comprehensive event aimed to bridge the gap between industry and learners while promoting deep-tech entrepreneurship.

The bootcamp attracted a diverse range of approximately 150 participants comprised of students, academic staff, and industry professionals, for a unique and collaborative experience. The bootcamp took place over three days, each offering distinct experiences as follows:

- ▶ Day 1: A public event held at Griffith College Dublin, featuring keynote speakers and industry guests. Attendees gained insights into sustainability, innovation, and deep tech entrepreneurship.
- ▶ Day 2: A finalists' workshop, where competition finalists engaged in mentoring sessions with Griffith College staff, and refined their business pitches to meet competition standards.
- ▶ Day 3: A private session for GBS Hub staff, competition finalists, judges, and invited guests, where finalists made their pitch. This event culminated in the announcement of the winners, and the presentation of prizes.

The event facilitated increased collaboration between Griffith College and industry partners (as guest speakers and judges), opening doors for future projects, initiatives and collaborations.



The bootcamp's success contributed to it being nomination for The National Procurement Awards 2023.

Promotional material for the #GameOn Innovation Bootcamp, October 2023



Presentation of prize-winners at the First HECA Research Conference at Griffith College, by Mr Simon Harris, TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in November 2022.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

Griffith College looks to the future of its Research, Enterprise and Innovation activities with confidence and enthusiasm, while realising there is much more to be achieved, and many challenges to be met and overcome along the way. As it has done to date, the College is committed to developing these activities using its own resources, by engaging directly with external companies and other higher education institutions, and applying for, and participating in funded research as opportunities present.

The College is delighted with its recent and increasing involvement in EU funded enterprise development projects, and the experience it is gaining from its interaction with established and start-up business partners, and with colleagues in other public and private universities and higher education institutions across the EU. It has been able to invite colleagues from Ireland's other private and public sector institutions to participate in current projects and in proposals for future funding, further connecting Griffith College researchers with others nationally, and looks forward to reciprocal arrangements being extended in the future. The College will also continue to advocate for its eligibility to apply for national research funds to advance the research activities of its learners and staff alike.

The recent integration of SMSI's Psychology programme team into the College's community of research active staff is hugely welcome and presents a most exciting opportunity to renew and extend the College's overall research activities and processes, supporting and benefitting from the

experience and practices of the College's new research active members.

From September 2024, the College proposes to revise and relaunch its Research Committee to include research active members from all its faculties, both new and existing, including the College's collaborative partners Innopharma and Pulse College. The College looks forward to the sharing of research experience and practices across the diverse disciplines of business, computing, education, design, law, media, music production, pharmaceutical science, psychology, and visual and creative arts, and the ongoing development and enhancement of the College's research activities for learners and staff alike.

4.12 Conclusion and Intended Future Direction - College's Governance and Management of Quality [Objective 1]

Griffith College's governance and management of quality is robust, effective, and evident College-wide in everything it does and seeks to do. It is driven and sustained by a shared and innate commitment to quality and doing the right thing, whether in programme design and delivery; teaching, learning and assessment; or learner supports and services; enabling learners to succeed in their chosen careers and future lives. In Griffith College, standards matter, learners matter, and quality assurance and enhancement matters. It always has, and always will.



The findings of this ISER review in relation to the College's governance and management of quality are welcome and affirming. It's not that everything is perfect – they're not! – but there's widespread convincing evidence that there is a lot that is right, and that works well, and reliably for learners and staff alike.

Examples include Griffith College's strong reputation for advancing the interests of higher education learners, generally, and for the effective recruitment and appropriate care of international students, and for providing protection for learners of other higher education institutions in times of crises. The processes in place to support international mobility and articulation are considered effective from the College's perspective. The College's clear commitment to EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) in policy, practice and its ongoing enhancement and embedding in the College's governance and management will further support this.

The scope identified in this ISER for potential enhancements, and the detailed lists presented in each of the 11 sections of this chapter alone are not considered to be daunting or overwhelming, but instead enticing and motivating, presenting many interesting opportunities for particular improvements and further development, some of which are already underway!

This future perspective is reflected in the College's intentional adoption of the term QAE- Quality Assurance and Enhancement for its governance and management of quality. It recognises the motivating and liberating benefit of a quality enhancement focus beyond that of mere assurance and control. This improvement focus facilitates

the College's welcoming and open culture, its embracing of feedback, its trusting collaborations with other providers, its active engagement of consultants as critical friends, and its enthusiastic participation in this review, knowing that enhancements will follow. Openness to the experience and feedback of others can only advance the College's governance and management of quality.

As a result of this ISER, Griffith College looks with clarity to the future of its Research, Enterprise and Innovation activities with confidence and enthusiasm. While realising there is much more to be achieved, and many challenges to overcome along the way, it knows it will benefit from the renewal and redevelopment of its College-wide research activities across all faculties and departments, incorporating the research experience of new faculties and collaborative partners, and building on the success of current EU-funded business and innovation projects.

The College also knows that this ISER does not mark the end of the College's QAE journey. Fortunately, there is no end or terminal destination to be reached ... but a continuation of development possibilities to retain and explore into the future.

5. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT [OBJECTIVE 2]

5.1 The Learning Environment

Description

Griffith College delivers a widely diverse range of programmes, from pre-university foundation programmes at NFQ level 5 to postgraduate diploma and masters' programmes at NFQ level 9. These extend across a range of disciplines, each with its own particular knowledge, skills and competence requirements.

The College's programmes are delivered in a variety of formats, for example:

- ▶ on an in-person basis from the College's four campuses, its collaborative partner colleges, and other locations, nationally and internationally.
- ▶ using a blend of online and in-person delivery, with the mode of online provision ranging from completely synchronous, to largely asynchronous delivery.
- ▶ within the workplace as part of nationally accredited apprenticeship programmes.

The College's programmes range in volume and duration from short microcredential awards of 5 ECTS delivered on a block-release basis within a week or on a part-time basis over several weeks, to honours degree programmes delivered on a full-time basis over four years and attracting 240 ECTS.

Programmes also vary in relation to the learner cohorts and programme focus involved. For example, the College's Certificate in Strategic Collaboration and Coordination of Modern Methods of Construction is tailored to the particular needs and planning context of industry professionals working in Ireland, with learners typically having at least 10 years, if not decades of senior management experience. In contrast, the College's Certificate in Art and Design is intentionally designed for Irish and international learners starting their higher education, allowing them to explore, experiment and develop their creative talents and interests more generally, before choosing specific specialisations in fashion design, interior design, graphic communications, or other creative and visual arts disciplines.

The College's rich diversity of learners, learner cohorts and programme disciplines inform the College's teaching, learning and assessment practices across all programmes, through the sharing of experience by learners and programme team members involved in the College's educational and related activities.

Notwithstanding the diversity of the College's programmes and learner cohorts, the learning environment and learner experience across all programmes share key features in common, ensuring that learning is appropriately structured and scaffolded, providing clarity for learners and staff alike.

Key characteristics underpinning all of the College's programmes include:

- ▶ Programme and module learning outcomes detailing the specific knowledge, skills and competences gained by learners in completing the programme.
- ▶ Programme schedules detailing the delivery methods, contact hours and forms of assessment used for each of the programmes' constituent modules.
- ▶ Detailed curricula, teaching strategies and support resources for each of the programmes' constituent modules.
- ▶ Assessments, both formative and summative, constructively aligned to meet agreed programme and module learning outcomes, and the generic and discipline award standards specified for the particular NFQ level and ECTS credit volume.

For all learners, their primary learning environment is created and facilitated by their programme team, led and managed by a head of faculty or programme director, along with teaching and support staff in general roles as lecturers and faculty administrators. Depending on the size and nature of the programme and the cohorts involved, other programme related roles include those undertaken by year heads, project and dissertation supervisors, lab technicians, and work placement supervisors. Additional roles such as success coaches and work-based mentors apply in the case of the College's apprenticeship programmes.

All College programmes are supported by Moodle, the College's choice of virtual learning environment (VLE). This provides learners with online access to programme and assignment handbooks, module descriptions, lecture notes, assignments and related support resources. The system is used as the primary source for ongoing communication between learners and programme team members, covering all aspects of the programmes' delivery, for example assignment submission dates and examination schedules.

The College uses Zoom to deliver its synchronous online classes, with additional resources used in the preparation of educational material designed for asynchronous delivery and reference purposes. These general resources are supplemented with programme-specific resources as required, for example the College's use of Mahara, to manage learner ePortfolios on its apprenticeship programmes and its collaborative masters' programmes with Innopharma.

Learners on all of the College's and collaborative partner programmes are directly supported by the College's library staff, through their delivery of discipline-specific research classes, and their ongoing guidance on the use of the College's related physical and online research resources. Learners are similarly supported by the College's Digital Learning Department's (DLD) team of learning technologists, with individual learners also being supported by the College's Learning Support Department.

Teaching staff on the College's programmes are supported by their heads of faculty, programme directors, faculty administrators and teaching colleagues. They are also directly assisted by the library team, DLD and IT Services Department in their access and use of the College's online resources.

Griffith College's Lecturer Support Department provides support for all full-time and part-time teaching staff on all of the College's and collaborative partners' programmes. These supports include:

- ▶ onboarding and induction of new lecturers connecting them to the College's various educational and support resources.
- ▶ free participation on the College's MA in Education, Learning and Development and related embedded awards and constituent modules to support their development.
- ▶ delivery of fortnightly CPD sessions throughout the academic year on key pedagogies and educational developments (e.g. UDL, interactive teaching resources, generative AI, etc.).

The College's Lecturer Support Department, DLD and Learning Support Department work collaboratively as constituent departments of the College's Teaching and Learning Department as shown in Figure 5.1.1 below.

- ▶ **Lecturer Support:** providing support for new and existing lecturers, delivering ongoing CPD sessions, and delivering the College's MA in Education, Learning and Development and related embedded awards
- ▶ **Learning Support:** providing tailored support for learners with disabilities, learning difficulties, and neurological (and other) conditions.
- ▶ **Digital Learning:** providing support for staff and learners in relation to the College's online programmes and related resources.

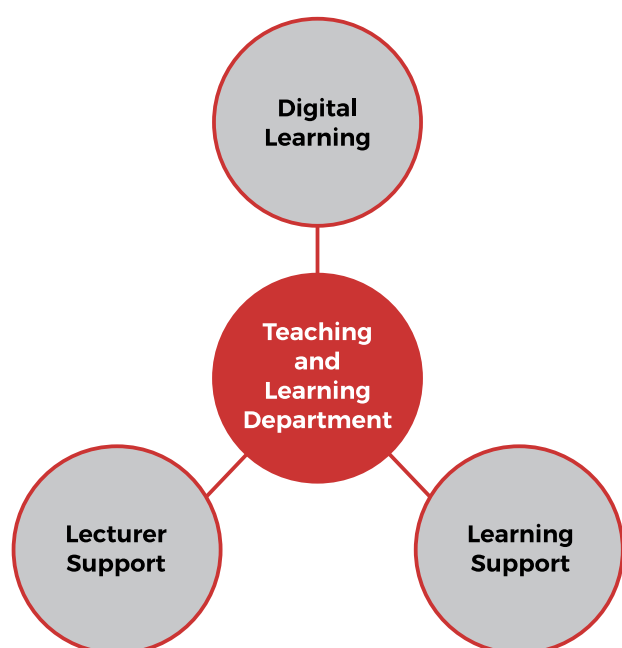


Figure 5.1.1: *The College's Teaching and Learning Department's constituent support departments*

More specifically, the Learning Support Department provides bespoke support for learners who have additional learning requirements. The department works directly with the learners to identify any learning challenges or requirements they may have, and with programme teams across the College and wider support staff, to advance the learning experience for learners and staff. The Department advances the use of UDL practices in the College's programmes and liaises with faculties to support learners following their learning needs assessment in relation to any reasonable accommodations that may be required. This enables learners to demonstrate their full level of academic potential, for example, spelling and grammar waivers, additional time, scribe and reader support, and low distraction venues during examinations.

The Learning Support Department also provides key skills workshops to support staff in identifying and engaging with best practice initiatives.

Evaluation

The quality of the College's learning environment is evaluated by learners through their formal feedback on each module, at the mid-point each semester, followed by their end-of-semester evaluation of the College's overall learning and support environment. The College's lecturers give their formal feedback at the end of each semester in respect of each module they deliver.

These formal feedback mechanisms complement the ongoing interaction and feedback between learners and the programme team throughout the year. They are formally reported in Annual Programme Reports following the end of year examination boards and external examiner feedback. APRs are reviewed by the College's QAES and APC, and used by programme directors and heads of faculty to guide future practice. Further details of these governance processes are provided in Chapter 6.2 of this ISER report.

While the College's practice of obtaining formal feedback is well-established, the specific forms and methods used, both in-person and online, continue to be reviewed and reworked in an effort to retain their effectiveness, particularly in respect of learner participation rates in anonymised surveys.

In the case of the formal feedback from lecturers, the end-of-semester module survey was extended in 2022/2023 to gather information on their particular training undertaken and requested by lecturers in order to inform the CPD training sessions provided by the College's Lecturer Support Department. This resulted in several APRs highlighting lecturers' requests for specific training in generative AI applications in different disciplines and how to include UDL.

The specific questions included in the professional development section of the Lecturer Module Survey in 2023/2024 were as follows:

- ▶ **Training undertaken**
Please give details of any professional development activities or training that you have undertaken in the relevant period as part of teaching this module.
- ▶ **Training interest area**
Please give details of any professional development activities you would like the College to provide to support you in the delivery of this module.

Upon further review in the second semester, these questions were expanded to ask lecturers to include examples of how they applied any new learning in their role. The lecturer module surveys also require lecturers to reflect on any challenges they experience in the delivery of their module(s). The need for more space was identified, with room allocation on the main Dublin campus presented as challenging and limited.

Each year, the feedback from learners and programme teams in relation to the College's learning resources are used to inform and direct the work of the College's PETALS Programme (Programme for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning Spaces). This annual programme is a cross-department and faculty collaboration programme, taking an overall view of the College's combined developments and upgrade requirement to IT hardware, software, AV, furniture, lighting, painting, etc., and has completely overhauled the College's teaching spaces. The annual cost of the PETALS programme is typically between €400K and €700K.

The exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic required a rapid pivoting of the College's programmes to online delivery and assessment. Lecturer perspectives on the COVID-19 contingency arrangements were sought at the end of May 2020 through a survey emailed to all lecturers. Of the 73 lecturers who responded:

- ▶ 80.3% agreed or strongly agreed that the College had provided access to sufficient technological resources
- ▶ 88.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the College's supports were effective in maintaining standards in teaching and learning.

A simultaneous survey of learners and their experiences found that the supports cited as most helpful related to online Teaching, Learning and Assessment provisions, including:

- ▶ Examination information sessions
- ▶ Recorded lectures
- ▶ Lecturers' responsiveness through email

- ▶ Lecturers' use of online learning tools such as Zoom and Moodle

Survey results over the past two years show that learners are generally very satisfied or satisfied with the support provided. In the College's Services and Facilities Survey, for 2023/2024 semester 2, on the question of the availability and quality of academic administration services (i.e. Registration Office, Exams Office, etc.) 88.1% of respondents indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service received. Similarly, in relation to the engagement with the learner platforms, 86.9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they found the Moodle platform easy to access and use.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

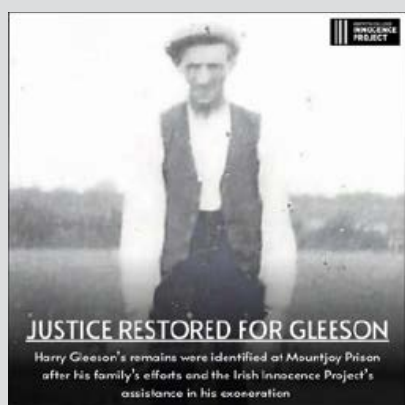
Griffith College has always been fully committed to the quality and enhancement of its teaching, learning and assessment activities in the interests of its learners and teaching staff alike. Throughout its development, the College has successfully initiated and led educational initiatives within Ireland's independent higher education sector, engaging actively with Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and with other higher education providers and related agencies generally.

Examples of effective practices undertaken by the College in supporting the learning environment for learners and teaching staff include:

- ▶ Design and delivery of accredited English language programmes including English for Academic Purposes to support learners, learning through a second language, with key academic writing and related research skills
- ▶ Pre-semester and in-semester English language development support classes for learners seeking to further advance their English language levels
- ▶ Support for learners with additional learning needs through the College's Learning Support Department, working in association with the learners' programme teams

CASE STUDY: Irish Innocence Project

Griffith College is the home of the internationally renowned Irish Innocence Project. Learners on the Project conduct post-conviction reviews as part of a team with qualified and experienced lawyers where wrongful conviction is alleged. The project works to free the innocent, prevent wrongful convictions, and create fair, compassionate, and equitable systems of justice for everyone.



Learners, following successful application, can also take the Irish Innocence Project as a 10 ECTS elective module on the LL.B. (Hons) programme in Year 3. The project also takes on Trinity student case workers to give other law students the opportunity to benefit from this process.

The Irish Innocence Project engages on average 20 students per year, to work on over 50 cases. The outcomes are not just about whether the person is proven innocent or not, but also about the importance of the processing of law, respect of human rights, application of criminal justice, handling of evidence, preparation of cases for trial and more.

In 2015, the work of the Irish Innocence Project resulted in the first posthumous pardon on a case worked on by Griffith College learners- Harry Gleeson- [Irish Innocence Project](#).

- ▶ Support for learners' effective use of digital learning resources provided by the College's Digital Learning Department and library staff
 - ▶ Design, delivery and ongoing development of its MA in Education, Learning and Development and its related embedded awards, for higher education and professional teaching staff, both internal and external.
 - ▶ Design and delivery of bespoke modules at NFQ level 9 in Research Supervision, Workplace Learning, and Learner Analytics on a block-release basis during the summer months, free to all the College's (and collaborative partners') full-time and part-time teaching staff and dissertation supervisors.
 - ▶ The College's Teaching Champions, who act as dedicated ambassadors of teaching, learning and assessment practices within the College's various faculties, campuses and collaborative providers, sharing, supporting and advancing best practice.
- ▶ Promotion of, and engagement in the UDL Digital Badge. Each year, the College teams up with [AHEAD](#) and [UCD Access and Lifelong Learning](#) to deliver the Universal Design for Learning digital badge. This free digital badge provides lecturers with a strong introduction to the UDL Framework and gives them the opportunity to implement UDL principles and approaches within their teaching activities.
 - ▶ The onboarding support and ongoing CPD training sessions provided by the College's Lecturer Support Department for the new and existing teaching staff across the College and its collaborative partners.

The College's learners benefit directly from the guidance and supports provided to the College's programme teams, and from their integration of new teaching, learning and assessment methods and resources into their programme delivery, informed by best practice.

CASE STUDY: Griffith College's Teaching Champions (Lecturer Development and Support)

The establishment of the Teaching Champions initiative was a direct response to the Learning, Teaching and Development Review: "A Roadmap for Sustainability and Innovation in Teaching and Learning at Griffith College" completed in 2021. Eleven Teaching Champions (TCs) were appointed to represent and support faculties, all campuses, and collaborative partners, for a one-year pilot in 2021/2022.

The TCs were identified through a competitive selection process as those individuals who:

- ▶ have a passion for teaching, learning, and assessment practice (TLA) in their discipline and are keen to develop and enhance their own practices.
- ▶ are knowledgeable about best practice and emerging developments, in TLA.
- ▶ engage with new and existing lecturers and learners to assist them in the exploration and implementation of best practice TLA College wide.
- ▶ support other teaching staff in developing authentic teaching and assessment practices
- ▶ monitor and review learner performance, meeting directly with individuals and groups of learners to obtain valuable feedback on their experience of the College's TLA
- ▶ monitor overall learner performance to identify appropriate TLA enhancements
- ▶ contribute to their faculty's / programme's TLA strategy

After the pilot, the Teaching Champions process was considered successful based on the increase in staff engagement, planned events and publications generated, and the pilot was extended into a second year.

Outcomes and outputs

- ▶ The Teaching Champions Showcase (January 2022) with presentations on topics such as: how to engage students in the classroom, and innovative assessment.
- ▶ Teaching, Learning and Assessment Moodle page – published by the TCs and which remains a useful resource to all lecturers in the College and for collaborative partners.
- ▶ A research project (2022/2023) which reflected on topics such as: feedback processes, assessment strategies and shared pedagogies.
- ▶ Collated and published findings – a reflective Teaching Champions booklet, with relevant statistical, anecdotal and pedagogical evidence.

The process was evaluated by the Teaching and Learning Department and the College has now committed to retaining the Teaching Champions as an ongoing commitment to staff development and the promotion of innovative assessment and teaching methodologies.



Given the diversity of the College's programmes, programme teams use a wide variety of different teaching, learning and assessment methods tailored to their particular programme discipline and related learning outcomes. For design and creative and visual arts students, their experimentation, and development of creations in a studio setting naturally supports extensive formative assessment, and regular "critiques" of their work by the programme team and external professionals. For animation and music production students, the weekly open presentation of their projects (individual or group) to the class as a whole, allows for shared learning while also maintaining momentum, enthusiasm and progress. For graduate business students, it involves engagement with industry guest lecturers and business networks on live business projects, for example with the Guinness Enterprise Centre, and opportunities to engage in EU funded business and innovation projects with start-up companies, while for Law students, it can involve internship opportunities in the US, and participation in the College's Innocence Project seeking to overturn miscarriages of justice.

The College greatly appreciates the freedom afforded by QQI and external validation panels to the College and its programme teams, to design teaching, learning and assessment strategies and practices tailored to the meet the needs of its learners and their chosen professional career and personal interests.

The College also welcomes the ability to experiment with and introduce new learning technologies and resources as they arise, initially on a pilot basis and later more permanently as opportunities present and evidence supports. Recent examples of newly introduced technologies (applications) in the College's design programmes include:

- ▶ [BIM](#) in interior architecture and design, allowing students to visualise and interact with their designs in a simulated environment.
- ▶ [CLO | 3D](#) in fashion design, providing highly realistic simulations of garments, allowing students to see how fabrics will drape and move on virtual models before any physical samples are made.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

Griffith College considers the overall learning environment it provides for its learners and programme teams to be effective and fit-for-purpose, and that there are a number of areas of particular good practice, given the context of the College's status as a private higher education provider.

Much of the feedback from learners for the ISER review gathered through surveys and focus groups replicates in large measure what was also obtained through the College's established feedback processes, and highlights specific improvements that the College will seek to address in 2024/25 and future years.

The ISER process also allowed for reflection on, and articulation of a number of key strategic learning development and environment initiatives, which are either already underway or planned for implementation.

The areas identified by the College for proposed development and enhancement include:

- ▶ Greater internationalisation of the College's curricula, to reflect global perspectives including and beyond those of European and Western countries

- ▶ Identification, promotion and celebration of College-wide Graduate Attributes, encapsulating key existing and future shared values, for example intercultural awareness, respect for diversity, commitment to sustainability, etc.
- ▶ Development of the College's Learner and Staff Information hubs, providing additional clarity of communication
- ▶ Expansion of the College's Careers and Employability Department to support the growing participation in the mentoring provided by alumni to existing learners
- ▶ Further integration of the College's Teaching and Learning Department and its constituent departments with the College's heads of faculty and programme directors, for example through the expansion of the College's Education, Learning and Development Subcommittee.
- ▶ Ongoing development of the College's facilities and resources arising from learner and lecturer feedback under the PETAL programme
- ▶ Advocating for, and securing nationally funded research opportunities to support and retain the College's research active staff.

5.2 Assessment of Learners

Description

Academic progress at Griffith College is assessed through various methods, including assignments, examinations, presentations, projects and practical assessments. Programme and Learner Handbooks provide detailed information on module assessments and the rules and regulations for conducting them. All College policies related to assessments are available in the [Griffith College Quality Assurance and Enhancement \(QAE\) Manual, Section F: Assessment of Learners](#).

Learners must submit assignments and projects by the appointed deadlines. Each faculty provides information on submission procedures. Extensions are only granted in exceptional circumstances, in line with College policy. Assignment submissions must include a Cover Sheet containing learner identification, submission details, and a declaration of originality. These components not only streamline administrative processes but are also mandatory for submission through 'Turnitin', a software tool used to evaluate academic integrity. It is advisable for learners to retain a copy of every assignment, project, or dissertation submitted to the College.

In relation to examinations, for semester-based programmes, examinations take place at the end of each semester. For modules extending across two semesters, examinations are typically held at the end of the second semester. A supplemental assessment and examinations sitting occurs at the end of the academic year, and before the next academic year begins. Information on assessments and examination regulations is available in the College's QAE Manual and [QQI Assessments and Standards](#).

Assessment Results and Grades

Most programmes within the College are assessed using the Percentage Grading Scheme (%), with a standard pass mark of 40%. For some programmes, including postgraduate programmes, the pass mark is 50%. The specific pass mark for each programme is detailed in the individual Programme Handbook.

Learners must achieve the minimum pass mark in each module. For modules assessed by multiple components (assignment, project, examination, etc.), learners must pass each component to pass the module. The breakdown of assessments in each module is available in the approved programme schedule included in the Programme Handbooks. Each programme module and components are marked out of 100%, with the minimum pass mark set at 40% or 50%, as specified in the Approved Programme Documents. Pass by compensation may apply according to the rules of Pass by compensation outlined in the QQI Assessment and Standards in cases where learners achieve within 5% of the pass mark. Rules relating to Pass by Compensation are available in the Student Handbook.

To ensure fairness, transparency, and adherence to rigorous standards, learners have the opportunity to discuss their assessment results with lecturers after receiving feedback. These consultations or feedback review meetings provide valuable guidance for enhancing future performance, making them beneficial for revising and preparing for subsequent evaluations.

The Percentage Point Average (PPA) representing the overall result for each stage of a programme is calculated by multiplying the percentage achieved in each module by its allocated credits to determine the Percentage Credit Score, then summing these scores and dividing by the total credits for the stage. Module credits are listed in the approved programme schedule in each programme handbook.

Award Classifications and bands are determined by the NFQ level of a programme and the overall PPA achieved by the learner in the award final stage of a programme, and are detailed in the QQI Assessments and Standards and in each Programme Handbook. A 'Pass' classification signifies a positive achievement. All awards, except minor and

supplemental ones, are classified. Minor awards and special purpose awards are usually unclassified. Special purpose awards with at least 60 credits, comparable to a major award at the same NFQ level, may be classified similarly.

Assessments and Examinations Boards

The College holds Assessments and Examinations Boards within four weeks of the final assessment before presenting learners with their assessment results, in accordance with the schedule contained in the Academic Calendar, as included in the Learner Handbook, Moodle, and the [College's website](#). Academic Calendars may vary by programme. Review Assessments and Examinations Board, which typically evaluate Semester 1 results, are conducted to allow the release of Semester 1 provisional results to learners. Main Assessments and Examinations Boards assess the results for the overall academic year and are typically held in June. These Boards are attended by External Examiners, who have viewed and provide feedback on assessments. Learners may access results post main Assessments and Examinations Boards, by logging into the College learner database, MyTHEMIS using their Griffith email account (Single Sign-On) details. Transcripts of results are issued by Faculty Administrators in hard copy upon the completion of the Assessments and Examinations Boards for a programme.

Review, Re-check and Appeals

Learners may request a review and/or re-check post release of their results. A re-check refers to the process of checking the administrative recording and addition of marks, and that all attempted parts of the question were marked, and that no computational error occurred during the marking process or in the transfer of marks to the results sheet or database. It does not involve any review of the assessment performance or the merit of the mark awarded. Requests for re-checks must be lodged within 5 days of the official release of the results. The request must be submitted on the appropriate form to the Faculty Administration Office and accompanied by the applicable fee. Should the re-check process identify a mark adjustment, the applicable fee is refunded.

A Review affords the learner the opportunity to discuss their assessment results with their lecturer(s). Such consultations or review feedback meetings are aimed at giving guidance

CASE STUDY: Assessment in Faculty of Design – Embracing AI

The Faculty of Design has integrated AI into its assessment frameworks, offering a comprehensive approach that supports learners in structuring their work and demonstrating critical thinking skills throughout their research journey. AI plays a pivotal role by providing initial topic outlines, suggesting key areas to explore, and recommending relevant sources, guiding learners in their research direction.

To foster critical thinking, assignments are redesigned to generate thought-provoking questions, present counterarguments, and highlight underlying assumptions. This prompts learners to analyse, justify, and critically evaluate their positions. Learners are required to cite sources and evaluate their credibility, maintain research logs, and establish connections between ideas, which they outline in recorded videos detailing their research journey.

In addition, alternative assignment delivery methods are implemented, including summarising research through infographics, supported by video summaries and proper referencing.

By combining AI assistance with activities such as plagiarism checks and reflection prompts, learners are encouraged to articulate their learning and decision-making processes. This balanced approach ensures that while AI supports structural and research aspects, the core of assessment remains rooted in learners' critical analysis and unique research experiences.

to improvements to future performance and can be very beneficial for revision and repeat preparation. Such requests must be made directly to the Faculty Office within 10 days of the release of the results.

Griffith College has a rigorous, fair and transparent Appeals process relating to decisions made by the Assessments and Examinations' boards. A learner wishing to appeal the decision of an Assessments and Examinations Board may do so in accordance with the conditions or grounds set below:

- ▶ The learner believes that there was a non-academic irregularity in the manner in which his/her assessments were conducted.
- ▶ The learner wishes to present information of mitigating circumstances which were not known to the Assessments and Examinations Board. In this case the learner must also show good reason why such circumstances could not have been made known prior to or at the Assessments and Examinations Board meeting.
- ▶ There is a breach of natural justice.

Any necessary supporting documentation which may be relevant to the case should be submitted along with the Appeal Form. It is important to note that disagreement with the academic judgement of the Assessments and Examinations Board cannot constitute grounds for appeal. It should be noted that all marks approved by an Assessments and Examinations Board go through a rigorous internal and external checking and moderation procedure in adherence with the College's QAE controls. Appeals must be submitted on the official [Appeal Form](#) along with appropriate fee, within 10 days of the results of an Assessments and Examinations Board Decision being released or posted online. Should the appeal be upheld the fee will be refunded.

Evaluation

Griffith College's policies and procedures in respect of Assessment of Learners are clear and fit-for-purpose. Information for prospective applicants about learner assessments, policies and procedures, award classification and rights for review/recheck/appeals are clearly outlined in Griffith College's QAE Manual available on the College's website, and also in the learner and staff hub. These policies and procedures undergo ongoing review and development, incorporating updates from QQI and other accrediting bodies according to agreed implementation schedules. Maintaining current information and providing links to the latest policies is treated with utmost importance by the Examinations Office and the wider Academic Administration Department, and essential for accurate provision of information.

Internal evaluation indicates there is a clear understanding of policies and procedures in respect of assessment of learners. This is evidenced by a reduced number of complaints and appeals in recent years, as faculty staff and learners fully understand the requirements for the execution of these processes.

The Academic and Professional Council (APC) serves as the College's principal academic oversight committee, reporting to the Board of Directors. It has responsibility to drive excellence in programme assessment and examination

design, development, and delivery, along with related activities, by fostering a culture of quality enhancement through continuous reviews, analysis, and data-driven decision-making. APC ensures the College meets its statutory obligations for internal and external quality assurance and enhancement in relation to assessment and examinations.

One of the significant challenges facing the College is the lack of integration among its key information systems—Scholar, THEMIS, Moodle, and the Attendance Platform (ATP). This fragmentation hinders seamless data monitoring, sharing, and reporting, leading to increased manual efforts to generate accurate reports.

Additionally, investing in IT systems to streamline administrative tasks presents its own set of challenges. While the implementation of advanced learning management systems (LMS) that support various assessment formats and integrate with existing platforms is essential, it requires substantial investment and strategic planning. These improvements are necessary to optimise assignment submission and grading processes, thereby allowing educators to focus more on teaching and less on administrative duties. However, the transition to new systems can be complex, involving training for staff and potential disruptions during the implementation phase.

Another challenge is related to Mahara, the e-portfolio tool used for assessing the work-based components of modules. While Mahara plays a crucial role in documenting learner progress and achievements, it has been known to encounter issues with offering and receiving feedback from mentors. Although the College has implemented more active supports, such as training sessions and step-by-step guides, the challenge persists.

Despite these challenges, the College is committed to finding solutions that enhance its educational offerings and administrative efficiency. Addressing system integration issues, improving the functionality of Mahara, and investing in advanced IT infrastructure are crucial steps toward creating a more cohesive, efficient, and supportive learning environment for both learner and faculty.

The College highlights commendable practices in the assessment of learners. Key strengths include:

- ▶ Clear and transparent communication with learners. Each learner receives a semester schedule detailing modules, learning outcomes, assessments, marking schemes, and feedback mechanisms, all thoroughly explained by lecturers.
- ▶ Rubrics are effectively used to clarify assessment criteria, while reviewing past exam papers prior to exams to support learners' preparation.
- ▶ Timely and comprehensive feedback mechanisms ensure learners normally receive constructive insights on assignments within 1-2 weeks of completion.
- ▶ The College supports the learner assessment and examination processes through various resources such as the College's Student Handbook, Faculty and Programme Handbooks, Module Outlines, Induction sessions, and tutorials, fostering a supportive learning environment from the outset.

CASE STUDY: Assessment in the Faculty of Graduate Business School - Teaching and Assessment

The lecturers in GBS programmes are typically seasoned professionals from industry, often holding senior positions in consulting within their sectors. This brings current and future real-life scenarios directly into the learning experience.

In addition to module leaders and lecturers, industry representatives play a significant role in shaping the teaching, learning, and assessment strategies across GBS programmes. Each programme incorporates assessments based on briefs provided by actual companies, whose managers, directors and/or owners attend presentations and interact with learners during their research.

GBS is committed to annually aligning all programmes with industry regulatory requirements to support career advancement. Maintaining accreditation from relevant professional bodies such as ACCA, the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS), and the Irish Institute of Pensions Management (IIPM) is a priority. Furthermore, strong partnerships are fostered with industry bodies like the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) and various national Skillnets to ensure both existing and new programmes are responsive to industry needs.

In the case of Work Integrated Learning (WIL), rigorous QAE procedures are implemented, involving internal moderation and input from External Examiners. Within the College's apprenticeship programmes, Academic Success Coaches (ASCs) play a pivotal role in supporting learners and workplace mentors, ensuring alignment with programme learning outcomes and guiding evidence submission via the ePortfolio system (Mahara). The College demonstrates its responsiveness and adaptability through the development of blended learning programmes, enhancing accessibility and flexibility for learners through the development of creative assessment and examination opportunities, and scheduling. Evidence gained from stakeholders involved in industry placements facilitate the College's participation in new projects and related programme developments in response to industry changes.

Feedback from learners is systematically gathered and used to enhance assessment methodologies and programme effectiveness, informing policy adjustments aligned with learning outcomes. Robust QAE processes ensure the integrity, consistency, and security of assessment instruments and records, supported by rigorous review from Programme Directors, External Examiners, and adherence to GDPR practices. Overall, these practices underscore the College's commitment to educational excellence, supporting learner success through transparent communication, rigorous assessment practices, and continual improvement initiatives.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

Griffith College maintains a robust framework for assessing learners, ensuring transparency and fairness through clear communication of policies and procedures. The College's commitment to academic excellence is evident in its meticulous documentation available in Programme Handbooks, the Student Handbook, and online resources. These resources provide learners with clear guidelines and expectations, fostering a supportive environment from the outset of their academic journey.

The College has established processes to support the assessment of learners to uphold the highest academic and educational standards, while enhancing the learner experience. Areas of effective practice include:

- ▶ There is an awareness within faculties of avoiding over-assessment in their approach to teaching and learning.

- ▶ The significant and ongoing work done on the Griffith College approach to Artificial Intelligence.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The College is committed to continuously enhancing the assessment of learners to uphold the highest academic and educational standards. Areas requiring further development include:

- ▶ Enhancing support and guidance for QAE procedures in managing results data by establishing a dedicated Quality Assurance and Enhancement support team within each department to provide tailored assistance and training. Regular audits and workshops focused on best practices for data management, along with clear documentation and guidelines, will help maintain high standards.
- ▶ Providing additional training for learners and mentors in Mahara, the College's e-portfolio tool used for work-based assessments, to overcome current challenges. Developing comprehensive step-by-step guides and holding regular training sessions can help mitigate these issues. Exploring alternative feedback tools integrated with Mahara can further enhance the feedback process, ensuring smoother and more effective assessments.
- ▶ Improving the College's current attendance platform by developing it further or investing in a more advanced attendance app. This app should offer real-time updates, integration with existing learning management systems, and ease of use for both learners and faculty. Features like automated notifications for absentees, attendance analytics, and seamless reporting functionalities can enhance attendance tracking, contributing to better learner engagement and accountability.
- ▶ Investing in IT systems to streamline administrative tasks is crucial. The College is currently modernising the IT infrastructure with robust, scalable solutions to automate routine processes, reduce faculty workload, and provide a more seamless experience for learners.

- ▶ Reviewing the academic calendars to suit Apprenticeships programmes. Regular feedback sessions with employers, apprentices, and faculties will help to refine the schedule. Additionally, exploring flexible learning options and blended learning formats could provide more adaptable solutions to accommodate various needs.
- ▶ Managing rapid developments in generative AI while continuing to ensure academic integrity. The College needs robust and adaptable assessment practices to address the opportunities and threats associated with generative AI. While moving to oral assessments temporarily has been a quick fix, more imaginative and long-term solutions are necessary. During the formal programmatic reviews in 2024/2025, developing assessments that are both valid and appropriate for learners will be considered. Incorporating AI tools into the curriculum, while ensuring safeguards against misuse, will prepare learners for the modern workplace while maintaining academic integrity.
- ▶ Incorporating off-campus assessments in theatres and other performance settings for learners on the Leinster School of Music and Drama's Higher Diploma in Drama Education, allowing learners to incorporate technical elements such as sound and lighting design. This initiative will provide learners with practical, hands-on experience in real-world settings, enhancing their learning and preparation for professional careers.

By addressing these potential enhancements, Griffith College can continue to improve its educational offerings, ensuring they remain relevant, efficient, and responsive to the evolving needs of learners, faculty, and industry stakeholders.

5.3 Support for Learners

Description

Griffith College is and always has been student-centred. This is evidenced in the central position students hold in the College's core values as recently affirmed in 2024 by the College's community of students, staff and other stakeholders. As shown in the graphic representation below, the College's complementary values provide a friendly, nurturing and supportive environment for all its students as they pursue their chosen professional careers and personal development interests with commitment and integrity.

The College's student-centred approach is formally expressed in the College's commitment that "its programmes and activities from admissions to graduation focus on preparing students for success in work and life", and further reflected in the College's overall mission "to provide a world-class intercultural learning experience for a diverse body of students supporting their career success".

Many of the College's supports for learners have necessarily been presented in earlier sections of this ISER report where they related to specific educational supports, processes and practices involving or directly impacting learners.

This chapter section provides an overview and evaluation of the supports provided to students throughout the lifecycle of their engagement with the College, from their initial

application and admission through to their graduation and beyond. The section also provides additional information on, and evaluation of, certain learner supports that were not previously presented in detail.



Pre-Enrolment and Admissions

The College's engagement with learners starts at the application stage, with the College's marketing officers providing information to applicants about the College's programmes, via email, over the phone or on Zoom. In the case of international learners, the College's Global Engagement Office attends overseas education fairs, college and school international days, and in-person meetings with students and parents at pre-arranged events in the applicants' home countries. Applicants are invited to attend the College's regular open information meetings, which are held both in-person and online for all applicants, and also to meet with faculty and programme team members on an individual basis to discuss the suitability of the College's programmes for their particular interests and needs, before proceeding with their application.

The College's admissions office considers applications received from the College's marketing and international marketing officers, and determines the learners' eligibility to join their particular programmes. Applications that require additional documentation (e.g. ID, transcripts, prior accreditations, etc.) are followed up directly with the applicant, assisting them to complete the admissions process where appropriate.

Applicants and learners admitted to the College are supported by the College's growing suite of short online videos covering all aspects of the College's application and registration process. These also extend to general supports on issues such as how to set up a bank account and get an Irish PPS number. Providing the short online videos has proven hugely successful, eliminating stress for applicants and learners prior to programme commencement, and significantly reducing the support required from staff. Further details of these supports were presented in Section 4.9 above.

Induction

Griffith College views the induction of learners to the College as a major formative event, and plans, resources and celebrates it on a par with its graduation ceremonies. The College's induction involves in-person welcomes from

the College's President, Director of Academic Programmes, Students' Union President and team members, and the managers and members from College-wide departments, for example: Student Activities, Learning Support, Careers and Employability, and Learner Engagement. These welcome sessions are interspersed with lots of informal ice-breaker opportunities, allowing learners to meet and chat with new and existing friends in a relaxed setting.

The formal College-wide welcomes are combined with lots of opportunities for fun and entertainment for students to watch, enjoy and participate in as they choose, along with food and refreshments. Recent induction events have included comedians, circus acts, céilí (Irish dancing) sessions and music sessions.

College-wide inductions are complemented by faculty and programme-based inductions. Led by Heads of Faculty and Programme Directors, these introduce learners to each other, and to their programme teams, administrators, programme support staff, along with library members, and IT and digital learning support.

The focus throughout the College's days of induction are to welcome learners, to give them opportunities to have fun, to meet other learners, to get their bearings, to know where to go and who to ask if they have any questions, and the assurance and confidence that they will be supported throughout their time with the College. Faculties continue to provide structured induction and onboarding support for learners, particularly during the first semester of first year programmes for full-time learners, as provided by the Law Faculty in their first seven weeks programme.

Academic Support

Throughout their studies with the College, learners are directly supported by their faculties and programme team members. These supports include the roles played by heads of faculty, programme directors, faculty administrators, year heads, class representatives, tutors, lab technicians, work placement officers, dissertation supervisors, workplace mentors and other staff. Support resources include College, Faculty and Programme based learner handbooks, dissertation and assessment handbooks, and online resources, such as Moodle and LinkedIn Learning.

Learners are also supported in relation to their studies by the various teams within the College's library, IT services, digital learning, and learning support departments. Further details on these supports are provided in Section 5.1 above.

Outside the learners' faculties and programme teams, the College's Learning Support Department provides educational support for learners with disabilities and additional learning requirements. Learners seeking guidance and support in relation to their careers and professional employment are directly supported by the College's Careers and Employability Department. An evaluation of the supports provided by these two departments are provided later in this section, with further information previously provided in other sections of this report.

Student Life

The College provides opportunities for learners to engage in a range of social and development activities outside their academic programmes. These are facilitated by the College's Students' Union and the College's Student Activities team



through their organisation of clubs, societies, field trips and social events for students on a campus and College-wide basis. Further opportunities for student engagement arise within faculties and other departments, for example, the College's Law Society and Innocence Project managed by the Law Faculty; the Global Ambassador programme managed by the College's Global Engagement Office; and the President's Award initiated and currently managed by the College's Careers and Employability Office.

The College's faculties and support departments provide direct support to learners when they are faced with personal life challenges, for example bereavements, difficult personal relationships, accommodation issues, or other negative life experiences. Students are supported on an individual basis within the faculty with deferrals and extensions as appropriate, and outside the faculty by other support departments, for example Learner Engagement and Students' Union officers, who provide an opportunity for learners to seek and receive support. The College's external counselling service is also actively promoted and communicated to all learners and support departments, so that learners experiencing life challenges can receive appropriate professional confidential support.

The Griffith Halls of Residences (GHR) on the College's main Dublin campus is also home to 664 of the College's learners. These learners have additional supports and activities provided by the GHR management team and staff. As the learners create their close community within GHR, they are actively encouraged to look out for each other, their friends and fellow residents, and to seek, use and direct others to the supports for learners provided by the College as a whole.

Graduation and Beyond

Griffith College celebrates graduation ceremonies with dignity and respect, recognising the importance they hold for learners, their families and everyone in the College who assisted the learners along the way. Great care is taken to ensure that ceremonies respect the formality and significance of learners' successful completion of nationally accredited awards, and sufficiently informal to reflect the close relationship the programme team members and wider College staff have with the learners themselves.

The College consistently receives unsolicited positive feedback from learners and parents about how much they appreciate the care and attention afforded to the ceremony by the College. The College continues to keep in touch with graduates (GDPR permitting) through the ongoing connections between graduates and programme team members on LinkedIn and through the College's Alumni Office.

The College's various student services and support departments (e.g. Learner Engagement, Student Activities, Library, Careers and Employability, Learning Support, Students' Union, etc.) track student requests, meetings, and activities. These statistics feed into end of year departmental reports which are then shared across the College's related governance committees and complement the feedback provided each semester by learners in their College-wide evaluation of facilities and services.

The overall feedback provided by learners and departmental staff in relation to learner supports is then used to inform the College's further development.

Insights from the Annual Programme Reports (2022/2023) on learner supports include the following overall comments:

Departments were pleased to see the additional learner services relating to pastoral care for 2022/2023 developed by the College and the close engagement with the International Office to provide support for international learners.

The overall feedback is that learners generally had a positive experience at Griffith College through the support and services offered. It is noted that faculties play a major role (as a first point of contact) in offering this support often on a wide range of topics.

Examples of specific feedback provided by learners in recent reports spanning 2022-2024 include the following comments, some of which have since been resolved, with others being addressed, where possible (as per the current status identified below).

- ▶ Full-time learners recommend releasing the detailed timetables a few weeks prior to start of each the semester. Current Status: This continues to be a challenge for a small number of programmes.
- ▶ Learners recommend improving canteen services i.e. opening hours, weekend availability, choice of dishes, more vegetarian options, etc. Current Status: The College has engaged a new provider for the canteen to start on 01 September 2024.
- ▶ Greater presence from the Careers and Employability Department requested by learners in a particular faculty. Current Status: This has since been addressed.

The online app that records learners' in-person attendance in class does not always seem to work or show the data accurately. Current Status: Improvements have been made, but classes rescheduled to alternative rooms continue to be a challenge.

- ▶ Recommendation made for a wider range of activities and societies which promotes inclusiveness. Current Status: A number of successful inclusive events were organised in 2023/2024 by the College's EDI committee, with support from the College's Student Activities Department and Students' Union.
- ▶ Discrepancies between the opportunities given to Griffith College's Dublin based learners compared to those provided in Cork and Limerick were mentioned and activities were recommended to bring the learners from other campuses and partner institutions together. Current Status: The appointment and funding of SU personnel in the College's Cork and Limerick campuses has facilitated these developments, with some joint events trialled in 2024.

Learner Awareness of the College's Supports

Griffith College's learner support services are promoted and communicated to learners in a variety of ways, for example during College and faculty induction sessions, in communications from programme teams, via links on Moodle pages, and through email and direct messaging campaigns by the departments involved. However, understandably, many learners may not engage with the

Other evaluations of learner feedback from the Services and Facilities 2023/24 surveys are summarised in **Figures 5.3.1** below.

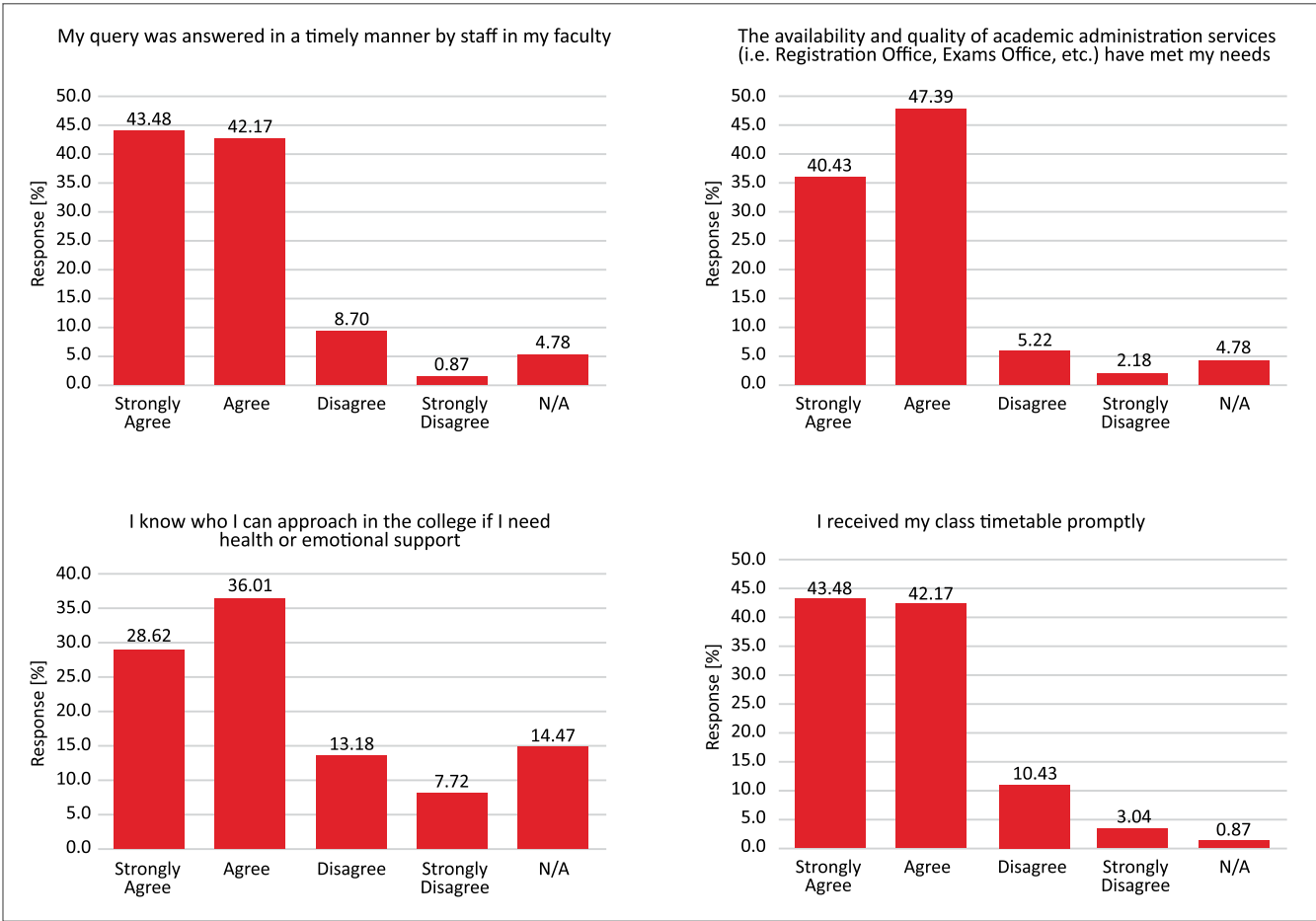


Figure 5.3.1: Extracts of evaluations of learner feedback from the Services and Facilities Survey 2023/24

support departments until they have a particular personal or professional reason to engage.

In 2021, to increase the awareness of the College’s learner support services, the Learner Support and Services Corridor was established at the main Dublin campus, relocating the various departments together in one of the College’s central buildings, next to the Students’ Union, and making the services more visible and accessible to learners and staff. Today, this location presents a colourful, signposted and

welcoming corridor where learners can be supported by the various departments involved.

The various support departments also provide their support services to learners from all campuses and collaborative partner institutions on an online basis. It is hoped that the College’s online Learner Hub being developed will also advance the visibility and awareness of the supports available for learners across all of the College’s programmes.



Images of the Learner Support and Services Corridor, Daniel O’Connell Building, South Circular Road Campus

Careers and Employability Office

The Careers and Employability Office is a key support for learners across the College’s campuses and collaborative partners. The Office works closely with the faculties and bridges the link between the College and its external stakeholders (industry and employers). The services provided by the Office are summarised in Table 5.3.1 below.

collaboration with members of the College’s Teaching and Learning and QAE departments.

Learning Support Department

Since its inception in 2018, the College’s Learning Support Department has experienced significant growth, with the number of registered learners increasing from 35 in

Table 5.3.1: Supports provided by the College Careers Service

Careers Outreach Academic Year 2023 2024	
Criterion	Number
Students who have accessed the Careers Office Moodle page	2820
Students reached through on campus events	500+
Employability Skills Programme (attended one or more workshop)	165
One to One Appointments	450
CV Review	200
Email support	150+
Mentoring Programme Participants	30
Employer Connections	110+

Feedback from previous learner surveys highlighted that learners would like a greater presence of career advice and supports across the College’s campuses, and an additional member was appointed in the Cork Campus, allowing learners from all campuses to be supported online from Dublin and Cork. Working together, the College’s Careers and Employability Officers, arrange a number of events on a College and faculty basis linking learners and employers.

Working with the College’s work-placement officer and other departments, the Careers and Employability Office delivers an Employability Skills Programme which is available for free to all registered learners alongside their primary programme of study. The Office has also recently initiated a review of the College’s Graduate Attributes in

2018 to 153 in 2024. A key driver of this success is the increased engagement with the College’s learners and the development of close relationships with faculties and departments across the College. Supporting learners is at the heart of the College’s values, and the department provides personalised learning support and resources to the individual learners involved. Figure 5.3.2 below charts the growth in number of learners supported by the Learning Support Department in recent years.

National Advocacy for Learners

The Learning Support Department has strong connections with national advocacy groups such as Dyslexia Association of Ireland, ADHD Ireland and the Irish Autism charity, ASIAM. Griffith College are also

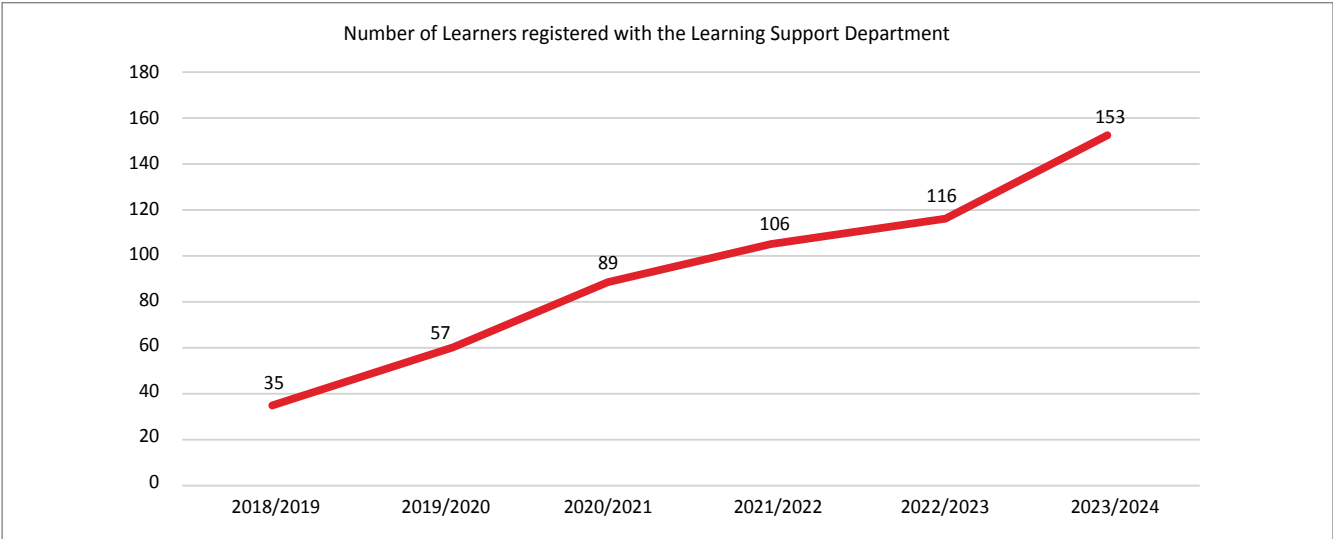


Figure 5.3.2: Growth of activity within Griffith College’s learning support department since 2018/2019 academic year (i.e. number of learners registered with the service)



Griffith College Cork Careers Fair 2023, Alter Domus representatives Neil Walsh and Marcus Nunes, pictured with Marion Courtney and Sinead O'Dea, Griffith College Cork

members of Association of Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) and the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN). These memberships further anchor and guide the work of the department. These advocacy bodies also guide the College when facilitating staff CPD sessions and seminars, training staff in disability awareness and promoting awareness among the learner body of different types of disabilities, their challenges, strengths, and associated learning preferences.

By maintaining open and regular lines of communication, the Learning Support Department ensures that faculty members are fully informed and equipped to support learners with diverse learning needs. This collaborative approach allows for the integration of learning support strategies into the classroom, enhancing the overall educational experience for learners. The Learning Support Department's commitment to these initiatives continues to influence how it designs tangible evidence-driven supports for the College's individual learners' needs.

Advancing relationships with learners by encouraging more informal interactions is a key focus for the department. This approach, combined with annual feedback, has significantly contributed to the high satisfaction rates among learners. The success of this strategy is evident in the consistently positive feedback that the Learning Support Department receives, and the strong, supportive connections that it has built with the learner body. This is evident from feedback received from learners registered with the service, when asked "How can we improve our services", as follows:

"Fantastic service, which has helped me more than I can explain. I would not have been able to complete my exams without it, thank you all very much :)"

"Excellent, service and advisors helpful, kind and approachable. I could not have achieved my degree or completed the course without their continuous support."



Business Lecturer William McBride with learner/helpers at Griffith College Dublin careers fair, December 2023

Student Wellbeing and Counselling Services

Over the past three years the topic of student wellbeing and the need for a more developed counselling service has been highlighted by learners and staff in the various surveys and feedback points throughout the academic year, and further evidenced in the feedback from the Griffith Halls of Residence (GHR) and the College's Learner Engagement Office.

As part of this ISER reflection process, many faculties have highlighted the need to further promote learner access to counselling services, and that the contact information should be clearly communicated and readily available. As students may require such support in challenging times, they need to be aware of the service and contact information long before they may need to use it. Faculties have also noted that once clear links to the services were communicated and clarified, students were able to access the service.

Plans to develop the College's Student Wellbeing and Counselling Services are currently being considered to determine how best they can be further resourced and more comprehensively communicated and promoted to support learners in 2024 and future years.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

Griffith College considers the range of supports it currently provides for learners to be effective and comprehensive, notwithstanding that continued development and enhancement is required and planned. The consistent support for learners is evident throughout the entire College, in every faculty, department, campus and partner institution.

Examples of effective practice identified include those listed below and in supporting case studies:

- ▶ The College's welcoming support for learners and best interests, from before they enrol until after they graduate.
- ▶ Providing online pre-enrolment supports for applicants and learners covering all aspects of their admission and registration processes, including their transition to higher education in the College.
- ▶ Induction programmes to facilitate learners' integration and success.
- ▶ The open-door policy providing learners with access to all in the College.
- ▶ Being there for students, in their good times and bad times, to support them as required.
- ▶ Valuing and acting on the feedback they provide.
- ▶ Celebrating learners' achievements, in end of year Creative Shows, and funding public displays of their work within and outside the College.

- ▶ Encouraging learners' ongoing development through initiatives like the President's Award and the Global Ambassador programmes.
- ▶ Embracing and celebrating diversity, participating in national, social and cultural events.
- ▶ Advocating for parity of opportunity for learners in private higher education provider institutions, and the successful inclusion of learners on a case-by-case basis for public funding to support their learning and disability requirements.
- ▶ Providing learner protection for learners of other higher education providers whenever invited or required, ensuring the continuation of their programmes to completion.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

Griffith College looks forward to the further enhancement of its learner supports. These will continue to be informed by the direct feedback given by learners through the College's established mid-semester and end-of-semester feedback processes, and by the reflections and evaluations arising from this ISER review.

The current areas proposed for enhancement are shown below and include some that are already under way for 2024/25.

- ▶ Review and clarify the overall structure and integration of the College's learner support services, while retaining and expanding the existing supports and services provided by each of the College's existing separate support departments.
- ▶ Review and expand the College's support services in relation to mental health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Continue to expand the number of inclusive cultural events and activities across campuses.
- ▶ Develop the College's Learner Hub to provide additional clarity of communication in respect of all of the College's activities.
- ▶ Increase the resources of the College's Careers and Employability Office, to create more opportunities for learners and graduates to directly engage with industry initiatives (with support from the College's faculties and Alumni Office).
- ▶ Advance the College's Graduate Attribute project with all of the College's community to its successful completion.
- ▶ Promote the President's Award, following its successful trial in 2023/24.

CASE STUDY: Faculty of Law: First Seven Weeks

Supporting early adjustment to third-level education is linked with subsequent success.

With that in mind, the First Seven Weeks is an initiative introduced in 2023 by the Faculty of Law, designed to provide targeted support for learners, during the initial weeks of their programme, and as a revision tool for those returning to their studies. In conjunction with lecturers and programme directors, the faculty offers a range of information sessions to help learners get settled in their studies.

The First Seven Weeks programme is structured as follows:

- Week 1- Introduction to Moodle
- Week 2- Answering Problem and Essay Type Questions
- Week 3- Study Strategies, Note Taking and Time Management
- Week 4- Academic Integrity
- Week 5- Referencing
- Week 6- OSCOLA (Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities)
- Week 7- Pre-Reading Week, catch up with the faculty

All talks are delivered synchronously via Zoom and also recorded and posted on Moodle. The webinars are scheduled to be accessible by full-time, part-time and blended programme students.

The programme already has a positive impact. In 2023/2024, over 50 learners attended the Introduction to Moodle session. Attendance varied per week but overall it is perceived as interactive and successful. The final session 2023/2024 was an in-person event with over 100 lecturers and students participating to meet their peers and gain an introduction to some of the additional activities hosted within the faculty (e.g. the Irish Innocence Project, Student Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC), courts visits, USA trips, etc.).

The linked resources on Moodle have been accessed over 400 times in the academic year (250 times during the first semester). This level of engagement confirms that students value this resource, and as a further support in next academic year, the First Seven Weeks initiative will have a dedicated space on the Clinical Legal Practice page on Moodle.

CASE STUDY: Funding Support for Learners with Disabilities

The College's Learning Support Department provides support for learners with disabilities, learning difficulties, and neurological (and other) conditions, ensuring that all learners can manage the demands of their chosen programme. Learning support is available to both full-time and part-time learners, across all campuses and partner colleges.

Learning Support Department staff meet with each learner when they register with the service, or indicate a learning difficulty/disability, to get a sense of their needs. The staff member explains the Learning Support service and how it works for learners. If the Learner requires more specific supports e.g. a note taker, extra technology, interpreter, the learner and/or their guardian are advised that they College can apply to the HEA for funding under the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD). Any application is considered on a case-by-case basis by the HEA.

Advocacy is key to the application. The application needs to make a case for why the learner has chosen their course in Griffith College, what are the specific benefits of the course, and why it suits the needs of the learner for example, part-time, hybrid, location, practical based.

To support the application for FSD funding, a learning needs assessment (LNA) is conducted with the learner, and this is supported with documentation about the learner's specific disability/learning difficulties and a learner consent form. The formal request letter (including costings per semester, details of the programme the learner wants to study and any quotations for technology or support hours) is sent to the HEA under the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD).

As a result of a recent application under the FSD, the Department of Further and Higher Education has agreed to provide funding to support one Griffith College learner who has additional support needs in Semester 1, 2024/2025. This government decision means that this learner will receive the same level of financial support for their disability that they would receive if they attended a public institution.

The College is hugely appreciative to the staff of the Learning Support Department for their advocacy on behalf of this learner and to all those involved across the College who over so many years have brought the government to this welcome position of equity for all learners.

CASE STUDY: Enhancing Employability for All: A Case Study Analysis of Undergraduate Support

The Certificate in Employability Skills was created by the Careers Office as an introduction to career development programme, equipping learners with a toolkit to inform their future career journey and transitions, separate but parallel to student academic progression. For accessibility, each workshop is delivered synchronously both online on a weekday evening, and in-person on Saturday mornings. The programme was available to students on each campus because of the flexibility of delivery.

A flipped classroom approach was adopted, with learners reviewing resources before class and participating in live workshops and problem-solving activities with their peers in class. The programme also incorporated real-world case studies and role-playing exercises to simulate workplace scenarios. Regular feedback sessions, both from instructors and peers, provided learners with constructive insights to further refine their skills.

Learners were invited to complete optional related assessments for certification purposes. This allowed for the workshops to be open to all interested learners to benefit from the knowledge, skills and competency investment, and to complete the optional assessment to obtain a Griffith College Certificate in Employability Skills if they wished.

Outcomes and Impact

Learners' feedback indicated a very positive response, as evidenced below:

*"...As a final year student, career decision was on my ...list
... and this programme has really helped me."*

LLB, year 3

"...I leave the programme with greater knowledge and direction to achieve my goals."

BA (Hons) Communications and Media Production, year 3

*"...the workshops provided a comprehensive learning experience, encompassing
informative sessions, engaging discussions, personality exploration,
and hands-on teamwork."*

BA (Hons) Business Studies, year 2

Overall, the programme is a success. The Careers Office runs the workshops each semester. The programme has attracted 40-50 learners per cohort, with about 30% of participants completing the assessments and seeking certification.



5.4 Conclusion and Intended Future Direction - Teaching, Learning and Assessment [Objective 2]

Griffith College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment activities are not just fit-for-purpose, they reflect a genuine and sustained commitment to delivering and supporting high-quality learning experiences for learners and lecturers alike.

Clear evidence of this support for lecturer development is given in the College's design and delivery of MA, Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate programmes in Education, Learning and Development, made available for free to all its lecturers, whether full-time or part-time, across all campuses and collaborative partner institutions, along with bespoke modules in research supervision and work-based learning, free to supervisors and work-place mentors to support their work with learners. The College's motivation is clear. Anything that supports lecturers' teaching, supports all of their learners, permanently benefitting all. So, make it happen!

Evidence throughout this ISER identifies other supports, such as access to LinkedIn Learning resources for all, the PETALS project for learning resources, and the Teaching Champions initiative that nurtures the dissemination of best teaching practices across faculties and partner colleges.

The ISER review evidences the College's commitment to advancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practices nationally through its engagement with the National Forum

the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, its involvement in EU research projects and its aspiration that lecturers in private higher education colleges will be soon be afforded equal (or even partial) eligibility to related funds nationally

The College's commitment to learners is evidenced in thousands of everyday considerate interactions; the open-door policy; the pre-induction support videos; not having exams on the same or consecutive days, seeking College-wide learner feedback each semester and reporting back on it; advancing UDL practices; learning support; and supporting learners and lecturers from other institutions when faced with difficult times.

The earlier sections of this chapter provide detailed lists of effective practice and related areas for potential development, for example President's Award, Graduate Attributes, increased mental health support, all of which the College looks forward to progressing.

At its core, educational provision is about making a difference, for people, both learners and lecturers. For a group of mature learners, it can be creating a bespoke programme, like the College's one-year BEng in Industrial and Systems Engineering programme to enable them return to college to gain a degree twenty years after they left. For lecturers, it can be the phone call from the same learners saying that they've just been promoted to regional manager of their engineering firm, or the spontaneous standing ovation given by graduates to a lecturer at a graduation event.

It all matters! It really does!

6. SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW [OBJECTIVE 3]

6.1 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Self-evaluation, monitoring and review at Griffith College focuses particularly on the quality of, or impact on, the learner's experience, achievements, contributions, and on findings from the many stakeholders engaging in the quality system. The emphasis in the first instance is on the impact on learners and other stakeholders, rather than on policies and procedures underpinning those outcomes. Self-evaluation is taken as an opportunity to engage in crucially important dialogue with stakeholders, including learners, employers, collaborative partners, and external experts retained by the College in implementing and supporting its quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

Description

The College's processes for quality assurance planning, monitoring and reporting are outlined in the [QAE Manual: Section K: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review](#). These policies and procedures support quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) monitoring and reporting at programme level, faculty/departmental level, and College level.

All College-wide academic and professional processes are subject to QAE annual review, and such reviews are planned for accordingly. These QAE reviews provide an opportunity for the College to reflect on the effectiveness of processes and mechanisms to assure and enhance the quality of academic and service provision. Review outcomes and reports generate evidence for the wider College on the operation of this provision.

Regular meetings with all relevant stakeholders and robust policies and procedures support QAE planning, monitoring, and reporting within the College. Reports and generated responses are submitted to the College's Academic and Professional Council (APC) and support continuous improvement within the College.

Annual academic and professional QAE reviews support the College's completion of the Annual Quality Report (AQR) which is submitted to QQI. The AQR provides documentary evidence of the College's strategic QAE development and application. It provides QQI with assurance that the College's internal QAE procedures are well-established and are being implemented consistently with regulatory requirements.

Specifically, the AQR provides QQI, and the wider public, with information on

- ▶ the College's internal QAE systems and processes
- ▶ the College's QAE activities undertaken during the reporting period, and their impact
- ▶ the College's plans for QAE activities to be undertaken during the subsequent, and following, reporting period(s)

- ▶ any examples of good practice and innovation implemented by the College which may be of benefit to peers across the sector
- ▶ written case studies of good practice based on main themes/topics as identified by QQI, linked to national policy developments, and specific local initiatives or activities identified by the College.

Since the introduction of the option for independent providers to submit an AQR, the College has submitted the following reports:

- ▶ [Griffith College Annual Quality Report 2021](#) [reporting period 2019-2020]
- ▶ [Griffith College Annual Quality Report 2022](#) [reporting period 2020-2021]
- ▶ [Griffith College Annual Quality Report 2023](#) [reporting period 2021-2022]
- ▶ [Griffith College Annual Quality Report 2024](#) [reporting period 2022-2023]

The College's process for developing self-evaluation reports involves evidence-based research, and all relevant stakeholders. The resulting reports are grounded in evidence gathered through the operational processes and information specifically generated during the review itself, as well as considered during the review. This evidence is normally a combination of feedback and data.

Within the context of its QAE self-evaluation processes, the College also engages external experts to periodically seek independent oversight and review of the effectiveness of its QAE System against national and international benchmarks providing evidence, assurance and accountability to the wider public of the College's commitment to excellence, quality, transparency and integrity. Some examples of the type of evaluations which have been supported by external expertise include:

- ▶ Evaluation of MSc programmes including a review of the supervision of dissertation work, December 2018.
- ▶ The Learning, Teaching and Development Review: "A Roadmap for Sustainability and Innovation in Teaching and Learning at Griffith College", completed in 2021.
- ▶ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Report on Progress, Challenges & Recommendations, June 2023.
- ▶ External review of the College's BA in Bar Management, summer 2024.

Strategic analysis and follow-up of the outcome of internal QAE reviews and monitoring are implemented across the College, for example:

- ▶ Programme team responses to any conditions and recommendations identified by external (re)validation panels are shared with other programme teams undertaking or planning programme review, revalidation and/or validation processes to facilitate enhancement.

- ▶ Learner feedback is integrated into the annual programme reporting and programme review and development processes, and learner support service planning.
- ▶ Lecturer feedback is integrated into the annual programme reporting and programme review and development processes, and lecturer CPD planning.
- ▶ External Examiners reports, and their responses, support annual programme reporting and the periodic programme review and development processes.
- ▶ Departmental responses to the issues identified in the learners' services and facilities survey are included in the survey report and circulated to all learners.

In programme review reporting, for example, evidence presented includes learner, lecturer, graduate, external examiner and industry feedback gathered through surveys and focus groups. These are further supported by output from operational activities such as programme committee meetings, APRs and class rep meetings. Programme reporting is underpinned by the analysis of programme data reflecting on applications, enrolments, assessment, etc. generated via the College's Institutional Analytics Dashboard. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative data supports comprehensive and inclusive evaluation and reporting.

Feedback sought from learners is used to further enhance the overall delivery of the programme and the learner experience going forward. Learner feedback demonstrates overall learner satisfaction with the programme and their experiences, relevance of modules on the programme, rationale for credits, assessment strategies and weightings. This is additionally supported by meetings with class reps. Evaluation of the feedback allows assessment of the quality of both delivery and content of the modules. The annual programme report (APR) allows the programme team to look at overall satisfaction, comments /suggestions. These evaluations are gathered using a list of questions and any recommendations that arise are with a view to implementing change to benefit future cohorts, for example, in the 2023/2424 Services and Facilities Survey, 95.4% of students who expressed an opinion about the Global Engagement Office (GEO) were happy with the quality and availability of its services.

Similarly, the College's Learner Engagement Office uses specific measurements to see how well its strategies are working. These include tracking the use of welcome emails, conducting surveys, collecting feedback, monitoring service usage, analysing communication methods, checking satisfaction with one-on-one support, tracking the use of skill-building resources, and assessing collaborative efforts with faculty and staff. This ensures that learners' needs are met within a supportive environment.

Feedback from lecturers is also crucially important and in addition to the formal and informal faculty meetings, lecturers are required to complete annual Module Evaluation Surveys concerning their respective module(s).

A Faculty's external examiners are also required to provide formal feedback via their end of year report in addition to informal feedback concerning assessment throughout the academic year. All of the above feedback channels and mechanisms play a crucial role in the ongoing refinement of the College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy.

The process for reviewing/updating handbooks and standard operating procedures relating to academic administration enables the production of clear and detailed documentation that supports consistent practices across the College. Regular updates and reviews ensure that these policies are kept current and relevant.

Evaluation

All QAE policies, procedures, practices and guidelines are included in the College's QAE Manual. The College awareness and implementation of QAE policies and procedures overall is strong, and recent enhancements to the QAE Manual support its use as a single source of information. QAED circulates proposed new policies for discussion and feedback to relevant parties, for example, FA, PD and HF groups. Proposed procedures are flagged at APC and return to this forum for approval once drafted and review processes are complete. Forms are reviewed and redesigned as necessary to be user-friendly, consistent, effective and professional in their appearance and design.

QAED supports the administration of College operational meetings such as those of the faculty administrators and programme directors, as well as APC. This provides an opportunity for QAED to promote, embed and enhance QAE practices across the College.

In preparing for this self-evaluation, the College has leveraged its experience of completing previous significant self-evaluations and whole institutional reviews over its lifetime, including two separate institutional reviews in 2009 – for Nottingham Trent University (in June) and HETAC (in October) – and one supporting reengagement with QQI in 2019. Generated ISERs are intentionally designed to serve as a working document for the College, providing a plan and related guide to the ongoing development of its programmes, activities, learners, staff and stakeholder relationships.

The fact that input and feedback is sought from stakeholders across the College, with all faculties, and academic and learner service departments and individuals involved and invited to provide contributions, makes self-evaluation a very effective process. The College's APC, MB, QAE subcommittee (QAES), education, learning and development group (ELDG), heads of faculty, faculty administrators and programme directors all review and contribute to the self-evaluation processes, through various channels, as appropriate.

QAE self-evaluation also supports the completion of the College's AQR. An evaluation of the AQR process itself was formally conducted within the College in February 2023, to facilitate a response to a QQI evaluation of the process- QQI commissioned a team of independent consultants to evaluate the function and value of the Annual Quality Report (AQR) as a tool for monitoring the effectiveness of institutional QAE.

Overall, the College believes that the AQR is useful in providing a comprehensive overview to an external audience of QAE activities in the College during the reporting period. However, given that its submission to QQI, and its review / reflection timeframe can relate to activities up to 18 months earlier, the College finds that it needs to remain cognisant of the reporting period and the fact that some actions may have already been closed since the period under review has completed.



Given the timing of the AQR report, all other reporting on an academic year under review has been completed (e.g. assessment and examinations' outcomes, external examiner feedback) and the feedback actioned. The AQR, therefore, serves as a useful QAE overview of the output of other reviews including the APRs and other annual and periodic reports on departments, functions and processes, including programme development processes, completed during the academic year in question.

The engagement with the AQR document, and its demonstration of year-on-year progress plays a welcome and enabling role in reflecting on and advancing the College's institutional objectives and addressing recommendations made by review panels. The College has increasingly embraced the opportunity to engage widely in completing the AQR to support QAE processes, guiding the College's progress towards delegation of authority.

From an external point of view the AQR is a valuable opportunity for private HEIs to highlight the level of QAE activity and wider college developments undertaken within the period under review, and to share this information on a national scale.

Examples of initiatives which support QAE practice and promotion include:

- ▶ Introduction of new management information systems, such as THEMIS and BambooHR, allows for enhanced reporting which supports QAE self-evaluation, monitoring and review.
- ▶ Communications from, and CPD training organised by, the Teaching and Learning Department, and Teaching Champions, support the promotion of QAE practices within the academic processes.
- ▶ Operational meetings across the College – process improvements are often as a result of reporting, analysis and discussion at meetings.
- ▶ Expertise and experience sharing and the creation of best practice documents.
- ▶ The College's increased delegation of content creation and update for the website with all drafts checked by the website editor before being published.

- ▶ The use of feedback forms after training is delivered, for example, for Teaching and Learning CPD and in relation to any HR initiatives, providing an opportunity to ensure a clear understanding of the topic was provided, while also providing the opportunity for enhancement of the next provision.

The annual Service and Facilities Survey to students, prepared and conducted by the QAED, also provides valuable feedback to the Campus Services office to allow it to prioritise key enhancements and improvements within the College. The feedback received in the 2023/24 survey suggested improvements in areas such as housekeeping and heating on campus. This feedback prompted the Campus Services team to review current cleaning schedules and regimes as well as cleaning times to ensure the best possible outcomes – resulting in the current satisfaction rating of over 90%. The survey feedback in relation to the heating on campus aligned with ongoing projects for the upgrade of the College's heating and building management systems, thus supporting Maintenance to prioritise areas of the campus for upgrade.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The self-evaluation, monitoring and review process at the College has enabled staff to provide feedback in areas relevant to them and in other areas they feel they would like to comment on. Examples of effective practice include:

- ▶ The APRs submitted to the QAED team, provide an annual review of each programme delivered by the College, detailing lecturer and learner feedback, specific grades per module, external examiner feedback, and it also provides insights into the admission / retention rates each year and learner performance during their academic journey.
- ▶ Weekly reporting of challenges and improvements is provided at Innopharma Education's weekly operations meeting. These meetings provide (among other activities) a forum to share best practice assessment methods within the faculty (e.g. AI, Mahara, Mentimeter).
- ▶ Within the Global Engagement Office (GEO), meetings have helped to monitor and enhance practices, such as the introduction of Campus Connect and the refining of the arrival form.

- ▶ The Data Protection Officer (DPO) has undertaken 23 Data Protection Impact assessments on new systems that are being considered for purchase by the College. The DPO also maintains a data protection risk register and data retention schedule.
- ▶ Centralised management of Academic Administration allows for streamlined process implementation and consistent academic standards within the administrative support provided to College staff and learners/applicants while maintaining academic integrity across all programmes. The use of the Central Administration directory (centralised filing) facilitates easy access to critical documents and resources.
- ▶ The College's application for the Athena Swan Bronze Award (a framework for advancing equality in higher education) will require a data informed process and a strategic and informed approach to EDI planning and implementation.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

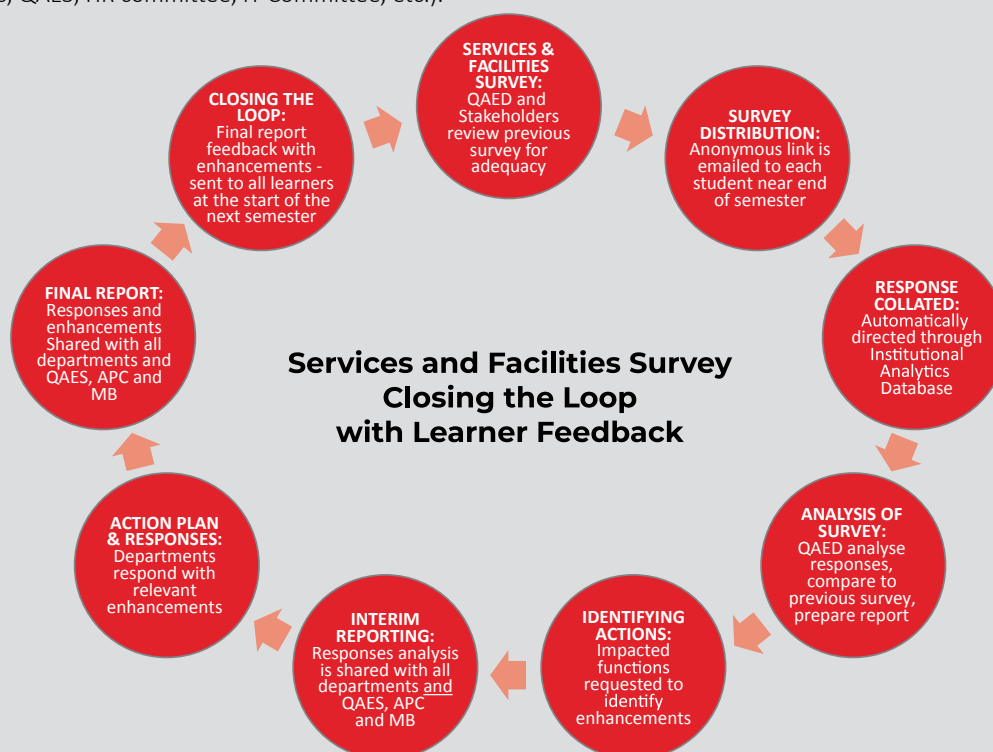
The collective institutional experience has also recognised the need for further enhancement to overcome challenges, as suggested below:

- ▶ Further enable a knowledge-sharing culture across the College by continuing to support inter-faculty collaboration and real-time sharing of best practices and case studies across faculties.
- ▶ Support greater inclusivity in communications to partner faculties.
- ▶ Strengthen research and stakeholder engagement in the development of the review and revalidation documents.
- ▶ Develop a tailored APR template and process for use within the Griffith College Professional Academy.
- ▶ Build on the successful redevelopment of the College's Disability and Learning Support policy to investigate, inform and develop other policies to guide practice.
- ▶ Continue to plan for processes aligned with the pending introduction of the International Education Mark (IEM).

CASE STUDY: CLOSING THE LOOP: Reporting back on Learner Feedback

The College's Services and Facilities Survey gathers feedback from learners on various aspects of the learning experience across the learner lifecycle. The survey covers eight key sections spanning support and communication prior to studying at Griffith College, right through to student support on campus, library, canteen, and other campus facilities. Some sections ask for additional information from students e.g., choosing Griffith College, learner platforms, assessment and the Students' Union. At the end of the survey students are also asked more generally what they enjoyed most, what they least enjoyed, as well as what they would change or improve in the services and facilities across all four campuses of Dublin, Cork and Limerick (and/or relevant collaborative partner).

The feedback received from these processes and the resulting actions and developments are managed on an ongoing basis by College members, both individually and collectively through the various committees and governance bodies (e.g. BoD, APC, MB, HFs, PDs, QAES, HR committee, IT Committee, etc.).



The review process concludes with College's response in the form of a "what you said" "what we did" report outlining the College's actions, both completed and proposed, to address to points raised as outlined in the following graphic.

6.2 Programme Monitoring and Review

Description

The College's policies and procedures for Programme Monitoring and Review are described in the [QAE Manual, Section C: Programmes of Education and Training – Programme Monitoring and Review](#). All College accredited and non-framework awards – undergraduate, postgraduate and professional programmes – provided by Griffith College, are subject to programme monitoring and review on an ongoing and more formally scheduled basis.

Programme Monitoring

The College quality assures and enhances the learning experience on its programmes using ongoing feedback mechanisms and specific additional learner supports. Ongoing feedback on teaching and learning, and academic programme content and quality, both formal and informal, is actively sought throughout the academic year through several monitoring mechanisms and data, including:

- ▶ Learner feedback questionnaires every semester, where learners are requested to provide feedback on each module, the faculty and College-wide academic and learner support services and facilities, etc. Formal input from learners via meetings with class reps throughout each semester, and through class rep presence at programme committee meetings.
- ▶ Formal, semi-formal and informal communication with learners, for example, through questionnaires and class discussions, and the use of tools such as Mentimeter in class.
- ▶ Lecturer feedback questionnaires every semester, to reflect on each module delivered (as collected using the Lecturer Module Report Form).
- ▶ Formal and informal Programme Committee meetings every semester, and discussion with faculty members.
- ▶ Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) as completed by the individual programme directors at the end of every academic year.
- ▶ Formal reports from external examiners, assessors, verifiers, etc.
- ▶ External feedback sources (as gained, for example, through alumni and graduate feedback, industry feedback, guest lecturers, workplace mentors, work placement supervisors, etc.).
- ▶ Application, admission, assessment data – generated through the College's Institutional Analytics Dashboard, as outlined below.

The processes for monitoring and evaluation are detailed in the College's QAE Manual, with the same procedures applied in each campus, and with each collaborative partner, to ensure that the approach is consistent across all programmes. These processes support programme modification to enhance the College's programmes as required.

Learner Feedback

The Institutional Analytics Dashboard is also used to report on learner feedback where learners submit feedback through online surveys, for example, via the Services and Facilities surveys. This process is managed through the QAED and supported by the IT Services department. The data generated through the reports is distributed to relevant service departments to identify and implement necessary actions which will improve the level of service provision to learners. Interim reports are provided to the QAE Subcommittee and APC, and the response to the identified issues from the various departments is provided to learners.

Annual Programme Review (APR)

At the end of every academic year, programme teams capture the performance of their programmes by completing the APR Template – [QAE Manual: Appendix 9](#). The APR addresses any identified strengths and weaknesses in areas such as: learner / lecturer experience, learner outcomes, and stakeholder feedback. Programme teams also reflect on resourcing, examples of good practice and areas for improvement. The APR also provides status updates on previous action points identified in earlier reviews and lists any new actions highlighted in their latest analysis.

The APR process has been reinvigorated (and streamlined) over the past four years with programme teams benefiting from the year-on-year analysis when it comes to completing their five-year cyclical review reports for QQI processes. This regular monitoring and reviewing ensure real-time enhancements are made to programmes as necessary to the benefit of staff and learners alike.

Programme Tracker

QAED maintains a 'programme tracker', a spreadsheet-based report, which is circulated at monthly APC and PPRC meetings. The contents of the tracker are informed by QQI's QHub platform and the College's AQRs, where all upcoming programme activities are flagged. The tracker ensures that all internal stakeholders are aware of the most imminent programme review processes and their statuses for the current academic year. The programme tracker also supports:

- ▶ Efficient time management: deadlines and prioritisation
- ▶ Enhanced accountability: individual and team responsibilities are flagged
- ▶ Resource allocation: it helps to convey workloads to inform capacity planning for future projects
- ▶ Risk management: helps to detect any potential issues or delays early, enabling suitable contingency arrangements
- ▶ Performance management: KPIs and insight to inform continuous improvement
- ▶ Historical reference for future projects and audits.

Formal Periodic Programme Review

Through the formal periodic, normally five-yearly, programme review, the College conducts external peer reviews of QQI-accredited programmes provided by Griffith College, to ensure that they continue to meet QQI's quality

criteria, while also meeting the necessary requirements of any contingent application for revalidation, in line with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. These reviews are co-ordinated and managed by the Programme Development team, a unit within the QAED (see Section 4.5 of this document for more information).

Programme monitoring and review is conducted by the College to:

- ▶ consider the delivery of the programme since its original, or most recent validation, in the light of its proposed design and any adaptations made to ensure its continued suitability.
- ▶ evaluate how the data gathered through the monitoring processes, such as lecturer feedback, annual programme reviews and learner performance across all campuses, are utilised to ensure the effective programme delivery and outcomes.
- ▶ enable the process and framework used to assess the ongoing suitability of a programme for its intended purpose and objectives, its continued relevance to industry or society, and its ongoing ability to provide a supportive and effective learning environment and an appropriate assessment strategy.

- ▶ verify the roles of the parties involved in the programme review procedure.
- ▶ support the interactions with any external peer reviewers appointed, and QQI.
- ▶ ensure College programmes remain current, relevant, and effective in consultation with faculties and departments.
- ▶ empower programme management teams to ensure consistency and quality, and providing support to faculty members.
- ▶ support and enable curriculum design and development.
- ▶ facilitate sharing of best practices in programme development and delivery among faculty and departments.
- ▶ ensure the ongoing viability of the College's portfolio, and where appropriate, secure continued validation status for programmes (through engagement with QQI revalidation processes).

The overall process for programme review identified in the graphic in Figure 6.2.1 below.

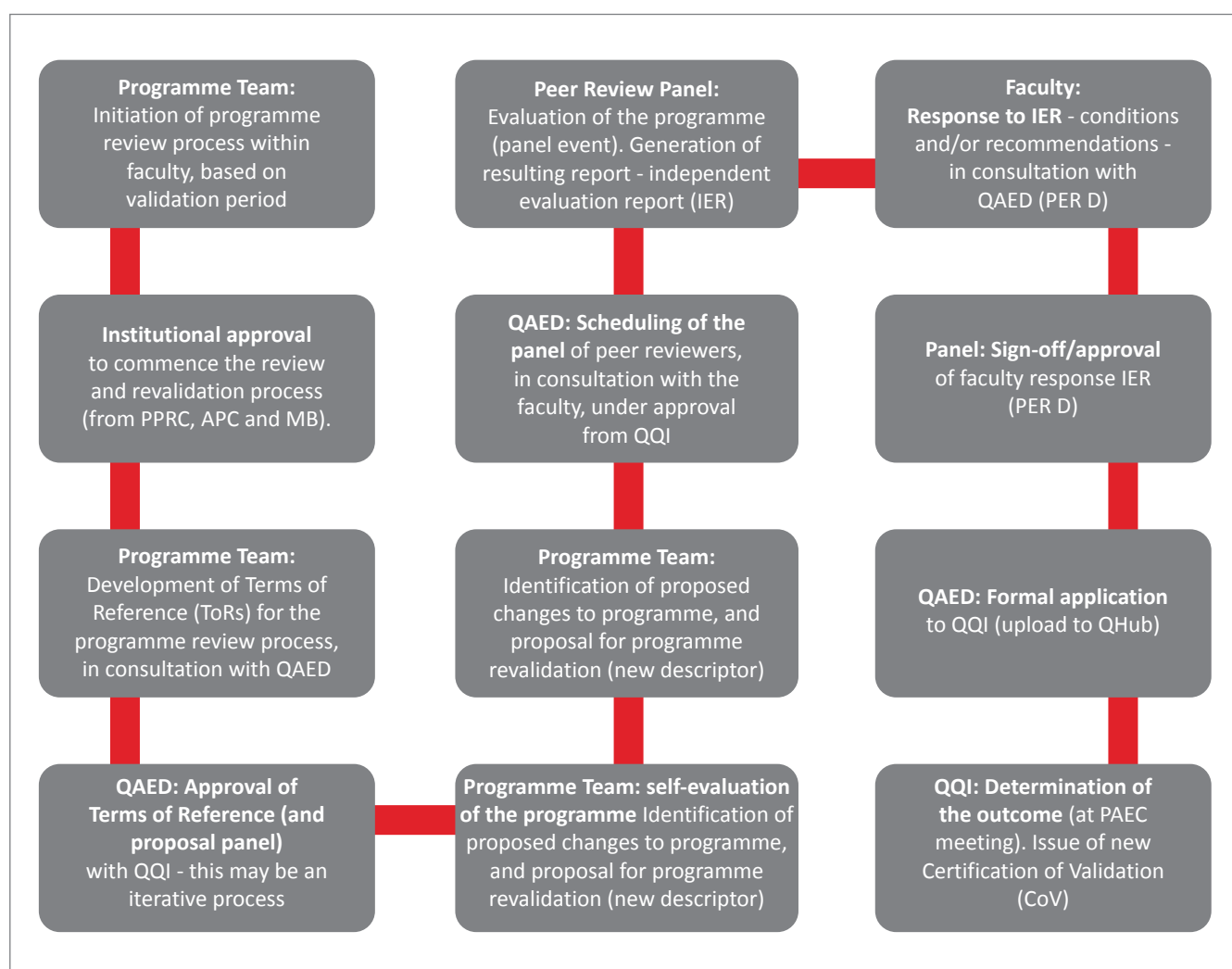


Figure 6.2.1: Institutional Programme Review process

Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC)

[The Programme Proposal and Review Committee \(PPRC\)](#) is the sub-committee of APC with responsibility to quality assure and enhance the College's policies and practices for monitoring and review of the design, development, viability and performance of all new and existing College programmes.

Some of the key roles of PPRC in relation to programme review and monitoring are to:

- ▶ review and evaluate proposals for programme review and revalidation submitted by faculty members or departments and make recommendations to the Management Board (MB) and APC.
- ▶ assess the viability of proposed new programmes and the ongoing viability of existing programmes and programme variants (all taught provision at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including apprenticeships), while exploring options and opportunities for the programmes and campuses.
- ▶ contribute to the ongoing enhancement of the College's curriculum, learning experience and academic standards, by considering emerging trends, and assessing the needs of learners and the job market, recommending periodic reviews and evaluations of existing courses, proposing new programmes to address gaps in the curriculum, and recommending retirement of non-viable programmes to ensure the curriculum remains current and relevant.

- ▶ with respect to existing programmes, initiate an internal review for programmes where class sizes for any particular cohort falls below the minimum number stated in the approved QQI certificate of validation

The [Programme Review Initiation Form](#) is completed by the programme team, to formally initiate a programme review process. This is presented for consideration to PPRC, which ultimately informs the consideration of the programme by PPRC and is used to generate the first draft of the Terms of Reference for the programme review.

The Institutional Analytics Dashboard

The College's Institutional Analytics Dashboard enables access to several reports in the areas of admissions and enrolment, programme and module results, and awards obtained, **as per Figure 6.2.2 below**, which support faculties and departments in their programme monitoring and review processes. The Institutional Analytics Dashboard is linked directly to Scholar, so the information generated is based on real-time data from the student information management system. The reports generated through the dashboard enable data-informed decisions to be made by Programmes Directors and heads of faculty and departments when writing their APRs and when undertaking Programmatic Reviews.

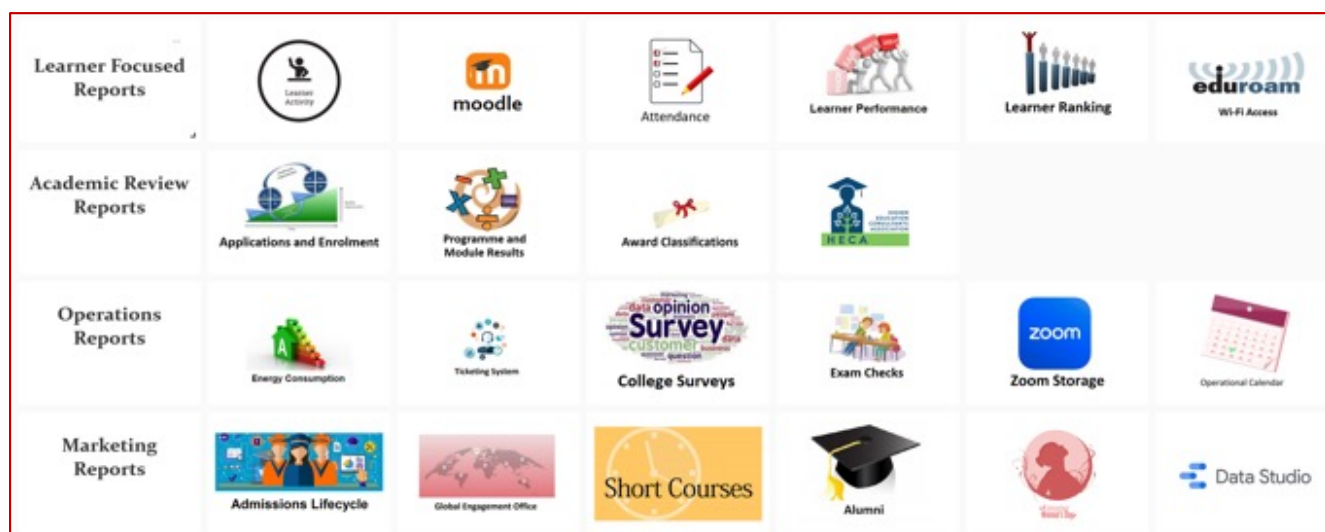


Figure 6.2.2: Institutional Analytics Dashboard home screen

Examples of the types of data that are generated on the dashboard to support programme review and monitoring are depicted in Figures 6.2.3 below.

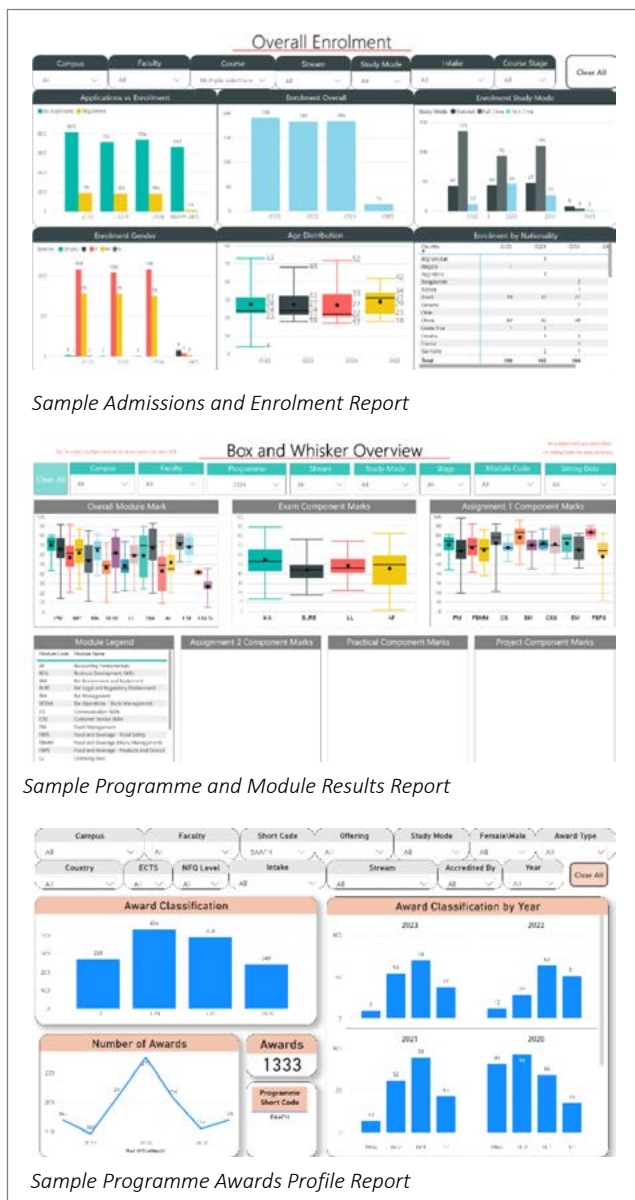


Figure 6.2.3: Institutional Analytics Dashboard:
Sample reports

Evaluation

The College has successfully coordinated and managed a series of successful programme monitoring, review and (re) validation processes since its reengagement in 2019, which has also included adopting new processes relating to:

- ▶ devolved responsibility for generation of IER (2020)
- ▶ apprenticeship programmes (2020)
- ▶ microcredentials (2021)
- ▶ a new collaborative partner, ESS Ltd. (2021)

while also supporting the establishment of the Griffith College Professional Academy (formerly Short Courses Department) in 2023, and the validation of programmes to support transferring learners under PEL arrangements (2019, 2020, 2023 and 2024).

In doing so, QAED has continued to elevate its support for faculty and departmental teams across all campuses and collaborative partners. Through the QAE team members' participation across many functions in the College, the team benefits from both formal and informal feedback to enhance the College's supports and programme development management.

Since completion of its reengagement with QQI in 2019, the College has successfully coordinated and managed 22 programmatic review processes (2020-2024) and revalidation events. During that period, the College has achieved a 100% success in programme validation activity.

The formal initiation process for programme review activities, conducted through the PPRC, MB, and APC, ensures transparency and early stakeholder engagement. This process clarifies roles and responsibilities, balances staff effort per project, enhances internal project tracking and file management, and considers costs (e.g., microcredentials vs. minor awards, programme viability, panel event management).

Within the faculties and at programme team level, the burden of supporting programmatic review is challenging due to competing operational priorities and existing workloads in the context of time commitments, research and documentation required. A shared understanding of the process and its requirements, supported by training, could help foster a more collaborative and streamlined approach.

The College can make better use of its institutional network to improve industry engagement to support the programme review and development processes. This could be further facilitated through industry engagement across institutional committees and dedicated industry-focused events.

The dashboard is efficient and well established with further data insights in the pipeline to improve programme monitoring and review processes. The data is automatically refreshed at least daily allowing for up-to-date data when reviewing programmes. IT Services are available to support staff and lecturers accessing data and ensure the correct permissions are applied.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College identified the following effective practices in relation to its programme monitoring and review:

- ▶ The College's Institutional Analytics Dashboard was noted as best in class following a sector-wide review by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and was shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Use of Educational Technology/ICT Initiative of the Year category in the annual Education Awards in 2020 and continues to provide significant value and insights across a range of activities both academic and operational.
- ▶ Each programme is reviewed and enhanced based on real-time feedback, annual monitoring review and output from monitoring processes.
- ▶ The feedback and written reports from the external examiner, in conjunction with the information included in lecturer module reports and learner feedback forms, provide an opportunity to formally analyse issues that have arisen during the academic year.
- ▶ Programme review and monitoring is supported by professional, supportive, inclusive and informative national and international peers as expert panel members, including NStEP-trained learners.

- ▶ Any of the recent programme review and revalidations processes are examples of demonstrated good practice with staff members now very proficient in the development of documentation and panel participation in panels.
- ▶ Feedback from the independent panels is positive and strong, as evidenced by fewer (to no) conditions of validation being identified and regular commendations regarding staff engagement, learner-centred focus, the analysis of data, the quality of documentation and the implementation of the (re)validation processes.
- ▶ The College has trialed the introduction of designated programme development roles within the faculty – this initiative will be evaluated and reflected on to determine the potential for its extension of such a resource to other faculties and departments.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

The collective institutional experience has also recognised the need for further enhancement to overcome challenges, as suggested below:

- ▶ The College plans to review the functionality of the Attendance App, to support greater real-time data analysis of learner engagement, and thereby performance.

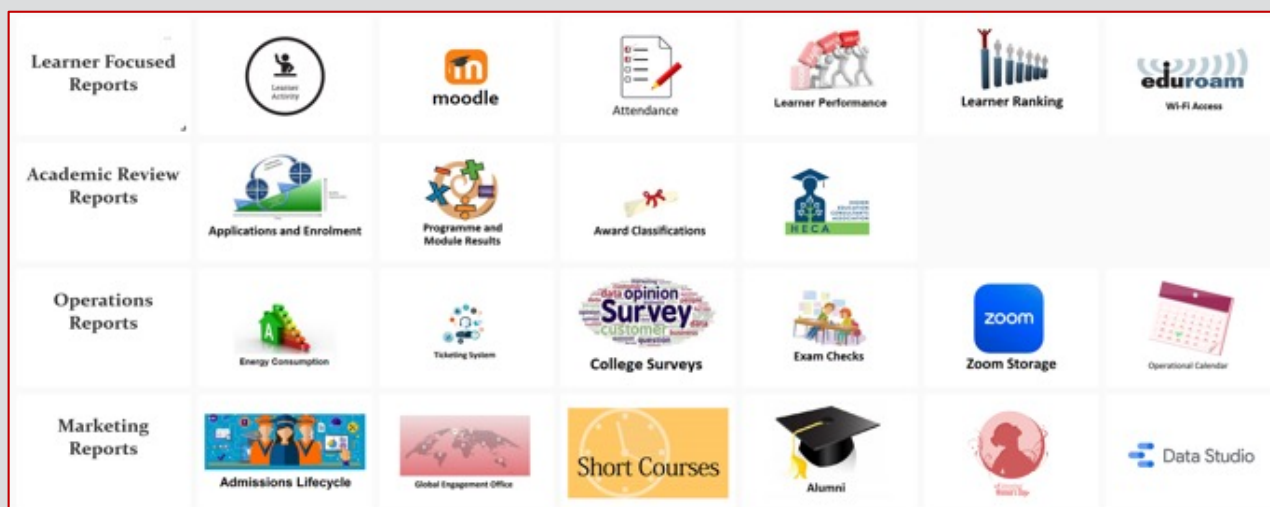
- ▶ The Griffith College Professional Academy, in consultation with the QAED, is currently planning the extension of the formal structured programmatic review processes to the department.
- ▶ With the sunset of the College's legacy Student Information System (SIS), Scholar, the report's source data within the Institutional Analytics dashboard will be moved to the next generation Student Information System (THEMIS).
- ▶ The continued existence of siloed IT systems e.g. CMIS timetabling platform, removes the possibility of deeper, richer analysis around resource allocation. This will need to be further considered and planned for in the context of the Institutional Analytics Dashboard.
- ▶ Module feedback is not centralised. Faculties send out different surveys to learners and manage the responses internally. If the College built a template survey, which faculties distributed to learners, the data could be included in the Institutional Analytics Dashboard and the analysed data accessible to faculties in almost real-time.

CASE STUDY: Griffith College's Institutional Analytics Dashboard

The College began developing an 'Institutional Analytics Dashboard' in 2017/18, supported by Microsoft Power BI. The dashboard, created by IT Services in collaboration with other departments, meets reporting and analytics needs across various areas, including admissions, exams and finance. Examples of its use include:

- ▶ current data on application progress from initial contact to learner registration for marketing and admissions officers.
- ▶ analysis of data on admissions, enrolment, programme/module results, and awards to support programme monitoring, review and annual reporting (including generation of programme review reports and APRs)
- ▶ hosting and analysing the Services and Facilities survey for QAED.

The Institutional Analytics Dashboard home screen/interface (as per Figure 6.2.2 above) demonstrates the applicability of the dashboard, and its importance in College reporting.



The dashboard provides real-time data for informed decision-making, which greatly enhances staff access to up-to-date information and supports management in generating top-line reports. Further development is required to fully integrate the reporting system with THEMIS.

The Griffith College Institutional Analytics Dashboard was shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Use of Educational Technology / ICT Initiative of the Year category in the annual Education Awards in 2020.

6.3 Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

Description

The College's oversight, monitoring and review of its relationships with external third parties and other collaborative partners, build directly on the quality assurance and enhancement procedures previously presented in section 4.10, which outlined the College's related governance and management of quality in relation to other parties involved in education and training.

The types of relationships the College has with external third parties and other collaborative partners can be considered under the following different categories of educational and related activities:

- ▶ Collaborative Programmes: delivered in association with other educational providers on a collaborative basis and leading to QQI accredited awards
- ▶ Apprenticeship Programmes: delivered by Griffith College on behalf of industry-based national consortium steering groups (CSGs)
- ▶ Programmes with PSRBs: delivered by Griffith College in association with professional statutory or regulatory bodies, leading to QQI awards and related professional recognition
- ▶ Programmes recognised by PSRBs: delivered by Griffith College and leading to QQI awards, with graduates also being eligible for professional membership or exemptions in respect of certain of the PSRBs' entrance requirements.
- ▶ Work Placement Employers: providing periods of structured, accredited training and development for learners as part of their degree awards.
- ▶ Articulation: arrangements with other higher education providers, enabling learners to access, transfer and progress (ATP) to programmes of both institutions
- ▶ Protection of Learners (PEL): arrangements with other private higher education institutions, providing academic and financial bonding arrangements for learners ensuring the continuation of their programmes

All of the external relationships are governed by specific formal written agreements signed by the different parties involved, with the scope and complexity of each agreement reflecting the nature and extent of the particular responsibilities involved. These detail the intended purpose and scope of the relationships, the parties involved, their responsibilities: operational, monitoring, governing, review and renewal processes; along with obligations regarding confidentiality, GDPR, intellectual property rights, learner protection and other related matters.

Before entering into any of the formal arrangements outlined above, the College undertakes detailed evaluation of the external third parties involved, along with a range of due diligence processes and related risk assessments. These also vary in scope and complexity depending on the nature of the particular relationship being proposed.

Evaluation

The College evaluates and monitors its relationship with external third parties and collaborative partners on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year: in the normal course of its operational activities; in the event of any developments that might arise; and through the scheduled meetings of the governance committees overseeing in the various agreements.

The College's most extensive interactions with external parties are on the programmes it delivers in association with its collaborative providers, for example Innopharma Education and Pulse College.

In both cases, these relationships have operated successfully for more than ten years, growing and developing new programmes and activities in a similar way to that of Griffith College's own faculties.

Collaborative partner provider members are fully integrated into Griffith College's operational, quality assurance and governance activities: through their representation on the College's various committees and governing bodies, for example: APC, QAES, programme director and faculty administrator meetings, etc.; and in their active participation in College-wide educational and related support initiatives.

Collaborative programmes are managed with identical processes in relation to learner and lecturer feedback, annual programme reports, and internal and external validation and revalidation processes. For all intents and purposes, programmes delivered in association with collaborative providers are indistinguishable in terms of their ongoing operation and management from programmes delivered exclusively by Griffith College.

Griffith College holds formal governance meetings with each of its collaborative and PSRB partners, typically at the end of each semester and at least annually. These provide opportunities to reflect on the operation of the collaboration over the recent period, and to discuss future plans. In most cases, these reflections and proposals have previously been shared and advanced through the regular and ongoing collaboration between the parties involved, with major developments and initiatives reported in the College's AQRs following their consideration and approval by the College's APC and the governing boards of the parties involved.

As outlined in section 4.10 and other related sections of this report, the College's relationships with the external partners are subject to detailed quality assurance and enhancement arrangements outlined in the College's QAE manual. In the case of Apprenticeship Programmes, these procedures are supplemented by additional Apprenticeship Specific QAE procedures, approved by both QQI and SOLAS. These programmes are governed by a national Consortium Steering Group, comprising employer representative bodies, employer representatives, apprentices, and Griffith College in its role as national coordinating provider. Meetings are held each semester to reflect on the operation and future direction of the programme, supplementing the ongoing interactions between members throughout the delivery of the programme.

The College's relationships with PSRBs in respect of its QQI awards arise in two ways. They include jointly developed programmes that lead to QQI and PSRB recognition, such

as those provided by the College in association with the Irish Institute of Pensions Management (IIPM) and the Irish Institute of Legal Executives (IILEX). They also include QQI-validated programmes delivered by the College, and aligned to the requirements of professional bodies, where graduates are eligible for professional membership or exemptions in respect of certain of the PSRBs' entrance requirements. Examples of PSRBs in this category include King's Inns, the Law Society of Ireland, ACCA, MII, PSI, etc.

Once validated and operational, programmes delivered in association with PSRBs, along with those recognised by PSRBs are governed by the faculties directly involved with the specific professional discipline. This governance maintains the ongoing alignment of the College's programmes with those of the PSRBs' accreditation requirements, and is supported by the PSRBs' participation in, and or sharing of all information arising from the College's QAE procedures relating to learner feedback, lecturer feedback, external examiner reports and other processes.

PSRBs are specifically notified and involved in any proposed changes to the programme structure, curriculum, or assessment strategy, and reciprocate in respect of any changes they make to their accreditation requirements. Similar notifications of changes to the College's programmes are shared with the external higher education institutions involved in the College's articulation agreements both inward and outward.

The governance of the College's relationship with employers in respect of accredited work placement periods is evaluated and reported in annual reviews. These present the experience of learners, employers and the faculty members for the period involved, along with any recommendations for enhancement, and are considered by the faculty, the College's QAES and APC. Further details of work-placement monitoring are provided in the QAE manual and in previous sections of this report.

The College's overall governance of its relations with external bodies and collaborative partners has evolved considerably throughout its 50 years, learning directly from its own experience and from the experience of its external partners. The College views its external relationships as being overwhelmingly positive with many existing and strengthening over decades, and very few throughout the College's entire history having to be discontinued.

The College considers the governance of these relationships to be effective, mutually beneficial and generally efficient. Relationships are governed openly, transparently and collaboratively, in the best interests of the College's learners and staff and respecting the mutual interests of external parties. These open communication and monitoring structures allow for assured practices on a day-to-day basis, with the ability to report and reflect on practices through scheduled and special purpose governance meetings as required. For example, the special meetings convened with external partners in relation to contingency measures agreed during COVID, and more recent communication and policies regarding generative AI.

As the College's activities with external partners develop, it would be helpful to align the scheduled meetings of the various different governing bodies. Currently, many College processes, such as induction, semester breaks, examinations, examination boards, graduate creative shows and graduation

are well established within the College's academic calendar allowing for College-wide coordination. The College is currently aligning its scheduling of other processes such as annual programme reports, departmental reviews, and Teaching and Learning Showcase Events so that reflections and recommendations can be considered on a College-wide basis by all involved. Establishing a particular APC meeting (or meetings) throughout the year where the reports and actions arising from the College's governance meetings with collaborative partners and PSRBs as a whole are considered would further assist the College's practices.

The College's relationship with HECA's private higher education PEL partners is necessarily different from its other external relationships. The joint HECA scheme operates much like insurance with individual colleges providing a fund to protect learners in the event of their institution or programme being discontinued. The joint scheme is governed by the HECA PEL oversight committee and subject to annual external financial audit reviews.

This scheme, along with Griffith College's particular commitment to protecting learners and staff of other higher education providers, both within HECA and beyond, ensures the continuation of educational provision for learners on QQI programmes.

Effective Practice(s) Identified

The College greatly benefits from its relationships with external parties and collaborative partners through the shared experience of all institutions involved, enabling the College to continually review and enhance its practices. Current examples of effective practice in relation to external parties include:

- ▶ The full integration of collaborative partner programme processes into the College's QAE processes and activities, on an identical basis to those of the College's own programmes.
- ▶ The participation of collaborative partner staff members in College-wide committees and internal governance bodies, for example: programme directors, QAES, APC.
- ▶ The support and funding of collaborative partners' staff members in the College's educational and related initiatives, as Teaching Champions, in CPD training, showcase events, and full funding on the College's MA in Education, Learning and Development and related embedded awards.
- ▶ The roles of Academic Success Coaches, Work-Based Mentors and Employer Liaison Managers involved in the College's national apprenticeship programmes.
- ▶ The use of Mahara, an ePortfolio platform, by apprentices, work-based mentors, academic success coaches and external examiners to evidence the learners' development of work-based knowledge, skills and competences.

In addition to Griffith College's relationships with specific external parties and collaborative providers, the College's governance and monitoring practices benefit hugely from its continuing interaction with QQI, HEA, HECA, and other higher education institutions and staff nationally and internationally.

Areas for Potential Enhancement

Griffith College's oversight, monitoring and review of its relationships with external parties and collaborative partners, continues to evolve, informed by the shared reflections and recommendations of its external parties and collaborative partners, both long-established and new.

Current areas identified for proposed enhancements include:

- ▶ Aligning the scheduling of the College's formal governance meetings with collaborative partners and PSRBs, to support College-wide consideration of recommendations at particular APC meetings.
- ▶ Coordinating, providing and promoting open, easy and shared access to external governance reports to all involved, using a common location for the various College, Faculty and Programme level reports.
- ▶ Providing further guidance, supports and encouragement for employers and work-based mentors involved in the direct supervision of learners and apprentices.
- ▶ Securing the International Education Mark for the College's programmes.
- ▶ Seeking accredited membership of EAQUALS in respect of the English language and pre-university programmes delivered by the GIL, the Griffith Institute of Languages.

6.4 Conclusion and Intended Future Direction - Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review (Objective 3)

Griffith College's self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes are robust, effective, and evidence-driven College-wide. The College enables learners, staff, collaborative partners and external stakeholders to provide feedback on everything the College does, and seeks to do, to demonstrate the College's ongoing commitment to quality of provision, and enhancing the learner experience.

The implementation of College self-evaluation, monitoring and review activities show that the College is doing the right thing, in all its endeavours- programme design and delivery;

teaching, learning and assessment; learner supports and services; enabling learners to succeed in their chosen careers and future lives.

In Griffith College, feedback matters, the learner voice is valued, and the ongoing effectiveness of the College's quality assurance and enhancement activities is at its core.

The College greatly benefits from its relationships with external parties and collaborative partners through the shared experience of all institutions involved, enabling the College to continually review and enhance its practices. The findings of this ISER review indicate that there is a consistent approach to the monitoring of these relationships and the integration of these parties and/or their feedback into the decision-making processes of the College.

The College's culture of welcoming feedback, trusting collaborations with other providers, active engagement of external reviewers as critical friends, ethical approach to data, and enthusiastic participation in this review, enhances the College's provision.

Griffith College can confirm that its programme review and monitoring is supported by professional, supportive, inclusive and informative national and international peers as expert panel members, including NStEP-trained learners. The College's evaluation, monitoring and review processes are hugely enhanced by its relationships and continuing interaction with QQI, HEA, HECA, and other higher education institutions and staff, nationally and internationally.

While the ISER confirms that current frameworks are robust, the College's clear commitment to further strengthen the research and stakeholder engagement in the development of the programme review and revalidation processes, enabled by effective and ethical data analytics systems, will further support this.

The College is also cognisant of the benefits of further enabling an inclusive knowledge-sharing culture by supporting further inter-faculty communications and real-time sharing of best practices and case studies across faculties, including with collaborative partners, as already demonstrated in the content of this ISER.



7. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Griffith College greatly welcomes the opportunity to undertake this comprehensive self-evaluation review of its activities as part of QQI's national suite of Cinnte reviews. The College's members actively embraced the process from the outset, viewing it as a valuable opportunity for shared reflection, evaluation and a basis for future development.

The process yielded huge amounts of valuable information, all of it given and accepted freely and openly, without restriction. The information was evaluated, with the findings circulated to support College-wide discussion and reflections.

The findings of the College's ISER identified and affirmed the following key characteristics:

- ▶ Griffith College operates with a strong moral compass and is trusted by internal and external stakeholders. It seeks at all times to do the right thing for, and by people, and treats them fairly and with respect. It places the learner at the centre of all its activities.
- ▶ The College takes its responsibility as a higher education provider seriously. It is committed to academic standards and academic integrity, has solid governance and invests in quality assurance and enhancement. It is committed to providing quality learning environments for its learners and staff as evidenced by its development of the College's campus infrastructure and related resources.
- ▶ It conducts its activities openly and transparently, embracing feedback and seeing it as an opportunity to learn and develop. In this regard, the College wishes to do things right and to address issues as they arise.

The College-wide self-evaluation review yielded valuable insights to support the writing of this ISER, with the findings also being used to guide the College's activities into the future. Reflecting on the findings as a whole, the College's established activities, its many areas of effective practice and potential enhancements, brings to mind the slogan "A Lot Done ... and More to Do".

This captures the reality that the ISER is not an end in itself but a snapshot of a particular point in time, in this case the College's 50th anniversary, looking both to the past with satisfaction and a feeling of achievement, and equally to the future with excitement for the experiences and opportunities that lie ahead.

Some proposed enhancements identified in the ISER that are already underway or being planned are the further development of the College's Learner Services, the greater inclusion of learner wellbeing to support mental health, and the promotion of EDI. The College looks forward to the reactivation of its Research Committee along with wider membership, and the further development of its Teaching and Learning Department and related activities. It anticipates the completion of THEMIS in 2025 and the progression of the College's campus development plans.

As the College's reputation continues to grow, it will continue to advocate on behalf of its teaching staff for their eligibility to participate in nationally funded research initiatives on a par with their colleagues in public higher education providers, and similarly for the College's learners who have additional learning and disability requirements to be given parity of treatment with their peers in publicly funded institutions.

Griffith College wishes to thank all learners, staff, collaborative partners, employers, external stakeholders and others who contributed enthusiastically to the self-evaluation process, and who contribute to the ongoing QAE processes of the College the outcomes of which were also extracted for this report. The College looks forward to exploring the effective practices and potential enhancements more thoroughly with the panel during their visit to campus in October 2024.

The College also wishes to express its gratitude to the staff of QQI's Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review unit for their support and valuable insights, as it commenced and progressed through the ISER process.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Current Profile of QQI Validated Programme Provision

FACULTY/OWNER	NFQ Level 5	NFQ Level 6		NFQ Level 7		NFQ Level 8			NFQ Level 9			TOTAL
	Special Purpose Certificate	Higher Certificate	Special Purpose /Minor /Microcred	Ordinary Degree	Special Purpose /Minor /Microcred	Honours Degree	Higher Diploma (NFQL8)	Special Purpose /Minor /Microcred	Masters	Postgrad. Diploma	Special Purpose /Minor /Microcred	
Apprenticeship		1		1	1							3
Business		2		2	2	4						10
Computing		1		1		1	2		4	4		13
Design		1	9	3		3		12				28
Education, Learning and Development (ELD)									1	1	1	3
Engineering				1								1
ESS Ltd (Collaborative programmes)			3									3
Creative Arts and Screen Media		1	6	2		1		4				14
Graduate Business School (GBS)			1		1	1	1	7	6	5	3	25
Griffith Institute of Languages (GIL)	1											1
Innopharma Education (Collaborative programmes)				1		1			3	3	2	10
Journalism and Communications Media				1		1			3	4	3	12
Law					3	1		1	3	3		11
Leinster School of Music and Drama (LSMD)			1				1	2				4
Pulse College (Collaborative programmes)			4	1		4			1	1		11
TOTAL	1	6	24	13	7	17	4	26	21	21	9	149

APPENDIX 2:

List of QQI programmes provided by Griffith College (by Faculty)

Programme Title per (Faculty/Owner)	Award Type	Award Level	Credits
APPRENTICESHIP			
Bachelor of Arts in Bar Management	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Certificate in Workplace Mentoring	Special Purpose Award	7	5
Higher Certificate in Healthcare Support Practice	Higher Certificate	6	120
BUSINESS			
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (HRM)	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (Marketing)	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts in Business	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Bachelor of Arts in Marketing	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Certificate in Applied Human Resource Management for Irish Hotels and Guesthouses	Special Purpose Award	7	10
Certificate in Digital Sales Transformation	Special Purpose Award	7	30
Higher Certificate in Business	Higher Certificate	6	120
COMPUTING SCIENCE			
Master of Science in Big Data Management and Analytics	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Computing	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Interactive Digital Media	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Network and Information Security	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Big Data Management and Analytics	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Computing	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Interactive Digital Media	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Network and Information Security	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing	Higher Diploma	8	60
Higher Diploma in Science in Web Development	Higher Diploma	8	60
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing Science	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Science in Computing	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Higher Certificate in Science in Computing	Higher Certificate	6	120

APPENDIX 2:

List of QQI programmes provided by Griffith College (by Faculty)

Programme Title per (Faculty/Owner)	Award Type	Award Level	Credits
CREATIVE ARTS AND SCREEN MEDIA			
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film, TV and Screen Media Production	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Certificate in Digital Cinematography and Image Grading	Minor Award	8	15
Certificate in Live TV and Studio Broadcast	Minor Award	8	20
Certificate in Visual Effects for Screen and Virtual Reality	Minor Award	8	15
Bachelor of Arts in Film, TV and Screen Media Production	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Bachelor of Arts in Photographic Media	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Certificate in Film, TV and Screen Media Production	Minor Award	6	60
Certificate in Photography	Special Purpose Award	6	60
Certificate in Screen Media Production for Small to Medium Enterprises	Minor Award	6	25
Certificate in Screen Production	Minor Award	6	10
Certificate in TV Production and Design Practices	Special Purpose Award	6	60
Higher Certificate in Arts in Film, TV and Screen Media Production	Higher Certificate	6	120
DESIGN			
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion Design	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Graphic Communication Design	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Interior Architecture	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Certificate in Advanced BIM and BIM Collaboration (using Revit)	Minor Award	8	20
Certificate in Advanced Rendering	Minor Award	8	5
Certificate in Advanced Web, Interaction and UX Design	Minor Award	8	20
Certificate in Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Graphic Illustration	Special Purpose Award	8	30
Certificate in Conservation, Sustainability and Adaptive Reuse	Special Purpose Award	8	30
Certificate in Entrepreneurship (Built Environment)	Minor Award	8	20
Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Project Management (Built Environment)	Minor Award	8	30
Certificate in Introduction to BIM (using Revit)	Minor Award	8	20
Certificate in Motion Design	Minor Award	8	10
Certificate in Project Management (Built Environment)	Minor Award	8	20
Diploma in Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Graphic Illustration	Special Purpose Award	8	60
Diploma in Conservation, Sustainability and Adaptive Reuse	Special Purpose Award	8	60
Diploma in Entrepreneurship and Project Management (Built Environment)	Special Purpose Award	8	60
Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Communication Design	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Bachelor of Arts in Interior Architecture and Design	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Certificate in Sustainability in Interior Design	Minor Award	7	5
Certificate in Web, Interaction and UX Design	Minor Award	7	15
Certificate in Advertising and Editorial Photography	Minor Award	6	5
Certificate in Architectural Drafting, 2D CAD and 3D CAD	Minor Award	6	10
Certificate in Art and Design	Minor Award	6	60
Certificate in Building Regulations in Interior Design	Minor Award	6	5
Certificate in Lighting Design	Minor Award	6	5
Higher Certificate in Arts in Interior Design	Higher Certificate	6	120
Higher Certificate in Business	Higher Certificate	6	120

APPENDIX 2:

List of QQI programmes provided by Griffith College (by Faculty)

Programme Title per (Faculty/Owner)	Award Type	Award Level	Credits
TEACHING AND LEARNING			
Certificate in Education, Learning and Development	Minor Award	9	30
Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Education, Learning and Development	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
ENGINEERING			
Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial and Systems Engineering	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	60
ESS LTD. (COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES)			
Certificate in Industrial Electrical Safety and Systems	Special Purpose Award	6	5
Certificate in Industrial Instrumentation Calibration	Special Purpose Award	6	5
Certificate in Industrial Manufacturing and Maintenance Skills	Special Purpose Award	6	25
GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL			
Certificate in Advanced Taxation	Special Purpose Award	9	25
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Business Management	Minor Award	9	30
Certificate in Quality and Regulatory Practice in the Pharmaceutical Industry	Special Purpose Award	9	5
Master of Business Administration in International Business	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Accounting and Finance Management	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in International Business and Law	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in International Business Management	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business Management	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Business in International Business Management	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Accounting and Finance Management	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in International Business and Law	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business Management	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Certificate in Intelligent Technologies in Procurement and Supply Chain 4.0	Minor Award	8	5
Certificate in Law and Governance for Trustees	Special Purpose Award	8	10
Certificate in Pensions, Insurance and Investment	Minor Award	8	30
Certificate in Public Procurement	Minor Award	8	10
Certificate in Strategic Collaboration and Coordination for MMC	Special Purpose Award	8	10
Certificate in Strategic Supply Management for MMC	Special Purpose Award	8	10
Certificate in Sustainability and the Circular Economy	Minor Award	8	5
Higher Diploma in Business in Pensions Management	Higher Diploma	8	60
Diploma in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	Minor Award	7	60
Certificate in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	Minor Award	6	30
GRIFFITH INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE			
Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies	Special Purpose Award	5	120

APPENDIX 2:

List of QQI programmes provided by Griffith College (by Faculty)

Programme Title per (Faculty/Owner)	Award Type	Award Level	Credits
INNOPHARMA EDUCATION (COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES)			
Certificate in Advanced Manufacturing Strategy (Life Science)	Minor Award	9	30
Certificate in Operational Excellence and Data Analytics (Life Science)	Minor Award	9	30
Master of Science in Digital Transformation (Life Science)	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Medical Device Technology and Business	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Transformation (Life Science)	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Medical Device Technology and Business	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Business Operations	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts in Pharmaceutical Business Operations	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
JOURNALISM AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS			
Certificate in Applied Project Management for Trust and Safety Professionals	Minor Award	9	10
Certificate in Self-Caring Practice in Occupational Contexts	Minor Award	9	10
Certificate in Software Skills for Trust and Safety Professionals	Minor Award	9	10
Master of Arts in Digital Communications: Podcasting and Video	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Arts in Journalism and Digital Communications	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Arts in Public Relations and Digital Communications	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Digital Communications: Podcasting & Video	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Journalism and Digital Communications	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Public Relations and Digital Communications	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Trust, Safety and Content Moderation Management	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communications and Media Production	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts in Communications	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
LAW			
Master of Laws in International Commercial Law	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Laws in International Human Rights Law	Masters Degree	9	90
Master of Laws in International Law	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Commercial Law	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Human Rights Law	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Law	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Bachelor of Laws (Honours)	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Certificate in Mediation	Special Purpose Award	8	20
Certificate in Legal Practice	Special Purpose Award	7	20
Certificate in Legal Studies	Special Purpose Award	7	40
Diploma in Legal Studies and Practice	Special Purpose Award	7	60

APPENDIX 2:

List of QQI programmes provided by Griffith College (by Faculty)

Programme Title per (Faculty/Owner)	Award Type	Award Level	Credits
LEINSTER SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DRAMA			
Certificate in Drama Education	Minor Award	8	45
Certificate in Drama Performance	Minor Award	8	20
Higher Diploma in Arts in Drama Education	Higher Diploma	8	60
PULSE COLLEGE (COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES)			
Master of Arts in Scoring for Film, TV and Interactive Media	Masters Degree	9	90
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Scoring for Film, TV and Interactive Media	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio and Music Technology	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Technologies and Digital Art	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music Production	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music Production with Composition	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	180
Bachelor of Arts in Animation	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180
Certificate in Animation	Minor Award	6	60
Certificate in Creative Technologies and Digital Art	Minor Award	6	60
Certificate in Music Production and Audio Technology	Minor Award	6	60
Certificate in Music Production for Games	Special Purpose Award	6	60

APPENDIX 3:

Meeting dates of Griffith College's governance and management bodies

MEETINGS HELD PER ACADEMIC YEAR			
Body	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024 (to 30 Jun)
Board of Directors	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
Management Board (MB)	Weekly, on Wednesdays (13.00hrs-14.30hrs)	Weekly, on Wednesdays: 07, 14, 21, 28 September; 05, 12, 19, 26 October; 02, 16, 30 November; 07, 14, 21 December; 11, 18, 25 January; 01, 08, 15, 22 February; 01, 08, 15, 22, 29 March; 05, 12, 19, 26 April; 03, 10, 17, 24, 31 May; 07, 14, 21, 28 June; 05, 12, 19, 26 July; and 02, 09, 16, 23, 30 August.	Weekly, on Wednesdays: 13, 20, 27 September; 04, 11, 18, 25 October; 01, 15, 29 November; 06, 13, 20 December; 10, 17, 24, 31 January; 7*, 14, 21, 28 February; (*in-person workshop on values and strategic growth pillars), 06, 13, 20, 27 March; 03, 10, 17, 24 April; 08, 15, 22, 29 May; and 05, 12, 19, 26 June.
Academic and Professional Council (APC)	17 September; 08 October; 05 November; 07 January; 04 February; 04 March; 01 April; 06 May; 16 June	Monthly, first Friday: 09 September, 07 October, 04 November, 02 December, 03 February, 03 March, 14 April, 02 June, 07 July	Monthly; first Friday: 08 September; 06 October; 03 November; 01 December; 02 February; 01 March; 05 April; 03 May; 07 June; and 05 July
Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC)	24 September, 15 October, 17 December, 21 January, 11 February, 11 March, 22 April, 20 May, 01 July	Monthly, second Friday: 23 September, 14 October, 28 October, 11 November, 09 December, 10 February, 10 March, 31 March, 18 May, 16 June, 14 July, 11 August	Monthly, second Friday: 08 September; 13 October; 10 November; 08 December; 09 February; 08 March; 24 April; 09 May; 14 June
Quality Assurance and Enhancement Subcommittee (QAES)	Weekly, on Tuesday mornings	Bi-monthly: 14, 28 October; 11, 25 November; 13 January; 10, 24 February; 10 March; 21, 24* April (*AI consideration meeting); 09 June	Bi-monthly (as necessary): 29 September; 13, 27 October; 10, 24 November; 26 January; 19 April; 24 May
Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department (QAED) operational meeting	N/A- was integrated with QAES	Weekly, on Tuesdays, 10.00 am	Weekly, on Tuesdays, 10.00 am
Heads of Faculty Meeting	Weekly, on Wednesdays, 11.45 am	Weekly, on Wednesdays, 11:45 am	Weekly, on Wednesdays, 11:45 am
Programme Director Committee	24 September, 22 October, 19 November, 10 December, 21 January; 11 February, 11 March, 08 April, 13 May, 10 June	Monthly: 16 September; 21 October; 18 November; 03 February; 24 March; 21 April; 26 May; 16 June; 18 August	Monthly: 27 September; 27 October; 24 February; 22 March; 26 April; 31 May
Faculty Administrators (FA)	02 November; 24 March; 26 April; 24 May; 16 August	25 October; 22 November; 20 December; 28 March; 25 April; 23 May; 04 July; 01 August	28 November; 09; 30 January; 23 February; 03 April; 28 May
Education; Learning and Development Group (ELDG; formerly Teaching; Learning and Assessment Group)	15; 22; 29 September; 06; 13; 20; 27 October; 03; 17; 24 November; 01; 08; 15 December; 05; 12; 19; 26 January; 02; 16; 23 February; 02; 23 March; 06 April; 04 May; 21; 28 July; 04; 18 August	Fortnightly; on Wednesdays; 9:30 am	Fortnightly; on Wednesdays; 9:30 am
Equality; Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group/ Committee	N/A – established in 2022	Monthly	Monthly
Disciplinary/Academic Appeals Boards	As required	As required	As required

APPENDIX 4:

Griffith College Panel Events – 2020 to 2024

Year	Event Manager	Type of Review	Programme Details			Panel Rep	Panel Member Details						
			Award Type	NFQ Level	Discipline		Male	Female	Independent	University (Irish)	Private / ETB (Irish)	University (International)	Industry
2020	GC (DR)	Validation	Major- HDip	8	Business	7	3	4	1	3	1	1	1
2020	QQI	Validation	Major-HC	6	Apprenticeship	8	3	5	1	3	2	1	2
2020	QQI	Validation	Major- MSc	9	Innopharma	7	4	3		4	1	1	1
2020	GC	Revalidation	Major – BA (Hons)	8	Business	7	3	4		6			1
2020	GC	Revalidation	Major- BA	7	Business	6	3	3		4	1		1
2020	GC	Revalidation	Major- MSc	9	Computing	7	5	2		3	2	1	1
2020	GC	Revalidation	Major- BA (Hons) & MSc	8, 9	Innopharma	7	3	4		4	1	1	1
2020	GC	Revalidation	Major- BEng	7	Engineering	6	2	4		3	1	1	1
2021	GC (DR)	Validation	Major- BA (Hons)	8	Film/TV	8	4	4		5	2		1
2021	QQI	Validation	Major-MA	9	Pulse		3	4		5		1	1
2021	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	7	Industry/Business	3	1	2		1	1		1
2021	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	8	Industry/Business	3	2	1		1	1		1
2021	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	9	GBS	3	2	1		2			1
2021	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	9	Industry / GBS	3	2	1		2			1
2021	GC (DR)	Validation	Major- BA (Hons)	8	Design	6	2	4		4			2
2021	GC (DR)	Validation	Major- PGDip	9	Journalism and Media	8	3	5		5	1	1	1
2021	GC	Validation	Major-BA (Hons)	8	Business	6	3	3		3			3
2021	QQI	Validation	Major-BA	7	Apprenticeship	7	2	5		2	3		2
2021	QQI	Validation	Major- BA (Hons)	8	Pulse	6	4	2	1	4			1
2021	GC	Revalidation	SPA/Minor/Micro-Dip	7	Law	6	2	4		4	1		1
2021	GC	Revalidation	SPA/Minor/Micro	8	Design	7	4	3		5			2
2022	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	6	ESS	3	1	2		2	1		
2022	GC (DR)	Validation	Major- MSc	9	Innopharma	7	2	5		3	2	1	1
2022	GC	Revalidation	Major- MSc	9	GBS	6	3	3		2	2	1	1
2022	GC	Revalidation	Major- BA (Hons)	8	Pulse	6	3	3		5			1
2022	GC	Revalidation	Major- BA	7	Pulse	6	3	3		5			1

Year	Event Manager	Type of Review	Programme Details			Panel Rep	Panel Member Details							
			Award Type	NFQ Level	Discipline		Male	Female	Independent	University (Irish)	Private / ETB (Irish)	University (International)	Industry	
2023	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	6	ESS	3	2	1		2				1
2023	GC	Validation (Desk)	SPA/Minor/Micro	8	GBS	3	1	2		1	1			1
2023	GC	Revalidation	Major - HC	6	Apprenticeship	7	2	5	1	3	1			2
2023	GC	Revalidation	Major - BA (Hons)	8	Design	8	4	4	2	3		2		1
2023	GC	Revalidation	Major - MA, BA (Hons)	9, 8	Journalism and Media	6	4	2		4		1		1
2023	GC	Revalidation	Major - BA	7	Innopharma	6	4	2		5				1
2023	GC	Revalidation	SPA/Minor/Micro-Cert	6	Music	6	3	3	1	3	1			1
2024	QQI	Validation (Desk)	Major - BA (Hons)	8	Psychology	3	2	1		1	1			1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major - MSc	9	GBS	6	3	3		3	1	1		1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major - MSc / MBA	9	GBS	8	3	5		4	1	2		1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major - MSc	9	GBS	7	4	3		4	1	1		1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major - LLM	9	Law	7	2	5		4	1	1		1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major - LLB	8	Law	7	2	5	1	3	1	1		1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major - BSc, BSc (Hons)	7, 8	Computing	7	4	3	1	3	1	1		1
2024	GC	Revalidation	Major-MSc	9	Computing	7	4	3	1	3	1	1		1

Key:

DR – Delegated Responsibility

Desk – Desk Review

Shading – QQI managed even

APPENDIX 5: Sample Standing Agenda Items

APP 5.1: Meeting of the Academic and Professional Council

Friday, DD Mmm 20YY, 10.00 am (to 11.30 am), Zoom

1. Meeting Opening and Welcome

- 1.1 Committee Business
 - 1.1.1 Apologies
 - 1.1.2 Membership update (for approval)
 - 1.1.3 Minutes of previous APC Meeting (attached, for approval)
- 1.2 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes (not on the agenda)

2. Delegated Authority Project at Griffith College - Updates

- ▶ Institutional Review 2023/2024

3. Quality Assurance and Enhancement – Policies, Procedures, Practices and Guidelines

- 3.1 QAE Proposals/Amendments under Consideration – for noting/update
- 3.2 3.2 QAE Proposals/Amendments for Adoption
- 3.3 Other Business

4. Correspondence with Awarding Bodies/ Accreditation Agencies

- 4.1 Recognitions/Approvals/Accreditations/ Validations
- 4.2 New Processes/Procedures
- 4.3 Other Business
- 4.4 General Correspondence

5. New Programme Development

- 5.1 New Programme Proposals (for noting)
- 5.2 New Programme Proposals (for approval)
 - ▶ Programme Proposal and Review Committee
- 5.3 Proposed Programmes under Development- Update
 - 5.3.1 Programme Validation Events – tracker (attached, for noting)
- 5.4 Other Business

6. Reviews of Existing Programmes

- 6.1 Programme Review/Revalidation Events – tracker (attached, for noting)
 - ▶ Programme Proposal and Review Committee
- 6.2 External Examiner Nominations
 - ▶ Nomination(s)
 - ▶ Extension of Duties
 - ▶ Replacement
 - ▶ Withdrawal of Duties
- 6.3 Admission Criteria

7. Collaborations - Updates

- 7.1 Collaborative partnerships
 - ▶ Agreements
 - ▶ Apprenticeships
- 7.2 EU projects'

8. Feedback Mechanisms

- 8.1 Update from learner representatives
- 8.2 Formal Learner Feedback
- 8.3 Departmental/Functional Reviews

9. College activities and developments

- 9.1 Updates and Report
- 9.2 Continuous Professional Development

10. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

- 10.1 EDI Committee – update

11. Minutes from sub-committees and other committees - for information

- 11.1 Updates from Management Board [MB]
- 11.2 Programme Proposal and Review Committee [PPRC]
- 11.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee [QAES]
- 11.4 Programme Directors' Committee
- 11.5 Faculty Administrators' Meeting
- 11.6 Other meeting minutes

12. Update on external meetings - for noting

- 12.1 QQI Event(s)
- 12.2 Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)
- 12.3 HECA Academic Quality Enhancement Forum (HAQEF)
- 12.4 National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

13. Any Other Business

Next Meeting: DD Mmm

APP 5.2: Programme Directors Monthly Meeting

AGENDA

1. Welcoming any new PDs, Greetings to any who are moving on

2. Committee Business

Minutes of previous Meeting

Matters arising from Minutes

3. Feedback from APC/HOF

Any relevant matters arising from APC or Head of Faculty meetings to be discussed

4. Teaching and Learning

4.1 Monitoring/managing attendance

4.2 Resources and facilities

4.3 Assessment methods

4.4 Plagiarism/Turnitin initiatives

4.5 Moodle

4.5 Teaching initiatives

4.6 Lecturer training and CPD

4.7 English language

4.8 External examiners/moderation and feedback

4.9 Student support/pastoral care (learning difficulties, mental health etc.)

4.10 Feedback from Teaching and Learning Committee

5. Seasonal Issues

January – Timetables, new lecturer induction, lecturer pre-semester day, exam papers, academic misconduct issues and process, academic calendar

February – Issues arising from exam boards, student lecturer feedback, exam papers, review of Feb intake induction process, celebrating/exhibiting student work

March – Faculty activities (competitions etc.)

April – Assessments and Facilities feedback results, Exam invigilation

May – Academic misconduct issues

June – Review of academic year/academic strategy, APRs, update on any programmatic reviews/new programmes for September, Summer activities

6. Updates

6.1 Project updates

Any projects proposed/underway/to be reviewed/shared

6.2 Faculty updates (any recent developments/initiatives to share)

Apprenticeships Journalism & Media

Business Innopharma

GBS Law

CIFS LSMD

Computing Limerick

Cork Professional Accountancy

Design Pulse

Education Springboard

7. QAE / QQI / EDI Updates

Any information or updates regarding delegated authority/programmatic reviews/ validations or similar.

Any information regarding QAE policies

Any information regarding EDI

8. Any Other Business

9. Next Meeting –

Date and Proposed topics for discussion

APPENDIX 6:

Glossary/List of Acronyms and Initialisms

ACA	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ACELS	Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS) accreditation scheme for English language education (ELE) providers
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AI SAG	Artificial Intelligence Special Advisory Group
AO	Authorised Officer (reference apprenticeship programmes) based in an Education and Training Board
APC	Griffith College's Academic and Professional Council
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
API	Application Programming Interface
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
APR	Annual Programme Review
AQR	Annual Quality Report
ASC	Academic Success Coach (reference apprenticeship programmes)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) <i>Countries – Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.</i>
ASIAM	Ireland's Autism Charity
ATI	Accounting Technicians Ireland
ATP	Access Transfer and Progression
ATP	Griffith College's Attendance Platform
AV	Audio Visual
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BAT	Business and Accounting Training (College), predecessor of Griffith College
BIP	Blended Intensive Programmes (Erasmus+)
BoD	Griffith College's Board of Directors
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CAO	Ireland's Central Admissions Office, which supports a central national selection system for all school leavers entering third level programmes.
CEFRL	Common European Framework Reference of Languages
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIFS	Certificate in International Foundation Studies (NFQ Level 5)
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
CGLI	City & Guilds of London Institute
CIF	Construction Industry Federation
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply

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Glossary/List of Acronyms and Initialisms

CMIS	Central Management Information System (room timetabling software)
CONUL	Consortium of National and University Libraries
COR	Change of Results form
CoV	Certificate of Validation
CPA	Institute of Chartered Public Accountants of Ireland (formerly) / CPA Ireland
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSG	Consortium steering group (reference apprenticeship programmes)
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education
DAWN	Disability Advisors Working Network
DCCI	Design and Crafts Council Ireland
DDI	Dublin Design Institute
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Science (legacy)
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DLD	Digital Learning Department
DPA	Data Protection Agreement
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessments
DPO	Data Protection Office(r)
DR	Devolved Responsibility
EAQUALS	Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services, a professional association for language education throughout the world
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ECCTIS	A UK-based provider of international education, training, and skills services and solutions.
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
EDR	AI-based Endpoint Detection and Response
EJTA	European Journalists Training Association
ELD	Education, Learning and Development
ELDG	Education, Learning and Development Group
ELE	English Language Education
ELM	Employer Liaison Manager (reference apprenticeship programmes)
ELR	Graduate Business School Experiential Learning Report
ENQA	The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, formerly the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines

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Glossary/List of Acronyms and Initialisms

ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
EU	European Union
FA	Faculty Administrator
FE1	Law Society of Ireland's entrance exam
FLAC	Free Legal Advice Centre / Free Legal Aid Clinic
FRS	Financial Reporting Standard
FSD	Fund for Students with Disabilities
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
GBS	Graduate Business School
GC	Griffith College
GC50	Griffith College's 50th anniversary
GCC	Griffith College Cork
GCD	Griffith College Dublin
GCL	Griffith College Limerick
GCPA	Griffith College Professional Academy
GCSU	Griffith College Students' Union
GDPR	EU General Data Protection Regulations
GEC	Guinness Enterprise Centre
GEO	Global Engagement Office at Griffith College
GHR	Griffith Halls of Residence
GIL	Griffith Institute of Language
GMIT	Galway Mayo Institute of Technology
HAQEF	HECA's Academic Quality and Enhancement Forum
HCI	Human Capital Initiative
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
HECA	Higher Education Colleges Association
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HETAC	Ireland's Higher Education and Training and Awards Council (predecessor of QQI)
HF	Head of Faculty
HNC	Higher National Certificate [in Engineering programme from the Business Technology Council (BTEC)]
HND	Higher National Diploma [in Engineering programme from the Business Technology Council (BTEC)]

APPENDIX 6:

Glossary/List of Acronyms and Initialisms

HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
HWU	Heriot-Watt University
IA	Interiors Association
IADT	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology
IAP	Institute of Advertising Ireland
ICA	Institute of Chartered Accountants
ICAD	Institute of Creative Advertising and Design
ICAI	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ireland
ICEP	Irish Conference on Engaging Pedagogies
ICHAS	Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences, Limerick
ICM	Institute of Commercial Management
ICOS	Irish Council for International Students
ICPAI	Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Ireland (now, CPA Ireland)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
IDI	Institute of Designers in Ireland
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IEM	International Education Mark
IER	Independent Evaluation Report
IHEQN	Irish Higher Education Quality Network
IILEX	Irish Institute of Legal Executives
IIPM	Irish Institute of Pensions Management
IISE	Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineering
ILEP	Interim List of Eligible Programmes (of the Irish Department of Justice)
ILO	Industry Liaison Officer
INIS	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
IP	Institutional Profile
IR	Incident response
IRQ	Irish Register of Qualifications
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISME	The Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association
ISTD	International Society of Typographic Designers
IT	Information Technology

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IUA	Irish Universities Association
IWD	International Women's Day
LAI	Library Association of Ireland
LATAM	Latin America – <i>the set of countries in the Americas where a Romance language predominates: Spanish, Portuguese, or French. Thus, it includes Mexico; most of Central and South America; and in the Caribbean, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti.</i>
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and the + holds space for the expanding and new understanding of different parts of the very diverse gender and sexual identities
LLMS	Large Language Models
LMS	Learning Management System
LNA	Learning Needs Assessment
LRAF	Learner Request of Amendment Form
LSD	Lecturer Support Department
LSMD	Leinster School of Music and Drama
MA	Master of Arts
MAELD	MA in Education, Learning and Development
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat, a scholarship funding agency which operates under Malaysia's Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
MB	Griffith College's Management Board
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MFA	Multi Factor Authentication
MII	Marketing Institute Ireland
MIMLO	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes
MIPLO	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
MMC	Modern Methods of Construction
MOA	Memorandum of agreement
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MSc	Master of Science
NAIN	QQI-facilitated National Academic Integrity Network
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres Network
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards (predecessor of HETAC and QQI)
NCGE	National Centre for Guidance in Education
NFQ	Irish National Framework of Qualifications
NFTL	National Forum for Teaching & Learning in Irish higher education
NStEP	National Student Engagement Programme
NTU	Nottingham Trent University
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NUTS	EU Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

APPENDIX 6:

Glossary/List of Acronyms and Initialisms

OSCOLA	Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities
PAEC	QQI's Programme Awards and Executive Committee
PB	Programme Board
PD	Programme Director
PEL	Protection for Enrolled Learners
PETALS	Griffith College's IT Services Department's Programme for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning Spaces
PMS	Property Management System
Power BI	Power Business Intelligence
PPA	Percentage Point Average
PPRC	Programme Proposals and Revalidation Committee
PPS	Personal Public Service (number)
PRII	Public Relations Institute of Ireland
PSI	Psychological Society of Ireland
PSRBs	Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
PV	Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	UK's Quality Assurance Agency
QAE	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
QAED	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department
QAES	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee
QPG	Global Engagement Office's Quick Programme Guide
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QR	Quick response (code)
RPEL	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learner
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SATLE	Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education
SCR	South Circular Road (Dublin, location of Griffith College's largest campus)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SEBS	School of Economics and Business, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
SecOps	Security Operations
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS, www.solas.ie) – the Statutory body with national responsibility for apprentices and apprenticeship programmes
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SIS	Student Information System
SME	Small and medium enterprises

APPENDIX 6:

Glossary/List of Acronyms and Initialisms

SMSI	St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland
STDI	Speech and Drama Teachers of Ireland
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics
SU	Students' Union
TD	Teachta Dála (member of parliament)
THEA	Technological Higher Education Association
TLA	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
TLD	Teaching and Learning Department
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
ToR	Terms of Reference
TV	Television
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UU	University of Ulster
VET	Vocation, Education, and Training
VLE	Griffith College's virtual learning environment, Moodle
VLOG	Video blog
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
WM	Workplace mentors ((reference apprenticeship programmes)
WTS	Wolfe Tone Street (location of Griffith College's Dublin city centre campus)

REFERENCES

This document is informed by and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Griffith College References

[Quality Assurance and Enhancement \(QAE\) Manual](#)

[Quality Assurance and Enhancement \(QAE\) Manual: Apprenticeship Programmes](#)

Griffith College's QAED Style Guide

External Resources

- ▶ [Apprenticeship Alliance's code of practice for employers and apprentices Code](#) (QQI, 2023)2023)
- ▶ [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\) for use by all Providers](#), (QQI, 2016)
- ▶ [Devolution of Responsibility for arranging \(Programme Validation Related\) Independent Evaluation Reports at QQI's request: OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES](#) (QQI, 2018)
- ▶ [NAIN Academic Integrity Guidelines](#) (NAIN, 2021)
- ▶ [Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training](#) (QQI, 2021)
- ▶ [Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards](#) (QQI, 2012)
- ▶ [Programme Review Manual 2022 – A Guide for Providers on HET Programme Review and Revalidation](#) W(QQI, 2022)
- ▶ [Provider's User's Manual – Programme Validation](#) (QQI, 2021)
- ▶ [Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions](#) (IHEQN, 2015)
- ▶ [QHub Providers' User Manual – Programme Validation](#) (QQI, 2021)
- ▶ [QQI Assessment & Standards 2013](#)
- ▶ [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#), (ENQA, 2015)
- ▶ [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes](#), (QQI, 2018)
- ▶ [The Industrial Training Act 1967](#), which regulates apprenticeships
- ▶ [Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#), (QQI, 2016)
- ▶ [Topic Specific – Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes](#) (QQI, 2023)



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