Institutional Review Report 2025

Griffith College

CINNTE

Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Contents

Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important functions is to ensure that the quality assurance (QA) procedures that institutions have in place are effective. To this end, QQI carries out external reviews of higher education institutions on a cyclical basis. This current QQI cycle of reviews is called the CINNTE cycle. CINNTE reviews are an element of the broader quality framework for institutions composed of Quality Assurance Guidelines; each institution's Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Quality Reports (AQR); and Dialogue Meetings. The CINNTE review cycle has been extended by one year i.e. from 2017-2024 to include the larger and mature independent/private higher education institutions (HEIs) operating in the Irish higher education sector. These HEIs have been prioritised on the basis that they have indicated their intention to seek the delegation of authority (DA) from QQI when it becomes available.[1] During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of these HEIs.

Each CINNTE review evaluates the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures and processes in the institution. It also measures the institution's compliance with European standards for quality assurance, having regard for the expectations set out in QQI's quality assurance guidelines, as well as adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures.

For independent/private providers, CINNTE reviews also explore how these institutions have enhanced their teaching, learning and assessment strategies and their quality assurance systems and how well institutions have aligned their approach to their own mission, quality indicators and benchmarks.

The CINNTE review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to reviews, including:

- the publication of Terms of Reference;
- a process of self-evaluation and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);
- an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers;
- the publication of a Review Report including findings and recommendations; and
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This institutional review of Griffith College was conducted by an independent review team in line with the terms of reference in Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the review team.

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1   The process for DA requires a statutory instrument detailing the ministerial regulations of the conditions to be met by institutions seeking DA.

The Review Team

Each CINNTE review is carried out by an international team of independent experts and peers. The 2024 institutional review of Griffith College was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. The review team was trained by QQI on 5 September 2024. The chair and coordinating reviewer undertook an online planning visit with Griffith College on 10 September 2024. The main review visit was conducted by the full team between 21 and 24 October 2024.

CHAIR
Professor Peter Purg

Professor Peter Purg is Dean of the School of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. At the School of Arts, he leads the New Media module in the Digital/Media Arts and Practices graduate/postgraduate programme. He was President of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency Council (2019-2022), therein representing the Slovenian Rectors Conference for the 2016-2022 mandate. With expertise in the arts and humanities, including interdisciplinary domains of media and social studies, Peter Purg has since 2012 acted as expert and often chair of quality review panels in over thirty procedures in Slovenia and abroad, collaborating with diverse national HE QA agencies across Europe and beyond. He is prominently active in the field of cultural and higher education policymaking, assessment and quality assurance, and is co-author of the Slovenian Higher Education Strategy 2021-2030. Having obtained a PhD in media art, communication science and literature from the University of Erfurt (Germany), his scientific inquiries include media arts pedagogy, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, media art and media ecology. Within the European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica – Gorizia Peter Purg heads the curatorial board of the 26th international festival of contemporary/media art Pixxelpoint for its 2025 edition, having also curated it in 2019. Since 2022 he has been leading two EcoC official programmes, the media-arts+performance series PostMobility and the art-science-DIY lab xMobil. He led the acclaimed

MAST – Module in Art, Science and Technology project (DG Connect) – and the School of Arts' teams in two large-scale projects, KONS – Platform for Investigative Arts (EU Cohesion) – and DIVA – Art:Biz Innovation Ecosystem (Interreg SI-IT). In 2011 he was awarded "Prometheus of Science for Excellence in Communication" by The Slovenian Science Foundation. Peter Purg also acts as a member of juries and boards in and between art and science such as Creative Europe, Horizon and S+T+ARTS of the European Commission.

COORDINATING REVIEWER
Carmel Kelly

Carmel Kelly is Assistant Registrar at the Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire. She leads the Academic + Student Affairs Office, which is responsible for student admissions, registration, fees, examinations and the student record through to conferring and beyond. Carmel also works closely with the Quality Office in the management and enhancement of IADT's quality assurance policies and procedures and ensuring alignment with relevant statutory requirements. During 2022-2023, Carmel was institutional co-ordinator for the successful CINNTE Review of IADT. Prior to joining IADT, Carmel worked at QQI for a number of years across various areas including programme validation, managing international projects and the establishment of the Irish NARIC centre for the recognition of international qualifications in Ireland. She also has many years of experience working in the education sector in the UK, Chile, Brazil and Pakistan. She graduated with a BA and Higher Diploma in Education from NUIG and also holds an MBA from UCD.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE [IRISH HE SECTOR]
Professor Aidan Mulkeen

Professor Aidan Mulkeen is currently Deputy President of Maynooth University, and former Vice President Academic and Registrar. In this role he was responsible for, inter alia, academic affairs, academic policies and administrative systems,

admissions, student services and quality assurance. During his time as VPA/Registrar MU grew from 9,500 students to over 16,000, developed new academic areas, and established an international institution in China.

His academic area is education, including teacher education, technology enhanced learning, and education policy. He has a strong interest in education in developing countries and has worked extensively on teacher issues in sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to his role as Registrar in Maynooth University he held roles as head of the Education Department in Maynooth University, and as Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE [HE SECTOR]
Daniela Jobertová
Daniela Jobertová holds the position of Associate Professor at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Czech Republic. Her academic interests, following her university studies carried out in the Czech Republic, but also in the United States and in France, cover theatre history, mainly French classical theatre, but also contemporary creation, theatre criticism and performance analysis; her more specific professional focus is on translation and translation studies, especially with regard to the particular nature, requirements and conditions of drama and theatre creation. Between 2002 and 2013, she served as vice-dean of the Theatre Faculty, and between 2013 and 2021 as vice-rector of the Academy of Performing Arts; in these positions she was in charge of international affairs, research, the study agenda and especially quality assurance and the implementation of the QA system at the Academy. For almost ten years, she has extensively collaborated with the Czech Accreditation Bureau as a reviewer, with the quality assurance agency which specialises in arts educations – EQ-Arts – and was on multiple occasions a member of programme and institutional evaluation panels in Lithuania. At present, she is a vice-president of the Czech University Council, one of the two major representative bodies voicing the interests of the academic sector towards relevant policymakers. She translates drama for the Czech professional theatres from English and French, as well as

theoretical works. She was awarded with the French Government distinction The Knight of the Order of Academic Palms for long-term support and advocacy of French theatre and drama in the Czech Republic.

LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE
Elizabeth O'Connell
Elizabeth O'Connell is currently on a career break. However, she has over 25 years' experience in the technology industry, specialising in GPS tracking and security solutions. Her role as director at Satcom Technology Ltd involved office administration and management, contract management and compliance, HR and scheduling, and procurement and supply chain management. Elizabeth returned to education as an adult learner. In doing so, she fulfilled an ambition to validate her industry experience and upskill. Elizabeth feels it is important to seek out additional skill enhancements or training for both personal and professional growth. She has completed a Certificate in Procurement Management at UCC and completed her MBA at NCI, during which she was also Class Representative. Elizabeth is a student reviewer with NStEP (National Student Engagement Programme) and a volunteer mentor with Inspire Mentoring. She is enthusiastic about student engagement and would like to be instrumental in ensuring everyone has an opportunity to enjoy further and higher education.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE [INDUSTRY & INNOVATION]
Éamonn Kennedy
Éamonn Kennedy is Storyful's Chief Product & Technology Officer. His career to date has focused on driving innovative user-centric technology by building agile cross-disciplinary teams. Before joining Storyful in 2014, he founded and was product lead for a number of web-based startups, winning industry innovation awards, including the Web Summit Spark of Genius. He leads the R&D team that creates systems to help journalists and analysts understand and interpret the vast amount of public content and data that is shared as our societies move online. Éamonn holds an M.Sc. in Computer Science from Trinity College Dublin.

Section 1

Introduction and Context

Section 1: Introduction and Context

BACKGROUND

Griffith College is one of the largest and longest established private/independent higher education institutions in Ireland. Established in 1974 as Business and Accounting Training (BAT) to prepare students for professional examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ACA), the institution has evolved significantly since the 1970s and now provides a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional programmes to an annual student population of over 7,000 learners from Ireland and abroad. The programmes are supported and delivered by a team of 725 employees, including both full-time and part-time staff.

In 2023/24, the institution had 7,936 students enrolled, of whom 6,172 were undertaking programmes validated by Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI). It has four campuses: the main campus on Dublin's South Circular Road; a second Dublin campus on Wolfe Tone Street; and campuses in Cork and Limerick.

STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The last Strategic Plan 2014 – 2022, which is published on the Griffith College website, outlines the institution's core strategic commitment to the development of its learners for successful careers and empowered lives in society. The strategic objectives covered core areas of performance including engagement with industry and the community; e-learning; research and development; financial planning; human resources; educational support services; and national and international marketing.

In 2024, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the institution developed and published its Strategic Framework for 2024 and subsequent years. The mission of Griffith College is 'to be recognised among the leading, innovative, and socially enterprising of Ireland's universities.' The vision of the institution is 'To provide, by living in our 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.'

As part of the strategic development process and the CINNTE self-evaluation process, the institution undertook a consultation among staff and students to further articulate and reaffirm the shared values that the community most associates with the institution. The following seven shared values are stated and described in the institution's Strategic Framework 2024:

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

The Griffith College Strategic Framework 2024 sets out the key strategic developments which have been identified by the institution for 2024/25 and beyond. These strategic developments identify over 30 particular projects and initiatives which the institution intends to deliver under the themes of Academic Excellence; the Learner Experience; Organisational Talent and Culture; Connectedness;

Global Engagement; Innovation in Education; and Sustainability.

As an independent higher education provider, Griffith College is registered with Ireland's Companies Registration Office. Originally incorporated as Bellerophon Limited, since its move to its campus on South Circular Road, Dublin 8, it has traded as Griffith College Dublin and more recently Griffith College. As a private limited company, the institution'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.

Governance and Management at Griffith College comprises three entities: the Board of Directors (BoD); the Academic and Professional Council (APC); and the Management Board (MB).

The Board of Directors oversees the financial stewardship, major capital expenditure, strategic planning, and has ultimate responsibility for the overall direction of the institution. The BoD has the responsibility of appointing members to the BoD, and to the institution's MB and APC. In doing so, the BoD maintains an overview of the institution's academic and quality assurance and enhancement management.

The Management Board (MB) operationalises the institution's strategic plans, which requires operational management of resource requirements, budget allocation, conducting operational reviews of faculties and departments, and overseeing staff provision and other resource requirements. The MB also considers any recommendations or reports from other key standing committees (for example, reports from APC and its sub-committees) and, as appropriate, recommendations and reports by other authorities/individuals within the institution, 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 responsible for academic governance at Griffith College and reports to the Board of Directors. The APC's remit is to drive the institution's mission and strategy in programme design, development and delivery, and related institution activities, through developing and embedding a culture of quality enhancement based on the outcomes of ongoing reviews and analysis. APC reflects on the output from the implementation of the institution's QAE processes and key feedback mechanisms, including feedback from learners, lecturers, external examiners, as well as the content of Annual Quality Reports (AQRs), Annual Programme Reviews (APRs), Faculty and Programme periodic reviews, etc. Since 2019, the BoD of the institution has appointed independent external chairs for APC, requiring the individuals to hold significant academic governance credentials.

MB and APC both have a number of sub-committees which undertake specific functions on their behalf and report to them. The membership of committees, including MB and APC, means that governance is representative of the institution'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 institution's EDI working group, reflect the institution's commitment to broad representation from across the institution 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 Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual in 2022/2023, and the current QAE Manual reflects these developments.

CAMPUS INFRASTRUCTURE
The main institution campus on Dublin's South Circular Road is a mix of historic buildings, and building of recent construction. The main campus has 65 teaching rooms, with a total capacity of 2,507 seats. In addition, there are 9 computer laboratories, ranging in capacity from 4 to 42. The main campus has on-campus accommodation for 664 students in a mix of single and twin rooms, which was completed in 2005. The institution's

Conference Centre was completed in 2006 and holds internal and external events, including the annual Griffith College conferring ceremonies.

PROGRAMME PROFILE

Griffith College provides a variety of programmes, including QQI-validated programmes, ranging from NFQ Level 5 to NFQ Level 9; QQI-validated programmes in association with collaborative partners; professional training programmes leading to awards of other accreditation agencies and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (e.g. Heriot-Watt University, Law Society of Ireland); and apprenticeships and accredited and non-accredited programmes for and in association with industry partners.

As of March 2024, the institution offers 149 programmes validated by QQI, of which there are 21 master's degrees and 21 postgraduate diplomas (level 9), 17 honours degrees (level 8) and 13 ordinary degrees (level 7).

Number of QQI-validated programmes in Griffith College 2024

NFQ level	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Certification in International Foundation Studies	1					1
Higher Certificates		6				6
Higher Diploma				4		4
Degrees			13	17		30
Postgraduate Diploma					21	21
Master's degree					21	21
Special purpose /minor /micro-cred		22	9	26	9	66

The institution offers degree programmes in a range of disciplines, including Business, Design, Music (in collaboration with Pulse College), Computing, Pharmaceuticals (in collaboration with Innopharma Education), Journalism, Law, Engineering and Creative Arts and Screen Media.

Number of QQI-validated Higher Certificate, Degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's programmes in Griffith College by department - 2024

Number of programmes	Higher Certificate L6	Degree L7	Degree L8	PG Dip L9	Master's
Apprenticeship	1	1			
Business	2	2	4		
Computing	1	1	1	4	4
Design	1	3	3		
Education, Learning and Development				1	1
Engineering		1			
Creative Arts and Screen Media	1	2	1		
Graduate Business School			1	5	6
Innopharma Education		1	1	3	3
Journalism and Communications Media		1	1	4	3
Law			1	3	3
Leinster School of Music and Drama					
Pulse College		1	4	1	1
Total	**6**	**13**	**17**	**21**	**21**

STUDENT PROFILE

Like all other higher education institutions in Ireland, Griffith College's Irish and EU undergraduate students gain their places through the Central Applications Office (CAO) process for fulltime courses validated by QQI. Students that join all other programmes (postgraduate, micro-credentials, professional programmes, and all non-EU students) apply via the Griffith College Admissions Office.

The profile of students on QQI-accredited programmes in Griffith College has been changing. Over the 5 years from 2019/20 to 2023/24 there have been significant shifts toward postgraduate students and towards international students enrolled at the institution:

Postgraduate students increased by 64%, while undergraduate numbers grew by 4%. As a result, the proportion of postgraduates grew from 33% to 44% in the period.

There has been a marked shift towards international students. The number of Irish undergraduate students fell by 572 (25%), while there were increases in international numbers at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. As a result, the proportion of Irish students has dropped from 53% in 2019/20 to 36% in 2023/24.

PROGRESSION RATES

The institution tracks student retention rates and records these annually in a written report. The graph below shows the historic trends in retention rates. Like many Irish HEIs, Griffith College showed unusually high progression rates from 2019/20 during the peak of the COVID pandemic.

There are some variations in retention rates. Retention rates are generally lower in stage 1 (first year) than in subsequent years, and the progression rates in the faculties of Law, Computing and Business were lower than in the faculties of Design and Journalism.

Progression rates by Faculty 2022/23 to 2023/24

Faculty	Stage 1	Overall
Business	69%	79%
Computing	67%	81%
Design	90%	83%
Journalism	81%	81%
Law	66%	78%

COLLABORATIVE LINKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Griffith College has partnered with local, regional (e.g. Skillnet) and national companies and industry bodies, and state agencies to develop, and in some instances to provide, programmes. The
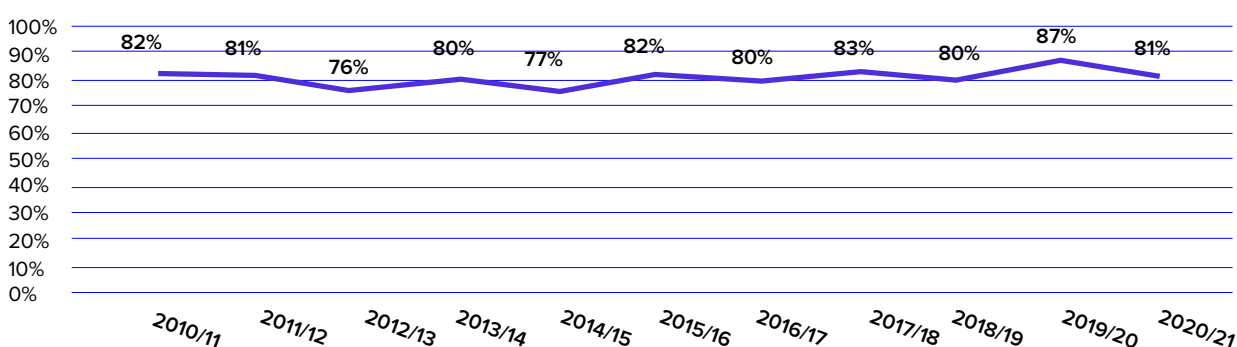
Note: The figures show retention rates, calculated as the proportion of students on multi-annual courses, excluding those in final year, who are registered in the institution in any capacity in the following year.

institution develops different relationships in terms of the arrangements for development, admission, provision, assessment, and post-graduation activities, depending on the partnership. Griffith College's collaborations are governed by its general QAE policies and those specific to the collaboration involved. Prior to establishing a collaboration, the institution undertakes a due diligence review. The relevant legal obligations are specified in collaborative agreements between the institution and its collaborating partners. Ongoing governance and monitoring of the collaborative arrangement and the programmes delivered under that agreement are managed through the institution's QAE Department and APC.

A number of the institution's QQI-validated programmes are delivered on a collaborative or partnership basis. Collaborative programmes leading to QQI awards are currently delivered with the following partners:

- ESS Ltd.
- Innopharma Education
- Pulse College

Programmes offered through these partnerships are managed in accordance with Griffith College's approved Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedures (Griffith College is the first provider).

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AT THE TIME OF THE CINNTE REVIEW

For Griffith College, the CINNTE review taking place during 2024 coincided with a number of noteworthy events and projects of infrastructural and strategic importance to the institution:

- Griffith College celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2024, and a number of events, lectures and celebrations were scheduled during the year.
- The institution undertook an institution-wide review with all stakeholders to review the institution's core values, mission and vision, to underpin the development of the institution's strategic plan from 2024 onwards.
- The institution supported students and staff from a number of QQI-validated programmes

at two private higher education institutions which closed during 2023 and 2024; Dublin Design Institute (DDI) and Saint Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland (SMSI), which required significant oversight and attention.

- The institution's engagement with Advance HE to work towards the Athena Swan Bronze award delivering on the institution's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all members of the institution's community.
- The development and implementation of 'THEMIS', the bespoke Academic Management Information System, to manage all learner records from admissions through to graduation, which has been a significant investment and a large focus for the institution during 2023 and 2024.

APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Griffith College intentionally adopted the term Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) as opposed to Quality Assurance (QA), in order to establish the context for quality 'as a means, not just for evaluation and assessment, but also for effecting continuous development.' Reflecting on the evolution of the institution's quality assurance and enhancement over its 50 years of experience in education provision to date, the institution asserts that the three key contributing factors to its quality assurance and enhancement framework have been:

- **Openness**: to new insights and ways of operating, as it constantly evolves and develops.
- **Collaboration**: as a result of the integration of many other programmes and institutions over the years, as well as working with collaborative partners.
- **Development Support and Engagement**: sharing best practice and other benefits resulting from the institution's engagement with state bodies such as QQI, the HEA and other related bodies.

Responsibility for oversight of quality assurance and enhancement at Griffith College ultimately

lies with the Board of Directors, which oversees the financial stewardship, strategic planning, and overall management of the institution. Appointed by the Board of Directors, the Academic and Professional Council (APC) is the main academic governance entity at Griffith College, responsible for driving the institution's mission and strategy relating to programme design, development and delivery and related institution activities.

Both the Board of Directors and the APC have a number of sub-committees (e.g. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-committee, Programme Proposal and Review Committee) and working groups (e.g. Programme Director Group, Head of Faculty Group) which are assigned particular responsibilities and tasks and report back to either the Board or the APC. As the institution has evolved in terms of increased student numbers, changing student demographics and new programmes provided with collaborative partners; new roles, sub-committees and working groups have been initiated to ensure that the appropriate quality assurance infrastructure is in place and efficiently supports such changes.

The institution's quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures are developed, formally approved through its academic governance processes, i.e. APC and the Board of Directors, and incorporated into the institution's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual. The QAE Manual addresses internal quality assurance relating to activities such as programme validation and 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 documented approach to quality assurance and enhancement is published on the institution's website and is accessible to stakeholders, both in the QAE Manual and also in individual elements of the policies and procedures contained in the manual by way of links from relevant sections of the institution's communication channels such as particular pages on the website and the staff intranet 'Inside Griffith'.

The Griffith College Quality Assurance and Enhancement page contains relevant quality-related information on the academic supports available to students at the institution, key policies and forms, as well as the QAE Manual, Learner Charter, and the Student Handbook. Quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures at Griffith College are informed by ESG 2015 and relevant QQI Statutory QA Guidelines (including sector-specific guidelines for private and independent providers and relevant topic-specific guidelines). In the ISER, Griffith College states that the QAE Manual is reviewed on an ongoing basis, with policies and procedures reviewed and updated frequently, in line with best practice and national and international developments.

The Griffith College Strategic Framework 2024 was approved by the Board of Directors, following extensive internal and some external consultation. As the Strategic Plan of the Institution is not fully elaborated upon as yet, it was not possible for the review team to critique the extent of alignment between the quality policies and procedures in the institution and the current strategic plan. However, from the documentation reviewed by the review team and meetings held during the review visit, it was evident to the review team that quality assurance is an integral consideration across all areas of educational provision and activities at Griffith College.

Section 2

Institutional Self-Evaluation
Report (ISER)

Section 2: Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

In autumn 2023, QQI and Griffith College agreed a schedule for the CINNTE review, to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of the institution's internal quality assurance procedures. A timeline was agreed, with the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) due to be submitted to QQI during the summer of 2024 and the main review visit scheduled for October 2024.

OVERVIEW OF THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS

The self-evaluation process was managed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department (QAED) at Griffith College. An Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) Development Group was established in autumn 2023, comprising approximately 15 members, representing the Board of Directors, Management Board, Academic and Professional Council and institution sub-committees, as well as members of academic and ensure a comprehensive and institution-wide review, the ISER Development Group agreed the following areas of the institution's educational and related operations would be in scope for the review:

- QQI-validated programmes, ranging from NFQ Level 5 to NFQ Level 9, delivered by Griffith College from any of its four constituent campuses, in all delivery modes.
- QQI-validated programmes delivered in association with the institution'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 institution, for example through the 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 all of the institution's community.

An approach to the review was developed and agreed by the ISER Development Group, consisting of a number of phases.

The initial phase consisted of communications and presentations from the QAE team to staff throughout the Institution, including the various management and committee groups. The team briefed staff on the purpose of the review, the scope and expectations involved, along with the schedule for the distinct phases and events. A comprehensive survey was undertaken, which sought feedback on the topics outlined in the CINNTE ISER template. Many focus groups sessions were also scheduled, principally with various institution-wide groups such as the Board of Directors, Management Board, Academic and Professional Council, Heads of Faculty, Programme Directors, Faculty Administrators etc. as well as with various departments within the institution such as Marketing, IT Services, Learner Services, Library etc.

A wider consultation phase followed, during which shorter, more targeted surveys were undertaken, seeking actionable feedback on what processes Griffith College does well and should retain, and what processes should be changed, discontinued, or further developed. Feedback was sought from learners, staff, graduates, employer groups and other key stakeholders. Surveys were followed up with the institution's and collaborative partners' groups (e.g. Heads of Faculty, Programme Directors, Faculty Administrators) to ascertain the level of satisfaction with the Institution's processes and to identify actionable feedback.

In addition, departmental self-evaluations and specific topic self-evaluations were undertaken, in order to ascertain the position of the institution with respect to specific areas of focus within the ISER such as Programme Validation, Review and Revalidation Processes Review and Teaching, and the Learning and Assessment Roadmap Review. Additional existing information sources were reviewed and considered as part of the self-evaluation, including learners' assessment of each module during and at the end of each semester, learners' assessment of institution resources and facilities, external examiner feedback, annual programme reviews etc.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (ISER)

QQI provided a template for the presentation of the ISER, which proposed the following sections in each chapter:

- Description
- Evaluation
- Identification of Effective Practice
- Challenges and Potential Future Enhancements

Via the ISER Development Group, leads from across the institution were identified to draft the various chapters/sections of the ISER. During all phases, the QAED team was available to the institution's staff, students and stakeholders to provide information and advice. The ISER's administrative processes were supported and

coordinated by the institution's QAED team and the team ensured that the ISER was agreed at various stages throughout its development by the ISER Development Group and that the report was approved and signed off by the institution governance prior to its submission to QQI.

REVIEW TEAM FINDINGS REGARDING THE REVIEW AND THE ISER

The review team found the ISER to be well-structured and informative and demonstrated significant capacity for critical self-analysis on the part of Griffith College. Together with the Annual Quality Reports and additional supporting materials, such as the institutional profile document and promotional videos, the review team was presented with quite a clear overview of quality assurance and enhancement procedures and activities at Griffith College. Prior to the review visit, the review team requested additional documentation and data relating to areas such as student and staff numbers, the institution's strategy statement and other quality assurance-related templates and completed documents, which was duly provided by the institution.

During the review visit, the review team was impressed with the level of engagement of staff in the self-evaluation process and found clear evidence of active participation in the review across all levels and functional areas of the institution. It was evident that the CINNTE review had buy-in across all staff in the institution. During many meetings with the review team, staff reflected on the self-evaluation experience, noting it was a comprehensive and useful exercise and that they welcomed the opportunity for reflective review and shared discussions of the institution's quality assurance procedures. It was also evident that the ISER invoked a sense of shared purpose to seek to improve Griffith College as an educational institution. All staff were cognisant and open regarding areas requiring further development. The institution is justifiably proud of its 50-year heritage as a higher and professional education institution, and this was very evident during the review process.

At board and senior management level, there was a strong focus on the future strategic development and potential expansion of the Institution. Recommendations relating to further reinforcing the quality assurance and enhancement infrastructure of the institution to support these ambitions are contained later in this report.

It was also evident to the review team that the QAE team at the institution provided extensive support and guidance to the institution community at all stages of the review process, including 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 Institution's learners, lecturers, staff, employers and other stakeholder groups in order to support writers of departmental and specific-topic ISER contributions.

The learner community was surveyed in the initial phase of the self-evaluation, with a 7% response rate achieved. There were no student representatives on the ISER Development Group. Though reference was made to surveys and focus groups with external stakeholders as part of the self-evaluation exercise, none of the external stakeholders that met with the review team were aware of the CINNTE review or had been consulted during the self-evaluation process, bar collaborative providers. Similarly, the students that the review team met with during the main review visit were not familiar with the CINNTE review and could not confirm that they had completed any survey relating to the self-evaluation or participated in any of the focus groups relating to the review. The review team were of the opinion that having learner representatives more directly involved in the review would have benefitted the work of the ISER Development Group and enhanced the report. The low level of learner representation in key quality assurance activities and mechanisms at Griffith College in general was noted by the review team and forms a recommendation in a later section of this report.

The methodologies employed as part of the review including surveys, focus groups, focused review and writing teams enabled meaningful engagement with the review process. As responsibility for drafting various chapters and sections within the ISER was shared across the Institution, this also contributed to the distributed ownership of the review.

COMMENDATION 1
The review team commends the QAED team in Griffith College on its approach to institutional review and the extensive support and guidance it provided to the institution community, thus ensuring a comprehensive and extensive review was undertaken, with active participation across all levels and functional areas of the institution.

Section 3

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Section 3: Quality Assurance/Accountability

INTRODUCTION

Griffith College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual is developed and revised on a collaborative basis by the Institution's teaching and support staff across all faculties and functions. The most recent version of the manual **Griffith College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual: Policies, Procedures, Practices and Guidelines 2024/2025** was published in September 2024. The manual comprises policies, procedures, practices and guidelines which set out the assurance of the quality and standards of the Institution's educational and related services. The manual covers all aspects of provision, governance and management of quality; including procedures relating to programme development and approval, learner admission, progression and recognition; programme monitoring and review, teaching and learning; assessment of learners and staff recruitment, management and development. The QAE Manual was reviewed over recent years so that its structure and contents is aligned with the most up-to-date national and EU regulatory standards for higher education, particularly the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG).

Griffith College has completed and submitted four Annual Quality Reports (AQRs), for the academic years 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.The AQR is drafted by members of the QAE Department, in consultation with institution management. It is then considered and approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-committee (QAES) and subsequently by the Academic and Professional Council. The AQR sets out the quality assurance and enhancement framework at the institution and provides information regarding enhancements achieved with regard to quality over the reporting period. The review team found the AQRs to be comprehensive documents, which provided good evidence and a means of tracking quality enhancement from one year to the next, for example, the development and approval of the Policy for Academic Integrity and Misconduct and the agreement of terms of reference for the recently established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group.

In line with the terms of reference for the CINNTE review, the review team evaluated the quality assurance and enhancement framework of Griffith College under the three objectives set for the review; Governance and Management; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; and Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review. The findings of the review team are set out under each objective below.

OBJECTIVE 1 – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

MISSION AND STRATEGY

Griffith College aims to position itself as a leading, innovative educational institution with an internationalisation ambition, and to provide an intercultural learning experience that supports both learning and career success. The institution is in a leading position among the private sector higher education institutions and has been active in ensuring Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) in cases where other private institutions have faced difficulties. It now has ambitions to become more research intensive, to gain delegated authority for its awards, and ultimately to gain university status. Its mission, driven by a commitment to high-quality education and training, is firmly rooted in values that reflect the needs of its diverse student body and broader community.

Griffith College's core values, as expressed in its Institutional Profile and confirmed in the review

visit sessions include a student-centred approach, where programmes are designed to foster student success in both career and life. Academic excellence, another key value, underpins the Institution's commitment to integrity and quality across all educational initiatives. Agility and adaptability, supported by dedicated staff and a well substantiated material base, characterise the institution's readiness to respond to changing demands within education and industry, ensuring the continued relevance of its offerings. Further emphasising career development, Griffith College collaborates with industry partners to equip students with the skills and knowledge essential to thrive professionally. A dedication to diversity and inclusion promotes a respectful, open, and supportive environment for all. Friendliness also plays a crucial role in creating a welcoming community where students feel valued and supported. Finally, Griffith College's commitment to responsible stewardship ensures that financial decisions are data-driven and sustainable, safeguarding the institution's longevity and reputation.

The Institution's upcoming strategic plan was discussed at several sessions during the review visit, although at the time of the review it had not yet been formally approved. The summary document Griffith College Strategic Framework 2024 was shared with the review team, but the complete strategy document has not been finalised yet. All staff agreed on the key development themes; academic excellence remains a priority, with expanded research efforts, integration of AI advancements, and alignment with international standards. Enhancing the learner experience, Griffith College is dedicated to improving online resources, maintaining robust feedback systems, and tailoring programmes to meet students' evolving career needs. Fostering organisational talent and culture, the institution intends to seek awards such as the Athena Swan Bronze to promote inclusivity, celebrate staff contributions, and support continuous professional development. Griffith College's global engagement strategy aims to broaden online transnational programmes and boost opportunities for student and staff mobility, while its industry connectedness initiatives focus on expanding partnerships, developing the Graduate

Business School Innovation Hub, and establishing industry advisory bodies.

Innovation in education is a further strategic priority, with significant investment in new teaching methods, apprenticeship programmes, and support for diverse cultural views within the learning environment. Lastly, sustainability remains central to Griffith College's vision, with plans to advance the Campus Masterplan, implement a new Management Information System (THEMIS), and embed sustainability considerations within curricula.

To ensure progress, the institution conducts regular academic and financial performance reviews, drawing insights from feedback from students, employers, and quality bodies. Through these initiatives, Griffith College continuously adapts, offering value-driven, future-focused education that aligns with its mission and values. The thorough and complex consultation conducted on the strategic development areas and directions across all internal stakeholders, including some industry partners, are thus to be commended.

COMMENDATION 2
The review team found that a thorough and complex consultation was conducted by the institution during 2024 on the strategic development areas and directions across all internal stakeholders, including some industry partners.

To further strengthen its strategic approach, Griffith College should consider consolidating its existing planning and development processes into a fully integrated strategic management framework. Currently, the institution employs an agile approach to planning, which offers flexibility and responsiveness. However, to ensure that this agility is balanced with consistency and comprehensive oversight, formalising and embedding these practices firmly into the quality assurance and enhancement system would be beneficial. By building a cohesive framework that interconnects institutional and programme development, the institution could establish a more structured approach to strategy implementation and evaluation. This framework should include

a clear articulation of processes for planning, action, and assessment, providing a foundation for programme development to consistently align with institutional goals and values. As jointly confirmed in some sessions, ensuring that these processes are documented within the QA system would create a dependable reference point, supporting both transparency and accountability.

Additionally, embedding robust quality assurance and enhancement in Griffith College's mission and strategy would ensure that strategic initiatives are comprehensively understood and consistently communicated to all stakeholders. By establishing action plan-based monitoring, key performance indicators (KPIs), and other evaluative mechanisms, the institution can foster a culture of continuous improvement across governance and quality systems. This alignment between QAE and strategy would promote a streamlined management approach, where strategic goals are consistently tracked and adjusted based on regular performance insights. The visibility of these processes would not only strengthen the Institution's strategic management but also enhance stakeholder engagement by providing clear, measurable outcomes and pathways for contribution. This consolidated, formalised approach would enable Griffith College to maintain its commitment to agility and adaptability while establishing a comprehensive, strategic framework for sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Visibly consolidate, formalise and embed into the QAE system the current planning of institutional and programme development arrangements, to form a complete strategic management practice that complements the current agile way of action-planning. To underpin their QAE integration, mission and strategy should be completed and consistently communicated to all stakeholders, followed by managerial integration (such as action plan-based monitoring, KPIs etc.) across the entire governance and quality systems of the institution. Leaning on a well-organised QAED team and a fast-developing quality culture, the Institution's governance should include strategic analysis and follow-up to the outcomes of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring in their decision-making systems.

STRUCTURES FOR GOVERNANCE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Griffith College's governance structure is designed to uphold strategic oversight, academic integrity, and operational effectiveness, combining three primary bodies: the Board of Directors (BoD), the Academic and Professional Council (APC), and the Management Board (MB). These entities support a balanced governance framework that addresses both educational programmes and institutional operations. While the BoD focuses on financial management, risk assessment, and strategic direction, the MB is responsible for daily operations, resource distribution, and administrative oversight. The APC, serving as the core of academic governance, leads programme design and quality assurance. Its structure, complemented by the involvement of external examiners and stakeholders, ensures rigorous review and stakeholder input. However, the institution could benefit from broadening its structure to include additional external peer reviews and objective bodies, and a stronger representation of students, reinforcing a robust foundation for critical self-evaluation amid evolving external conditions.

COMMENDATION 3

The institution's financial situation appears very stable due to owning property and maintaining considerable financial reserves as well as applying strict yet agile financial management, allowing for ambitious investment planning.

COMMENDATION 4

The institution has a dedicated management team with a strong commitment to the institution. This has allowed agile decision-making which has helped the institution to survive and thrive through recessions and changes in demand which have proved challenging for others.

As described in the ISER, transparency is prioritised at Griffith College through structured, documented meetings, shared agendas, and records accessible to relevant stakeholders across all governance committees. The meetings and the documentary evidence provided to the review team indicate that there might be further transparency and clarity to be recommended, both to ensure

consistent follow-up on all priorities and to keep all stakeholders well informed. Updates to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual have recently reinforced committee roles, terms of reference, and communication channels, providing a more solidified framework for internal processes. Nevertheless, feedback given across the review visit sessions, including those with partners and alumni, indicates that the addition of independent external bodies in governance could further enhance visibility and stakeholder confidence, particularly among those less familiar with the institution's governance operations. This could serve to somewhat demystify complex processes for all participants and make them more accessible to the wider (not only academic) community.

In terms of risk management, the institution has well-established practices, with the BoD spearheading strategic and financial risk assessment while specific staff oversee areas like GDPR, cybersecurity, and academic integrity. Risk evaluation is embedded in strategic planning, with major decisions contingent upon risk assessment – however this appears to be conducted within a rather small and fairly closed circle of executive staff. Thus, Griffith College could strengthen its resilience by diversifying its governance framework to include external peer reviewers and bodies, ensuring comprehensive oversight. This would mitigate risks associated with volatile external factors such as political or economic changes, shifts in competition, and variations in student demand, positioning the institution to better weather uncertainty.

The institution's governance structure underpins the integrity of academic processes through QAE policies, routine self-evaluation, and a culture of ongoing quality improvement. The thorough and consistent QAE Manual, informed by sector best practices, provides consistent standards for academic quality across all departments. Reviews, including Annual Quality Reports (AQRs) and Annual Programme Reviews (APR), inform governance processes and ensure continuous improvement. The institution's efforts to strengthen academic integrity through recent AI usage guidelines further illustrate this proactive approach. Expanding external peer reviews and oversight mechanisms

within governance could further reinforce these standards, promoting integrity institution-wide.

Griffith College's capacity for self-evaluation and ongoing improvement is evident in its QAE practices, which are supported by regular feedback mechanisms and sector-aligned standards. Recent updates, including committee restructuring and expanded representation, reflect the institution's commitment to governance evolution. However, diversifying governance through additional external input, such as independent peer reviewers, could enhance the institution's adaptability and transparency. Implementing this would not only strengthen critical self-assessment but also make the institution's operations more visible and relatable to a broader stakeholder base, fostering a well-rounded understanding of governance processes.

The institution could bolster its critical self-evaluation and enhance its capacity to address volatile external factors, such as shifts in the economic landscape or political climate, changes in competitive positioning, and quickly evolving student demands. This approach would not only support operational transparency but also foster a culture of openness and critical reflection, reinforcing the institution's commitment to excellence. Introducing independent entities would bring fresh perspectives into governance, encouraging debate and constructive feedback to enrich strategic planning. Additionally, a governance structure with external reviewers would ensure that Griffith College's risk management practices remain proactive, resilient, and aligned with best practices, ultimately reinforcing stakeholder trust and confidence in the institution's mission and long-term sustainability.

The current membership of all the decision-making bodies is largely internal, comprised of staff members of the institution. While this has allowed agility and rapid decision making, the institution has reached a scale where it may benefit from greater externality in its Board of Directors. If properly managed this could bring a breadth of perspectives without restricting the agility and autonomy of the institution. From an academic perspective, the current structure relies on the external chair of

APC to bring external perspectives to academic governance, and the institution is heavily reliant on external validation processes to bring expert peer review to the programme approval process. If the institution is to move to delegated authority for programme approval, a much stronger external review process will need to be incorporated into its own procedure, with a wider range of external inputs.

RECOMMENDATION 2

To ensure sustained resilience and transparency, Griffith College should strategically diversify its governance structures, both in the managerial as well as in the academic realm, by incorporating independent peer review, objective externality and a stronger student voice.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Griffith College should develop a formal institutional risk register, which is reviewed annually.

DOCUMENTING QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Griffith College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual is an extensive document, which runs to 442 pages. This manual is intended to meet the operational needs of the institution, and to meet the requirements of the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. The manual covers a broad range of topics, from admission requirements and the procedure for approval of new programmes, to the service dog policy. Additional policies have been developed as needed, for example a separate set of procedures for apprenticeships.

The policies continue to develop and adapt. The most recent version of the manual was approved in September 2023 following a consultation and review process. This review formed a useful preparation for the institutional review, and also provided an opportunity to update and revise policies as needed. There were examples of situations where procedures have been amended. For example, the Annual Programme Report (APR) process was revised and simplified after a period of use.

The QAE policies remain a work in progress. There are a number of sections of the QAE Manual which are marked as "being reviewed and redeveloped for consultation". These include:

3.2.2: Faculty review

3.3.2: Departmental review

3.5.1: Admission and registration processes.

4.2: Staff recruitment and selection.

4.4.3: Staff communication

5.2: National and international effective practice.

5.3: Learning environments.

The clear identification of policies under review is helpful, and an indication that the policies are being actively reviewed. Nevertheless, there is clearly a need to complete these reviews and update the relevant policies. There are formal processes for development and approval of policies, and a committee structure which allows policy development and review.

Policy review has been carried out when required, and as new areas of operation such as apprenticeships have emerged. The institutional quality review process has provided an opportunity to review the suite of policies and to identify policies which merit updating. Over time, it will be helpful to have a cyclical and systematic review of policies and procedures for QA, to develop a policy tracker, and to publish policies with the approval dates and approval committees clearly identified.

There are mechanisms in place to give staff and students access to policies. For staff, a dedicated SharePoint space known as "Inside Griffith" functions as a staff intranet, and provides, among other resources, a repository for policies. It includes an alphabetical list of policies and procedures with links to each. All staff, including part-time staff, have access to this once they have a Griffith College email address. For students, the information on student-related polices is provided through the Learner Hub, an open website for students which has a specific policies page https://www.griffith.ie/learnerhub/policies. The policies are also

combined in the QAE Manual which is available on the QAE webpage https://www.griffith.ie/offices/quality-assurance-and-enhancement.

The QAE Manual outlines a comprehensive strategy to uphold educational quality standards, aligning with national and international regulatory requirements. Several review visit sessions demonstrated that the manual is being consistently used and is well known across the QAE structures of the institution.

The QAE Manual is collaboratively developed, involving input from teaching and support staff, students, and quality assurance bodies, to remain adaptive to feedback and regulatory changes. Each policy undergoes a formal approval process through the Academic and Professional Council (APC) and the Board of Directors, ensuring consistency and accountability. The manual includes key sections on governance, teaching, learning, and learner support, with an additional manual specific to apprenticeship programmes. Accessibility and usability improvements, like interactive formats and individual policy documents, are in progress to simplify navigation. To enhance the review process, the review team also advises a systematic cyclical process for review of policies and procedures, a systematic policy tracker and change control tools, including display of the policy approval body and approval date, promoting transparent oversight of policy updates.

RECOMMENDATION 4
The review team recommends that work continue to complete all areas of the QAE Manual which are "under review", with particular emphasis on updating, approving and publishing the Admissions, Transfer and Progression Policy and the sections relating to Faculty and Department Review as soon as possible, and implementing a schedule of Faculty and Departmental reviews.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

STAFFING LEVELS
Griffith College has a full-time staff of 250, of whom 95 are academic staff. The teaching work is supported by a further 453 part-time staff. These vary in status from fractional contracts to occasional staff paid for teaching a course or supervising a postgraduate thesis. There was insufficient information available to allow an analysis of the proportion of the part-time teaching staff who are on substantial employment contracts.

The institution is heavily reliant on part-time staff to deliver its teaching. The ratio of students to full-time academic staff is 83:1 (based on the 7,936 students reported in the institutional profile). While it is understood that programme directors are normally full-time staff, this is not always the case. Similarly, with the increase in the number of postgraduate students, thesis supervision is frequently done by part-time staff.

The reliance on part-time staff allows for the involvement of active professionals in teaching, and an agility in scaling staff numbers to meet demand. The use of part-time contracts may also be beneficial for staff in some disciplines (architecture, music technology, design) where staff may wish to combine professional practice with teaching.

Nevertheless, it is important that there be an appropriate balance of staffing on programmes, and that there be sufficient academic staff on either full-time or substantial ongoing partial contracts to provide stability, to ensure sufficient oversight of a course, an academic presence available to students, and the capacity to consider the quality assurance and future direction of a programme and discipline. As the institution moves to a higher proportion of level 9 programmes, there is a need for capacity to supervise students' work (whether that be a master's thesis or a project) and a greater expectation of research-engaged teaching staff. If the institution aims to pivot to a research-intensive scholarly institution, it is likely that the proportion of full-time staff, the research activity of staff at appointment, and the diversity of prior experiences will all need to be considered and expanded.

RECOMMENDATION 5

With regard to staffing policies, the review team recommends that the institution document a clear principle regarding academic staffing, which will provide clarity regarding full-time and part-time staff and the appropriate balance of each managing and delivering its programmes. Principles regarding the following two scenarios should be included:

The circumstances where someone outside of the full-time staff could be a programme director, and the QA measures that may be needed in such circumstances.

The QA measures to support situations where thesis supervision is being done by part-time staff should also be considered, to ensure quality and consistency of supervision.

RECRUITMENT

The institution has documented processes for the recruitment of staff. The recruitment of administrative staff, and of full-time academic staff, is done centrally by Human Resources (HR). The recruitment of part-time academic staff is managed by heads of faculty, with central support in issues of contracts and payment rates. There are standard job description templates for Heads of Faculty, Programme Directors, and full-time and part-time lecturers. The recruitment process for academic staff includes a "mock lecture" as part of the selection process. Recruitment is supported by a role specific onboarding programme and a strong probationary process which involves formal meetings after two, four and six months.

Staff posts are advertised both internally and externally and filled through a competitive selection process. A number of the full-time teaching staff have also been former part-time lecturers, or former students (or both). This pattern brings benefits in terms of a strong sense among staff of belonging to the organisation, and a deep understanding of its organisational culture. However, there may also be benefits in attracting staff with a wider range of backgrounds and experiences.

MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

The institution has a staff performance review process (PRP) for administrative and support staff that involves a quarterly review meeting between staff members and their managers to review achievements, provide feedback, and discuss objectives. For the teaching staff, there is regular collection of feedback from students, at least once per semester. Data from this survey is available to Programme Directors and Heads of Faculty, and they are expected to take actions to address issues of concern. Where issues arise, the responses may include measures such as observation of teaching, mentoring, additional coaching, and ultimately removal or redeployment of staff.

COMMENDATION 5

The institution has a rigorous process for monitoring of teaching, including a mock lecture as part of the selection process, and comprehensive monitoring through students' feedback and oversight by Programme Directors.

Staff are provided with pedagogical training through an initial course when appointed, and fortnightly CPD sessions organised throughout the academic semesters. In addition, the institution provides a Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development (MAELD) with embedded Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate programmes, which enable experienced staff to further develop their pedagogical education. All staff also have access to other supports, including LinkedIn courses.

The majority of the teaching staff at the institution hold masters' degrees. Doctoral degrees are not normally required at entry. This reflects the history of the institution, its focus on teaching and its relationship to professional practice. The institution supports some of the academic staff to complete their own doctoral degrees, through fee support, flexibility in scheduling, and in some cases reduced working hours.

COMMENDATION 6

The institution actively supports the development of its own staff, both through the provision of the Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development, and the provision of support for those undertaking doctoral studies, or other relevant programmes.

COMMENDATION 7

There is evident camaraderie amongst staff and a collegiate atmosphere which gives an impression of a satisfied and happy community and provides a setting for efficient pedagogy, good pastoral care and high academic morals that are maintained across the institution.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Although the Bamboo HR system and recruitment processes appear robust, it is recommended that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team schedule and oversee a complete and thorough review to finalise the system's implementation. This review should focus on achieving full alignment, particularly by addressing integration issues with payroll records to ensure seamless and accurate data management across HR and payroll functions.

EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

The institution has a commitment to EDI. It is a member of Advance HE and is preparing to apply for the Athena Swan Bronze award. A dedicated member of the HR team is responsible for EDI in the institution, and there is specific staff training on dignity and respect, mental health, and other EDI-related topics. There are also guides to the use of inclusive language, pronoun use, and LGBTQIA+ supports.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND SUBMISSION FOR VALIDATION

Griffith College provides a broad range of programmes in the disciplines of Arts and Humanities; Business; Design; Education; Engineering; Foundation; Healthcare; ICT; Journalism and Information; Law; Services; and

Social Sciences. There are 149 programmes which are QQI-accredited, ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications. In practice, some of these programmes are embedded or have shared components. Many of the master's programmes have a related postgraduate diploma, and some of the micro-credentials are based on modules in larger programmes.

The institution is very conscious that it operates in a competitive environment and that its survival and growth depend on attracting students. There is a strong impetus to maintain an attractive portfolio of programmes and to ensure that the institution has a strong reputation for quality. As a result, the institution seeks to be both stable and agile, and prides itself on its ability to respond quickly to opportunities or changes in demand.

The institution stresses the industry-facing nature of many of its programmes, and many of the courses are focused on employment, either through specific industry needs, or through developing employment-related skills and qualifications. Some are developed in response to industry requests. As the senior management expressed it: "Students want to come here because it is a good investment, and they want a return."

Consequently, ideas for programmes can come from different sources. Some come from faculties or programme directors who identify opportunities. Others come through contacts with industry partners who make requests for particular programmes. For example, the Certificate in Applied HR Management for Irish Hotels and Guesthouses was developed specifically with the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) Skillnet.

Other programme ideas arise from external sources. Griffith College has made academic links with other private institutions, for example Pulse College had a programme which was accredited by the University of Central Lancashire, but this was operated as a franchised programme and Pulse College had limited flexibility in the curriculum. It was seeking to have its programme included in the Irish NFQ, and to revise the curriculum, and entered into a partnership with Griffith College,

which involved the redesign of every module, and validation of the programme.

Griffith College has also absorbed students and programmes from institutions which were closing. For example, the Psychology Degree arose from the closure of a psychology programme in St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland (SMSI) in mid-2024. With this closure, Griffith College arranged validation of a bachelor's degree in psychology modelled on the SMSI programme, but with some modifications and updates. This enabled Griffith College to offer the existing students the opportunity to transfer. Staff from SMSI were employed by Griffith College and a new intake of students was accepted into Griffith College through the CAO in September 2024 https://smsi.ie/institution-news/

In its meetings with students during the review visit, a number of students expressed their wish for Griffith College programmes to comprise an internship or work placement element, particularly at undergraduate level. It appears that a small number of programmes comprise work placement elements, but most do not.

RECOMMENDATION 7
Griffith College should consider expanding the access to work placement and internship across a greater range of programmes, as this is clearly valued by and beneficial for many students.

PROGRAMME APPROVAL PROCESS
The initial proposal is documented in a programme proposal form and reviewed by the Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC) which includes representatives from finance, marketing, APC, the Griffith Professional Academy, and an industry advisor. The PPRC, which meets monthly, considers the proposal from multiple perspectives, including market demand, financial viability, academic coherence, and capacity to deliver. A programme is normally discussed on a number of occasions before being recommended for validation.

Once ratified by the PPRC, a programme is reviewed by the management board (MB) which considers the resource implications and the strategic fit, while the APC considers its academic considerations.

Most courses are externally validated, and therefore once APC has given its approval, the course goes through the QQI programme validation process. The validation documentation is prepared and then reviewed by the QAED team in advance of submission to QQI.

There is a dedicated programme development team within the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department that coordinates the development of programmes. This unit is responsible for preparing documentation for accreditation, and maintains a programme development tracker, which is circulated to APC monthly. The process has been evolving over time, and has considered about 70 proposals since 2019, although some of these were related or embedded courses. The overall development, approval and validation process takes at least a year.

PPRC may also make recommendations about retiring a course. For example, a level 7 business programme was retired due to lack of demand. The link with the Globe Business institution in Munich was also retired after a 15-year partnership, following a decline in numbers.

Enhancements have been applied to the programme validation and revalidation process over recent years including the introduction of a digital dashboard, which provides programme leaders with easy access to data on student numbers and student performance. In addition, QAED has developed a programme tracker that provides clear oversight of the process for internal stakeholders. QAED also provides guidance and support through the validation process. These initiatives have streamlined the validation and revalidation process and reduced the burden on programme leaders.

COMMENDATION 8

Griffith College has efficient and effective programme approval, validation and revalidation processes in place, that are clearly documented and multi-layered in terms of approval structures.

SHORT PROGRAMMES (MICRO-CREDENTIALS)

The institution also offers a range of programmes which do not directly lead to awards in the NFQ. These are typically short programmes based on existing modules included in other programmes, and marketed as part of the "Griffith College Professional Academy".[3] https://www.griffith.ie/faculties/professional-academy

For the development of these specific programmes the institution has clear, established processes which are similar to those used for QQI-validated programmes. The review team heard that the most successful micro-credential programmes were those aligned with regular courses, where learners attend the same classes as those on QQI-validated programmes.

REVALIDATION

The externally-validated programmes require periodic revalidation. This is also managed by the QAED team. Griffith College has devolved responsibility to convene panels and run revalidation reviews, in that it can identify the panel members, and these are subsequently approved by QQI. Approximately 120 programme reviews and revalidations have been completed in the last five years, and all have been successful.

TRENDS

There have been some noticeable trends in the demand for courses. The expansion of undergraduate level 8 degrees in the state sector has resulted in a softening of demand for full-time undergraduate programmes from Irish students at Griffith College. There has also been a decline in demand for level 6 and 7 major awards, which are now more commonly used as exit awards.

There has been an increase in the number of international students, particularly at postgraduate level, as described in section 1 above. There has also been a demand for flexible learning options which allow people in employment, often mature learners, to advance their education. There have been some innovations in this area, including a Diploma in Legal Studies and Practice, which allows students to move directly to second year of the law degree.

These changes have resulted in changes in the student profile, and there are some programmes where the majority of the students are international. This has been an agile response to changing market conditions.

ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

Griffith College has formal processes in place for Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP). The institution provides learners with clear information on programmes, accreditation, and on progression pathways, on the website and in the prospectus. There is a documented procedure in place to allow for recognition of prior learning. There are also measures in place to support neuro-diverse students. The range of courses at different levels provide educational pathways for a range of students who may not otherwise be able to achieve of an accredited award. The Admissions, Transfer and Progression policy is currently under review and is not published. The ATP structures described in the ISER and discussed during the review visit are aligned with the NFQ and with national policies.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Every programme has specific and documented admission requirements, including academic and English language requirements. For accredited courses, the entry criteria are often defined as part of the Certificate of Validation. Changes to entry requirements post- validation are typically approved at APC. Certain undergraduate applicants, those under 23 seeking entry to full-time undergraduate courses and excluding the international applicants, apply through the CAO. Griffith College has 21 level 8 undergraduate programmes in the 2025 CAO handbook, and a

further eight level 7 or 6 courses. The CAO points for 2024 entry range from 219 to 378 points, and higher for courses where a portfolio is required.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The English language requirements for courses are clearly defined and expressed in terms of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) standards. There is a system to allow students who score one grade below the standard, for example a grade of 6.0 on IELTS rather than 6.5, a "Supported Entry", in some disciplines only. This requires the learners to take English language support classes, which are typically provided prior to the commencement of the course and ongoing during the first semester. These additional language supports are provided at no additional cost to the learner.

Meetings with students and alumni confirmed that the standard of English is a challenge for some but that supports are in place. It was reported that many of the students were taking extra languages classes, and these were seen as beneficial. Some reported that study was challenging at the start because of their difficulty with the language, and one student indicated that their reason for choosing Griffith College was the higher language requirements in other institutions.

The English language standards have been modified in recent years to include minimum component scores in addition to the overall score. This is reported to have resulted in learners having a higher level of English at entry. The international staff explained that increasing demand has enabled this increase in standards. It is not clear if a formal analysis was done before making this change. The normal progression reports do not analyse the progression rates by standard of English.

TRANSFER

The institutional QAE Manual provides guidelines for progression and transfer regarding awards in other countries. The admission and recognition processes are aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications. For international equivalences, the institution uses NARIC and ECCTIS, and the staff in the admissions team receive ongoing

training through ECCTIS. This alignment is helpful in ensuring that learners can transfer between programmes, internally and externally.

Griffith College's history and experience of enabling the transfer of students from other Irish private institutions that are closing, such as SMSI and DDI over recent years, was referred to frequently in the ISER and during the review team sessions. The institution has strong procedures in place to manage such incidents and transfers when they occur.

COMMENDATION 9

Through managing PEL arrangements well, the institution has proven both responsible and responsive in proactively stepping in and supporting students at other private colleges that have closed; and has developed positive partnerships as well as sound procedures in this respect.

FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

Griffith College provides flexible entry pathways through a number of mechanisms. It offers a range of programmes at levels 6, 7, 8, and 9, which allows applicants to enter at a level appropriate to them. It also has specific programmes designed to meet the needs of specific groups. An example is the level 7 Bachelor of Engineering degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering, designed to provide a progression path for those in industry with the equivalent of a level 6 qualification.

More generally, applicants may use accredited prior learning (APL) or accredited prior experiential learning (APEL). APL can be used to allow admission and/or advanced entry. These processes are overseen by the APL/APEL committee in accordance with the QAE procedures and it is noted that applications via APEL are increasing. There is also flexibility embedded in some programme structures, as postgraduate awards are typically embedded with a postgraduate diploma and a linked master's degree, which allows both exit and progression options.

Meetings with students confirmed the value of the flexibility for students. One had chosen the programme because it allowed blended learning, which was vital for the student. Another had transferred from an international university and the recognition of prior work was important to the student. A number of students reported customised advanced entry arrangements, in some cases involving starting in the second semester. While the flexibility in transfer is welcome, the transfer system can be complicated. Some students reported starting with semester 2 modules and reverting to semester 1 at a later point. Learners felt it was a disadvantage to them where they might not have prior knowledge of the preceding semester.

ERASMUS

Griffith College is an active member of an Erasmus+ network, but in practice outward mobility of students has been very limited. There was some work to develop greater student mobility, but it was disrupted by COVID and has not yet been restored. Reinstatement of the Erasmus programme should be beneficial for the institution and provide an enriching educational opportunity for students.

MONITORING OF PROGRESSION

Griffith College has, in recent years, made greater use of data on progression rates. There are annual progression reports which are reported to APC. These show progression rates for the institution, and separately for first years, for each campus, and for each faculty. In addition, Heads of Faculty reported that the data dashboard was useful to them in providing progression data when they needed it.

COMMENDATION 10

The institution produces annual progression reports which present statistical information on student progression. The availability of this data in a standard form, and the annual reporting of the information to APC, are both appropriate QA measures.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of data which could benefit from further analysis. It would be valuable to have information about, for example, the progression rates of students who enter

through APL, and those who enter with lower levels of English language proficiency. This data, formally analysed and reported, would provide a robust evidence base to support changes in admission requirements as needed. Some of this analysis may already be in place informally, but it was not evident during the review. Therefore, the review team includes the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 8

Griffith College should examine the possibility of greater analysis of its progression data. It would be valuable to have information about, for example, the progression rates of students who enter through APL, and those who enter with lower levels of English language proficiency. This data, formally analysed and reported, would provide a robust evidence base to support changes in admission requirements as needed. Some of this analysis may already be in place informally, but it was not evident during the review.

INTEGRITY AND APPROVAL OF LEARNER RESULTS

The system of examination at Griffith College is governed by clearly defined rules and principles assuring the integrity and the fairness of learners' results. The main mechanisms of this system are as follows: approval of all assignments before they are given to learners; use of Turnitin for exam assignments, with focus on plagiarism (and corresponding training provided to teachers and examiners); external reviews of exam papers; the ownership of the management of the exams only by the central Examination Office; blind marking of learners under different numbers than those of their student IDs; rigorous checking of results in the Themis system by the administration in order to prevent errors, either human or technical; formal approval of all results at the Examination Boards in the presence of faculty, external examiners and the Examination Office which ensures the necessary transparency of the assessment process. Post-examination mechanisms such as re-check, review or appeal are in place at Griffith College, each of them having clear procedures, criteria and timelines.

The same procedures concerning academic integrity and the approval of results are applied across all three campuses. Historic differences in the procedures at individual faculties are being minimised with more centralised solutions being progressively implemented. Enhanced oversight of compliance with standards and procedures at all sites and faculties is one of the benefits of the IT developments, as systematic and centrally managed tools prevent inconsistencies and enable further enhancement of unified and secure environments. The maintenance of consistent and robust mechanisms to ensure the reliability and integrity of results is vital for the maintenance of standards and the reputation of the institution.

Attention is paid to clear definition of access rights to the systems, to strictly authorised use of information, and to careful handling of information with prohibition of unauthorised changes. The role of the IT department is crucial. While the current IT system appears robust and the institution has been proactive in enhancing its IT functionality, further enhancements are in development and IT security is a continually evolving challenge. There may be a case to expand the existing IT Department and structure given the importance of rigorous controls on data, and the substantial number of part-time staff.

Communication within Griffith College and faculties appeared effective and constructive, particularly in the context of emerging challenges such as GenAI and academic integrity. Oversight of programme modules and learner behaviour is more easily measured in a positive and collegial staff environment, which was demonstrated during the review visit. It is acknowledged that the integrity and approval of learner results is protected by adhering to the QAE manual. The institution recognises the challenge to academic integrity arising from the emergence of GenAI.

There is clear recognition at the institution that GenAI is going to be an integral part of study processes, and the review team heard during some of the meetings (for example with support staff) that information sessions and training has been organised for the academic community to help them grasp the possibilities and threats that AI presents.

COMMENDATION 11
The institution is to be commended for its systematic, objective and unbiased approach to learner assessment, in using blind and anonymised mechanisms, external voices ("critical friends"), multi-level approval of assessments and various appeal procedures. Moreover, the oversight of learner integrity and governance is clearly consistent with QQI requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 9
As the institution clearly states its ambition to develop more research-oriented study programmes, and at the same time has been attracting a much larger scope of learners' nationalities, the review team recommends an even more robust approach to academic integrity in learning and research, given the specific nature of more research-oriented work, which is particularly critical at master level.

INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT
Data as part of the Quality Assurance System
Similar to most modern organisations, the institution has a variety of different online management systems and therefore a lot of data from which they can draw insights related to QAE. The IT department over the past number of years has been progressively combining these data sources, in a staged and compliant manner, leveraging Microsoft PowerBI as the main conduit. Processes and protection methodologies have been implemented to ensure that data is anonymised where necessary and protected through strict user level access protocols.

This combined data lake, and the analysis tools built on top are internally referred to as the institution's dashboard system. These dashboards contribute to an environment where relevant stakeholders can access structured insights from multiple internal systems to give a unique

and holistic view of the student experience. Thematically, the dashboards help provide QAE oversight in the following ways:

Monitoring and Oversight: Dashboards are instrumental in providing a comprehensive view of data related to student performance, programme effectiveness, and operational efficiency. By presenting real-time data, QAE stakeholders can monitor trends and promptly address any issues that may affect quality. This oversight ensures that all programmes and processes align with established quality standards. The dashboards are regularly queried and reviewed throughout the academic year.

Decision-Making Support: The structured data within dashboards informs decision-making by highlighting departmental key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics relevant to academic and administrative processes. This enables departments to identify programmes, or students that need improvement or additional support, helping to prioritise resources effectively.

Compliance and Policy Enforcement: Dashboards facilitate the enforcement of data protection policies and compliance with regulatory standards, such as GDPR. Academic and IT departments regularly track the status of data governance practices, and dashboards assist by ensuring that data handling procedures meet legislative requirements.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement: The integration of regular student survey and feedback data within dashboards enables the analysis of learner responses, contributing to iterative enhancements in teaching, support services, current and future programme curriculum design. This feedback loop ensures that the institution can adapt its strategies based on tangible student experiences and outcomes.

Programme Evaluation and Reporting: Dashboards are used to support annual programme reviews (APRs) and other evaluations by compiling and presenting data that illustrate programme success and challenges. This data-driven approach enables formal reporting to QAE stakeholders and assists in external reviews.

COMPLIANT, SECURE AND RELIABLE DATA

Griffith College places a strong emphasis on data safety and compliance through comprehensive systems and practices. While this is a cross-departmental effort, policies and implementation are often driven and coordinated by the IT staff. The institution has a Data Protection Officer (DPO) who, as a member of the board of directors and management board, has the ability to influence decisions and drive policy development and deployment.

Over the years the institution has implemented a number of cyber safety-focused initiatives, which also serve to protect and enhance data management. Across all personnel, staff and students, multi-factor authentication (MFA) has been implemented for all Griffith College accounts, providing an additional layer of security against phishing and social engineering threats. Staff are regularly targeted with simulations and awareness campaigns to maintain a high level of vigilance.

The institution operates with a centralised IT risk register, driven by the IT and SysOps teams, to ensure policies are systematically monitored. This risk register informs a multi-year IT Roadmap and is reviewed on a monthly basis through departments and sub- committees.

All data and IT policies are clearly available and regularly updated through both the public-facing website and internal intranet. The development of these policies involves multiple layers of review, including feedback from the IT and QAE departments, ensuring alignment with best practices and data legislation including GDPR.

The ongoing development and transition to Themis as the main student record database further supports a structured and compliant approach to data management, with multiple checkpoints in place to maintain quality assurance.

COMMENDATION 12

The alignment and coordination of the IT staff and adjacent steering groups concerning IT management systems, data compliance and cyber risk management is highly commendable.

The digital transformation journey that has been undertaken over recent years has positively permeated the entire community and secures a safe and manageable future for the institution's operations. While no organisation can claim to be without risk in these areas, the policies, people and the processes the institution has implemented and continues to iteratively review, means that it is capable of steering though emerging risks as they develop.

Forward strides in data collection and management have opened an opportunity for the institution to be more transparent about what it cares about and how it is performing. The review team found that data collected is not fully utilised or interrogated, a significant amount of data exists passively which could provide valuable insights for the institution.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The review team recommends that the institution publish results of feedback surveys and core performance metrics. These should be tracked in a multi-year format, enabling the institution to further define its core strategies and clearly communicate these to stakeholders.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Griffith College disseminates information to students, staff, and external audiences through multiple channels, including the Griffith College website, prospectuses, learner handbooks, e-bulletins, social media, and in-person events. The website serves as a primary communication tool, offering comprehensive information on programmes, policies, and resources with accessible pages detailing entry requirements, alumni insights, and programme-specific content. Additionally, the Learner Hub on the website provides student access to academic support, policies, and the Quality Assurance & Enhancement

(QAE) Manual. Updated annually, the Griffith College Prospectus and Quick Programme Guide engage prospective students in both digital and print formats, reflecting the latest offerings. The review team recommends continued attention to content clarity and accessibility for all materials.

Beyond digital channels, communication efforts include open days, school outreach, and education fairs, supplemented by an annual Student Handbook detailing academic regulations, along with programme-specific handbooks. The institution maintains a dynamic social media presence across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, X, and YouTube, sharing news, events, and student life content. The Griffith Halls of Residence and Global Engagement Office also use platforms like Campus Connect and WhatsApp to facilitate real-time networking and communication among new and current students. Enhanced by Looker Studio analytics, a national brand tracking survey, and an institutional Analytics Dashboard, Griffith College refines its outreach and branding strategies. In addition, the Alumni Office engages the Griffith College's extensive alumni network and is actively involved in organising events for the institution's 50th anniversary, known as "GC50."

To further bolster student and staff engagement, particularly in QAE procedures, the review team recommends promoting QAE services on-site across pedagogical and social settings on campus, complementing the institution's extensive online presence. Additionally, the institution could enhance the effectiveness of its communications by introducing a communications officer to coordinate all internal and external messaging, as recommended in the ISER, to streamline operations and ensure cohesive communication across all channels.

Public information about Griffith College (including its units such as Library, GCSU, campus etc.) and especially communicating the institution's QAE arrangements online are well managed; the documents and data are useful, clear, accurate and up to date. In particular, the Campus Connect platform that is made available to new incoming students seems to function efficiently. However, the review team has a recommendation in this area:

RECOMMENDATION 11

Griffith College should promote its QAE services and information on site also, across pedagogical and social settings on the campuses, in order to efficiently complement their manifold online presence and promote involvement of students especially in QAE procedures and activities.

OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Griffith College's governance and management of third-party partnerships are structured through frameworks that outline specific roles in written agreements and contracts. These agreements establish operational guidelines designed to align with the institution's strategic and quality objectives. Oversight and continuous evaluation of these partnerships are facilitated through the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) department and Academic and Professional Council (APC) structures and relevant sub-committees. Additionally, the institution holds formal governance meetings with each third-party partner at the end of each semester and at least once annually. Feedback is collected from students, staff, and external examiners through surveys, ensuring a consistent and transparent evaluation process.

Third-party partners involved in providing training and courses operate under the QQI awards criteria via Griffith College, although there is no single policy document covering all third-party courses validated through the institution's QQI awards system. Successful programmes, such as those with Innopharma Education and Pulse College, are supported both within and outside the institution. Griffith College employs an agile approach to meet demand for third-party course provisions, with apprenticeship courses playing a significant role in its offerings. However, quality assurance (QA) management for third-party collaborations appears to depend on the specific partner, with apprenticeships following different onboarding processes compared to academic programmes. Feedback from apprenticeship and participants undertaking practical programmes suggests that a more extended induction period would be beneficial. The Griffith College prospectus clearly outlines awards and progression opportunities

for students, reinforcing transparency and future pathways.

COMMENDATION 13

Griffith College is to be commended for its proactive approach to maintaining relationships with third-party providers, which supports consistent alignment and communication across all collaborations. Furthermore, the institution's commitment to fostering and expanding third-party collaborations is notable and should continue to be encouraged as a core strength of its educational offerings.

RECOMMENDATION 12

To strengthen the quality assurance of its collaboration processes, the institution should consider consolidating QA of collaborative procedures into a single policy document and contract for all third-party arrangements. Additionally, improvements in the recording and data management of QA systems would support enhanced oversight.

RESEARCH, ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION

Griffith College has developed a comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement framework to support its research, enterprise, and innovation activities, emphasising sustainable growth and strategic alignment. This framework involves a wide range of teaching and support staff, both within and beyond faculty structures, as well as key external partners. The library team actively supports students' research projects and dissertations at undergraduate, postgraduate, and master's levels by providing tailored guidance on research methodologies and access to extensive physical and digital resources. Faculty and library staff collaborate to deliver targeted sessions on research skills and resource utilisation, ensuring that all learners receive effective support as they undertake their research.

As described in the ISER, Griffith's capstone research projects are facilitated through rigorous oversight mechanisms, including Ethics Committees, structured meetings with supervisors, interim presentations, and viva assessments,

particularly for undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations. These structured supports ensure that research is ethically sound, methodologically robust, and aligned with professional standards. The institution's approach to managing and guiding research has been informed by practices from institutions such as the University of Ulster and Nottingham Trent University (their legacy partnerships) and has further evolved through engagement with HETAC and QQI, with external examiners and dissertation supervisors contributing to a robust peer-review mechanism, which is being gradually integrated into the core procedures and culture at the institution.

In alignment with its strategic goals, Griffith College has actively pursued enterprise and innovation initiatives, supported by collaborations with industry and professional bodies, of which many have proven explicitly prepared to engage in further developing the institution's research and innovation policies. These partnerships have fostered enterprise-oriented research and career-ready skills for students, as reflected in contracts with industry and non-disclosure agreements that ensure alignment between academic standards and professional expectations. Griffith College's Graduate Business School's Innovation Hub has been particularly instrumental, securing significant EU funding for projects such as SMART4FUTURE and AI4VET4AI, which emphasise sustainable innovation and digital transformation across diverse educational and vocational training environments.

Looking forward, Griffith College's strategic ambition includes defining and expanding its research objectives in alignment with its broader educational mission. This will necessitate identifying whether Griffith College will expand its current research activity from enterprise-oriented applied research to other areas such as research programmes, increased research engagement by academic staff etc. As the institution considers growth in research domains beyond applied enterprise, establishing the necessary infrastructure in financial governance, staffing, and enhanced QAE policies will be essential. The institution should also consider contemporary trends and standards such as peer review mechanisms used for research

funding and publication, including considerations on GenAI and Open Science.

The review team makes the following recommendation in this regard:

RECOMMENDATION 13
It is necessary for Griffith College to define and align research ambitions with the institution's long-term strategy to ensure the necessary infrastructure (financial governance and staffing), as well as QAE policies and procedures, can be established within the institution to realise these ambitions in a coherent manner.

institution leadership's firm support for research quality, combined with their commitment to pedagogical and professional enhancements, underscores Griffith College's long-term vision for research. By building on existing partnerships with collaborators like Innopharma Education and Pulse College, the institution is advancing toward a diversified research agenda that bridges applied and scientific research domains, paving the way for ongoing, strategic development in research and educational excellence.

INTERNATIONALISATION AT GRIFFITH COLLEGE
Internationalisation was a strong and pervasive theme throughout the CINNTE review of Griffith College, given the increasingly international profile of the institution student body year on year. Considerations relating to many aspects of managing international learners such as recruitment and onboarding, accommodation, programme delivery and assessment and learner supports (including English language) were discussed in the ISER as well as during the main review visit sessions, were considered at length by the review team and are included in various sections of this report. With the aim of addressing the many aspects relating to the international orientation of Griffith College, and to link this theme with Recommendation 1 above, the review team includes the following key recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 14

Griffith College should seek to manage cohorts with respect to both the increased numbers and the quickly changing profile of international students in order to further develop a multicultural atmosphere that corresponds to the institution's ambitions on quality teaching and learning, including the stated decolonisation priority. The review team recommends that the institution:

- Embed both QA and governance of internationalisation firmly into the institution's strategic management, using a proper set of tools and procedures, including sound data-informed action planning, targets, ceilings, KPIs etc. Special attention should be paid to the fact that lectures and classes are attended by students with a variety of linguistic competences, with native English speakers and students with English as an additional language from various parts of the world.
- Ensure proactive and strategic positioning in Erasmus+ and similar financing mechanisms, including bigger cooperation projects and broad alliances as well as long-term certification arrangements, grant schemes etc.

OBJECTIVE 2 – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Griffith College provides a wide range of programmes across many disciplines, in a variety of delivery modes including in person on campus and with collaborative providers; blended online and in person delivery and programmes delivered in the workplace. There is also great diversity in terms of programme size and duration as well as target learners. The review team found that the institution gives due consideration to the needs of its varying learner cohorts and has intentionally built the learning environment at the institution to support the success of its students.

As described earlier in this report, the institution frequently elicits feedback from its students with regard to their educational experience at Griffith College, including feedback on the learning environment. Drawing from the feedback from these surveys and other channels, the institution has implemented a PETALS programme (Programme for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning Spaces), which is an annual cross-department and faculty collaboration programmes, funded to the tune of €500k per annum, which determines the institution-wide development and upgrade requirements with regard to IT hardware, software, AV, furniture, lighting, painting etc. This programme has had a considerable impact on the ongoing improvement of the institution's teaching spaces.

Notwithstanding the positive impacts of the PETALS programme, a number of students raised the issue of the learning environment failing to adequately meet learner needs. Students referred to equipment such as speakers not working in teaching spaces and a lack of electrical sockets in rooms situated in the older parts of the buildings, for example. Other students commented on poor quality of broadband for the delivery of some fully online modules, which is something the institution should review and remedy immediately.

It was notable to the review team that a number of students raised the issue of difficulties in keeping up with their lectures, particularly in modules delivered to large class groups. This seemed to be an issue for international student cohorts in particular, and the recommendation below relates to this.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The institution should continue to provide ongoing support in pedagogy to teaching staff in order to optimise teaching of each module, especially in large class situations.

Where appropriate, methods which enhance student engagement, such as flipped classrooms, world-café sessions, and IT student response tools should be encouraged. A continued focus on student engagement in their learning has the potential to enhance the student experience, and learner outcomes.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Griffith College's QAE Manual contains a section which sets the policy and procedure framework relating to assessment of the institution's students. The suite of policies and procedures include: assessment submission, assessment appeals, extension of deadlines for assessment of learners. The manual also contains principles relating to the academic use of artificial intelligence (AI). Assessment is undertaken through various methods, including assignments, examinations, presentations, projects and practical assessments.

The QAE Manual is further complemented by the Learner Handbook and individual Programme Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on course content and module assessment procedures and criteria for students.

During meetings with various student groups, it was confirmed to the review team that the assessments and assignments set for programmes are well formulated, and that assessments correspond to the material taught on the programmes.

The positive response of the learner body implies a strong match between their expectations and the reality of their learning experience on all three campuses, which confirmed to the review team that there is a strong common teaching and assessment culture in the institution. At the same time, there is adequate attention to the specific requirements of various study programmes: learning methods and assessments of students in arts disciplines are different from those in law and business studies, and those in healthcare programmes, etc. It should be added that learners were well-prepared for the learning and assessment expected as part of their programmes via various training sessions and meetings provided by institution staff, especially as part of the induction of new learners upon arrival. These introductory meetings were generally highly rated by the learners that met the review team, describing them as preparing them for success in their higher education studies.

OBJECTIVITY AND FAIRNESS OF ASSESSMENT

External examiners are in place for all programmes, to assure integrity, fairness and objectivity. External examiners attend the Assessment and Evaluations Boards, which are held after the first semester and at the end of the academic year. A Percentage Grading Scheme is used for most programmes at the institution, pass marks are specified for each programme, the standard pass mark is set at 40% (or 50%). Final grading goes through detailed internal and external checks which follow strict QA procedures. Appeals are possible when non-academic irregularities are noticed, or when special circumstances occur during the exam period with an impact on the result, or in case of a natural breach. The review team was informed that in difficult situations regarding results, the institution showed understanding and support, within the established rules: cases must be explained and documented. Students can request a review of scripts within 10 days of the release of results through an application to the Faculty Office.

In general, students from different faculties confirmed to the review team that outside of formal communication channels and assessment mechanisms there is more informal communication with teachers and especially with Programme Directors (PDs), which enhances the formative aspects of the learning process and overall learning experience for students.

MONITORING AS A TOOL FOR EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS´ PROBLEMS

The institution has recently developed a tool aimed at the early identification of students who may face problems with their academic studies. Via the monitoring of certain activities (data from attendance app, Moodle log-in data) reports are run which identify students who may need additional supports or are in danger of dropping out. The institution emphasised that there are clear and well-defined access rights to the data and only relevant data was made available to assigned data users in the institution. The review team was impressed that the institution, while maintaining the standards of assessments and awards, are proactive in identifying and supporting students in

need and considers the successful progression of each enrolled student towards attaining their award as an institutional responsibility.

MECHANISMS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND TRANSFERS

Griffith College has clear procedures and mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning, embedded in the QAE Manual. Applicants from a range of entry routes can enter the institution. The review team also heard during meetings that Griffith College was flexible and welcoming towards applicants with complex personal situations (for example parents with children). The institution has considerable experience with competently handling student transfers from other institutions, the most recent being the transfer of students from the Dublin Design Institute and St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland over the past year.

COMMENDATION 14

Assessment processes are robust; tasks, criteria, standards and deadlines are well communicated to learners; the study environment including the system of assessment enables good planning of various student activities (necessary parallel work engagements etc.). The institution has attained a good balance of summative and formative assessment, for example by enabling consultation with teachers after results are released; there also appears to be a good balance of formal and informal assessment and feedback mechanisms (surveys and questionnaires/individual approach and communications between learners and teachers and PDs was evidenced in many faculties).

SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

The institution provides a range of supports for students, including:

- The library, which maintains a range of resources for each programme, and a series of e-books and databases. The library also provides guidance to learners on accessing resources, both in classes, in bookable workshops, and through online resources and YouTube videos.
- The Learning Support Department provides tailored support for learners who have additional needs; typically physical, learning and neurological differences. This includes provision of reasonable accommodations for students. The institution is able to apply to the HEA Fund for Students with Disabilities for support for students on a case-by-case basis.

- Counselling is provided for students through an external provider which provides 16 hours per week on campus, and a "callback" telephone counselling service. A student seeking counselling can access the first four sessions for free and a fee of €20 per session is applied after that.

- The Activities Team looks after out-of-hours activities. This includes competitive and social sport, as well as social activities and cultural events. Some of these are specifically intended to reflect the range of nationalities and cultures on campus. They organise weekend trips out of Dublin, targeted at international students.

- The Careers and Employability Office provides pre-employment supports such as interview and CV-preparation skills. This is done through a formal module, through workshops, and though one-to-one consultations.

- The institution supports a Students' Union, with a dedicated SU building on the Dublin campus. The SU has a full-time president, and two part-time vice-presidents in Dublin and part-time vice-presidents in Limerick and Cork. The Students' Union receives a budget to run some events for students.

There are specific supports in place for international students. The International Office has developed pre-arrival videos and information booklets that provide guidance with tasks like getting a PPS number and opening a bank account. They also arrange informal peer groups with existing students. Every international student is collected from the airport, and brought to their accommodation, whether this is on campus or with a host family.

There are also specific supports in place for particular programmes. For example, there are dedicated academic success coaches allocated to each apprenticeship programme (currently located

in both Limerick and Dublin). The coach ensures that students are aware of the assessment dates and course requirements and makes contact regularly to check on progress.

LEARNER AWARENESS OF SUPPORTS

Students are made aware of the support services in a number of ways, including induction, Moodle pages and direct emails. The student services have been co-located in a Learner Support and Services Corridor at the main campus, with the aim of making the services more visible. In meetings, there were mixed reports of student awareness of the services. Some students were very clear that "we know who to contact", while others seemed vague about the services available. The SU said that a lot of its work is "directing students to the right place". This is understandable as it is likely that the students who use a service are very aware of it, and others are more vaguely aware that there are supports, but not necessarily familiar with the specific roles and titles.

The international students were very much aware of the specific supports provided for them, and very positive about the pre-arrival, and immediate post-arrival support. Some students specifically referenced the strong support provided by Griffith College vis-a-vis other institutions they had been considering before joining Griffith College and confirmed an excellent welcome by the staff of the institution and by "student ambassadors," upon their arrival, and while making their first arrangements for accommodation in Ireland.

PLANNING AND MONITORING OF SUPPORTS

The institution collects information on the uptake of each of the student support units. Each of the units tracks student requests, meetings and activities and these contribute to annual reports which are shared with the governance committees of the institution.

Student numbers have been growing, and inevitably this has been putting increased pressure on services. In meetings, a number of units reported growing demand for their services. The number of learners registered with the Learning Support Department has grown from 35 in 2018 to 153 in 2023, outpacing the rate of growth of student numbers.

While meeting with learners at the institution, the review team was satisfied that students by and large were aware of the range of student supports available via the student support services. During induction, students are informed of their points of contact for academic, financial, and wellbeing needs.

However, the staffing of these supports is modest despite student numbers. There has been some growth in service staff employed, and some units have had additional staff assigned to them over recent years. However, it was not possible to determine if this has kept pace with the growth in demand. Some support units talked of the need to "work smarter" as well as scale up.

The institution includes questions on student services in its survey of students, and based on this, a number of areas for improvement were identified in the ISER. Students' requests included:

- Earlier release of timetables
- Improving canteen services including opening hours, weekend availability, choice of dishes, more vegetarian options
- Greater presence from the Careers and Employability Department
- Improvement in the online app that records learners' in-person attendance in class
- A wider range of activities and societies to help promote inclusiveness

According to the ISER, these issues were responded to and addressed. The review team were assured that each faculty was aware of student needs as a result of the findings of feedback surveys distributed to learners.

CONSISTENCY

The supports provided vary somewhat between the campuses, perhaps inevitably given disparity in size, and each service is handled differently. For example, the main library is in the Dublin campus, and there are smaller libraries in Cork and Limerick. The SU President is based in Dublin, and there are part-time vice-presidents in Limerick and Cork, and two in Dublin.

The discrepancies between the opportunities available to Griffith College's Dublin-based learners compared to those available in Cork and Limerick were mentioned in student feedback, and in response the institution has funded SU personnel in Cork and Limerick.

The students also reported some discrepancies in the scope of induction. Apprentices and other off-campus students appeared to have had a less thorough induction than their fellow undergraduate and postgraduate programme students.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ISSUES

In the meeting with students, a small number of students referenced language difficulties in lectures. Some said that their level of English made understanding the lectures challenging, others spoke about the huge effort it took to keep up with the content because of language issues, one spoke of difficulties in understanding the accents of lecturers, and one found it difficult to hear the lecturer because of other students talking during the lecture. While it is inevitable that studying through a second language will be more challenging, and require greater concentration, it would be wise for the institution to continually review its language policy, to ensure that international students can access appropriate supports for as long as needed.

COMMENDATION 15

The institution provides a broad range of support services for learners, and the enthusiasm and student-focused nature of the staff in these areas is to be commended. The co-location of the services is a welcome development and increases the visibility of services on the Dublin campus. The

recent expansion of counselling provision is a welcome enhancement of services.

COMMENDATION 16

There are particular services for international students that are highly appreciated by the students. These included the pre-arrival briefing information and videos, the "buddy system" of peer contacts, the accommodation service and the airport pickup.

As learner expectations of support services continue to increase, the institution will need to consider how to manage the scale-up of its services. There are particular challenges in providing the full range of student services on small campuses. Care will be needed to ensure that equivalent levels of support are available on smaller campuses, and that they are not perceived to be less well served.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The institution should work to establish clear data on the level of use of the services, staffing levels, and the student population to provide a clear empirical basis for making decisions about resourcing levels. It should also continue to review language policy and language supports provided to ensure that the changing student population at the institution have access to appropriate supports for as long as necessary.

OBJECTIVE 3 – SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

In recent years, Griffith College has been strengthening its self-evaluation capabilities with regard to quality assurance and enhancement. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department (QAED) has been expanded and the improvements that have resulted in the quality infrastructure of the institution as a whole are evident. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Manual was reviewed and re-designed in the past few years to better align with the quality standards set out in the

relevant QQI guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines for Quality in Higher Education (ESG) and is updated on an ongoing basis.

As noted in Section 2, the review team found the approach to undertaking the CINNTE review to be inclusive and comprehensive. The resulting Institutional Profile (IP) and ISER gave the review team a very strong sense of the institution and a firm foundation on which to base its evaluation. Competently led by the QAED, a strong self-evaluation was undertaken by engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including staff, students, and external partners, to collect feedback and assess and align its quality assurance and enhancement procedures with QQI guidelines. The review employed targeted surveys, focus groups, and management input to identify strengths and areas for improvements, with the intention of evidencing a consistent, data-driven quality infrastructure.

Moving forward, the institution should use insights from the ISER as well as this review team report, to inform governance decisions and focus on strengthening inter-faculty collaboration, inclusivity, and stakeholder engagement. These enhancements position Griffith College well for regulatory challenges that it will encounter in the future.

QUALITY ASSURANCE PLANNING, MONITORING, AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Griffith College's quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) processes are systematically documented in the QAE Manual, which delineates policies that support planning, monitoring, and reporting at various levels – programme, faculty, and institution-wide. Annual reviews of academic and professional practices are conducted to ensure continuous improvement, demonstrating a well-organised and efficient QAED team. These reviews not only assess the effectiveness of current processes but also identify areas for potential enhancement, such as promoting a culture of knowledge-sharing through inter-faculty collaboration and real-time sharing of best practices. Reports from these evaluations

are submitted to the Academic and Professional Council (APC), which oversees ongoing QAE improvements. According to the sessions held with QA-related staff, including the heads of faculties, it is evident that governance decisions should be more firmly based on strategic analysis and follow-up of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring, ensuring that the institution continues to develop its fast-evolving quality culture while preparing for the impending International Education Mark (IEM), thereby aligning its processes with evolving regulatory standards.

COMPREHENSIVENESS, INCLUSIVITY, AND EVIDENCE-BASED SELF-EVALUATION

Griffith College employs a self-evaluation process that incorporates feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders, including learners, employers, external experts, and partners. This approach ensures inclusivity and is anchored in evidence, utilising qualitative and quantitative data from surveys and operational committees. In recent years, and especially in the past year when developing the ISER and preparing for the main review visit, the promotion of a quality culture and self-evaluation procedures among staff and student representatives has been notably consistent, enhancing the overall effectiveness of these processes. However, there is an opportunity to enhance communications among Griffith College's faculties to foster greater inclusivity, as well as openness to collaborations outside the institution's framework. The evidence gathered during the review demonstrated that the institution supports informed, data-driven reporting and assists in crafting more tailored self-evaluation reports, including a specialised Annual Programme Review (APR) template that is currently being used within the Griffith College Professional Academy. This will enhance the comprehensiveness of evaluations by focusing on specific institutional needs.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND FOLLOW-UP OF QA OUTCOMES

Following each QAE review, Griffith College engages in comprehensive strategic analysis to address identified areas for improvement. The institution collects and acts upon learner and lecturer feedback, as well as external examiner

evaluations, which are integral to the annual and periodic review processes. Strengthening research and stakeholder engagement in the development of review and revalidation documents would further close this feedback loop. Specific examples include using learner satisfaction surveys to refine service areas and integrating external expertise into policy evaluation. Leaning on the established QAED team and Quality Enhancement sub-committee, these initiatives will support a more inclusive approach and lead to meaningful enhancements in both academic and service provisions, demonstrating the institution's commitment to quality and transparency.

PROMOTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY

Quality is actively promoted at Griffith College through ongoing training and initiatives that foster a collaborative environment, also reaching to part-time academic staff. For instance, the Teaching and Learning Department facilitates continuous professional development (CPD) sessions for faculty, which emphasise the sharing of best practice and knowledge across faculties. This supports the development of a culture of continuous improvement and encourages faculty collaboration. Moreover, as confirmed during discussions with students and alumni, the institution can build on the successful redevelopment of its Disability and Learning Support Policy to investigate and inform other policies that guide practice. This proactive approach, along with the planned integration of new reporting systems and operational meetings, will ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in the quality enhancement process.

In summary, Griffith College has established a robust and future-oriented framework for quality assurance that incorporates comprehensive planning, monitoring, self-evaluation, and external feedback. While the institution's QAE processes are inclusive and evidence-based, there are areas for potential enhancement. By fostering inter-faculty collaboration, improving communications with partner faculties, and enhancing stakeholder engagement in review processes, Griffith College can further strengthen its commitment to continuous quality improvement. The ongoing

development of tailored processes and policies, supported by the strategic use of the QAED team and the Quality Enhancement sub-committee, will not only promote excellence in academic offerings but also prepare the institution for future challenges and regulatory requirements.

COMMENDATION 17

The review team commends Griffith College for its robust quality culture; the institution actively promotes professional development and collaboration among staff, fostering continuous improvement across faculties and departments. Quality culture and self-evaluation procedures at the institution appear to have been consistently promoted among a range of staff and student representatives, especially in recent years.

COMMENDATION 18

The robust and overarching monitoring of student opinion and wellbeing that permeates quantitative and qualitative, formal and informal mechanisms is paramount and central to the institution's efficient student-centred approach.

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

Griffith College's programme monitoring and review procedures are comprehensively outlined in the QAE Manual, providing a framework for continuous evaluation and improvement of all accredited and non-framework programmes, including undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional awards. Regular monitoring involves both informal and formal feedback from students, faculty, and external stakeholders, collected via surveys, programme committee meetings, and external examiner reports. The institution also gathers learner feedback through tools such as Mentimeter, online surveys, and analytics, providing a consistent quality assurance process across all campuses and collaborative partners to support programme modification and enhancement.

To track ongoing and forthcoming programme review activities, the QAED maintains a programme tracker – a monthly reporting tool that aids in-time management, accountability, and resource allocation. This tracker assists the formal Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC), which oversees the design, development, and performance of all programmes. The PPRC evaluates the feasibility of new programmes and reviews existing ones to ensure they meet market and learner needs.

The institution leverages its Institutional Analytics Dashboard to track student feedback and monitor the performance of service departments. This system aggregates data from learner feedback, admission records, and module outcomes, allowing near real-time analysis for improvement in service provision. Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) are conducted by programme teams to assess areas such as learner experience, outcomes, and stakeholder feedback, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The APRs, refined over recent years, play a vital role in preparing teams for the comprehensive five-year programme reviews required by QQI, ensuring alignment with both institution and regulatory quality standards.

Griffith College's programme monitoring and review system indicates strong integration and robustness across its campuses in Limerick, Cork, and through partnerships, including QQI-validated programmes and collaborative provision in China, demonstrating a positive model for programme monitoring and enhancement. The QAED staff provide professional methodological guidance reflecting the specific standards and requirements relating to the institution's programmes, ranging from apprenticeships to taught master's programmes. The outcomes of programme monitoring and review are periodically considered by APC and its relevant sub-committees. The formal periodic programme review, carried out under devolved responsibility from QQI every five years for each programme, is well-managed and organised, with clear timelines and responsibilities, and there is evidence outcomes are taken into consideration for further enhancement of study programmes and/or eventual changes. Programme reviews are generally carried out for clusters of similar programmes, which is an efficient approach and enables internal comparison and benchmarking. The fact that the institution has undertaken 22 programmatic review processes since 2020 with a 100% success rate in having its programmes revalidated is testament to the robust programme revalidation procedures in place at the institution.

COMMENDATION 19

The Limerick and Cork campuses – together with programmes recently included from other institutions – are well integrated into the institution's monitoring and review processes.

In addition, QQI-validated programmes run by the institution with collaborative partners, including placements and apprenticeships, show a high level of integration into the QA system with regard to monitoring and review, and are well-supported by its IT system.

The institution's IT framework supports programme reviews by providing data-driven insights and has enabled significant administrative efficiencies across faculties. It also enables the review of placements and apprenticeships to ensure they meet QA standards and benefit from consistent monitoring. To further improve, the institution could implement surveys and focus groups in a systematic manner to capture more comprehensive feedback, enhancing the impact of student and faculty insights on strategic decisions and programme adjustments. Currently, module feedback is decentralised, with each faculty managing surveys individually. By adopting a standardised survey template, the institution could streamline data collection, integrating the results into the Institutional Analytics Dashboard. This would enable all faculties to access real-time feedback, fostering efficient and coordinated programme enhancement. These improvements would support the Institution's goal of inclusive, robust, and data-informed programme development.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The review team recommends that the institution develop and implement an institution-wide standardised student survey template, and

integrate the resulting data into the Institutional Analytics Dashboard, providing faculties with near real-time access to analysed feedback.

OVERSIGHT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL/THIRD PARTIES AND OTHER COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Throughout its 50 years of education provision to date, external parties have been an integral feature of Griffith College's programme development and delivery structures. The institution collaborates with a range of quality partners on the provision of programmes from NFQ Level 5 to Level 9, spanning pharma, sound production, healthcare, tourism and finance. Currently, the three principal active, national collaborations, which demonstrate the institution's commitment to offering diverse and technically robust education programmes, are:

- Innopharma Education collaborates on the provision of industrial and technology-focused training programmes in the pharmaceutical, food and medtech industries.
- Pulse College, providing professional training programmes in audio, music, film, gaming and animation, benefiting from close ties to the industry.
- ESS Ltd., providing programmes to achieve maintenance excellence and asset management optimisation across many industries including life sciences, food and drink, pharmaceutical and manufacturing sectors.

Griffith College's engagement with professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) further strengthens its academic credentials. Examples include partnerships with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the Law Society of Ireland, the Irish Institute of Legal Executives (IILEX), and the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). These bodies provide essential accreditation that elevate the quality and employability of Griffith College graduates.

The institution's relationships with industry and business partners exemplify its focus on bridging the gap between its programmes and industry. Partners such as the Tech Industry Alliance, Kube Kitchens, and Coolattin Cheddar have offered opportunities for students to gain industry experience. The Tech Industry Alliance, representing 250 IT companies, collaborates with Griffith College to mentor students and provide insights into current industry skill requirements. Meanwhile, Kube Kitchens have supported project-based learning and internships in a live commercial environment.

Work placement and employment partners are another pillar of Griffith College's comprehensive strategy to enhance student employability. For instance, Styletex Ltd. have collaborated closely with the institution's design faculty and serves as an employer for a small number of students, while Donore Credit Union participates in community projects that involve Griffith College students, which is an intentional strategy to connect the international student body with the local community. The institution's collaborations with community and voluntary sector partners include organisations like Debra Ireland and Dubco Credit Union. These partnerships focus on community engagement and support projects that allow students to apply their skills in practical, socially impactful settings. Consortiums and apprenticeship programmes also play a significant role in the institution's training structure. Nursing Home Ireland (NHI) is one such consortium partner, providing apprenticeship opportunities that blend theoretical and practical training.

Griffith College's international partnerships contribute to its global outreach and academic diversity. Notably, the institution has maintained a longstanding collaboration with institutions in China, where articulation programmes in finance and business involve curriculum mapping and faculty exchanges.

Griffith College ensures the suitability of the external parties with which it engages through a combination of formal agreements, ongoing evaluation, and adherence to established quality assurance measures. Each partnership is initiated with a thorough due diligence process that considers the potential partner's alignment with the institution's academic and operational standards.

Formal written agreements and contracts are a foundational aspect of these partnerships. These documents detail the roles and responsibilities of each party, the scope of collaboration, and compliance with relevant regulations, such as data protection laws (GDPR). This ensures clarity and sets clear expectations for both Griffith College and its partners. Each third party met by the review team noted that these formal agreements are also reviewed towards the end of each agreement term to ensure continued understanding of expectations.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation form another critical component of maintaining suitable partnerships. Griffith College conducts regular programme reviews (APRs) and continuous validation processes to ensure that the contributions and performance of external partners align with institutional quality standards. This involves gathering feedback from stakeholders, including students and external examiners, to evaluate whether collaborations continue to meet the desired outcomes.

Evidence from the review team's sessions supported the collective understanding of this structured approach. Representatives from partnering institutions, such as Innopharma Education and Pulse College, affirmed that quality assurance processes applied to collaborative programmes are closely aligned with those of Griffith College. Innopharma Education, for instance, applies its own QA measures alongside Griffith College's processes, ensuring dual oversight and maintaining programme quality. Additionally, partners such as Pulse College engage in annual reviews as part of Griffith College's requirements for APRs, providing a systematic check on the effectiveness of the collaboration.

Griffith College also ensures that external parties align with its standards through evaluation and feedback mechanisms. This includes student feedback and assessments, which are factored into annual reviews and continuous quality improvement strategies. For instance, it was noted in discussions that every assignment and reflective piece within certain collaborative programmes is reviewed by Griffith College to ensure that academic standards are upheld.

Overall, Griffith College's approach to ensuring the suitability of external parties involves a structured process of initial vetting, formal agreements, and continuous oversight through evaluation and feedback. This multi-layered strategy helps maintain the quality and alignment of its partnerships with the institution's strategic and academic goals and provides students with valuable opportunities for learning, development and career progression.

The collaborations have enjoyed successful outcomes to a number of tender applications and have attained a notable level of satisfaction among both students and alumni. With regard to the institution's research aspirations, Griffith College is at the early stages of developing a base of applied and other scientific research, which will result in pedagogical and professional improvements. Collaborative partners such as Innopharma Education and Pulse College are being gradually introduced in the institution's research developments which is commendable.

Griffith College maintains transparency in its collaborations with external parties by publicly sharing information about the nature of these arrangements. The institution's website features a dedicated section entitled "Partners," which provides detailed descriptions of its partnerships with various organisations. Additionally, Griffith College outlines its international collaborations under the "Global Opportunities" section, where it discusses partnership opportunities and lists university partners. While these sections provide overviews of the partnerships and their objectives, specific details of the agreements, such as contractual terms or proprietary information, are not disclosed publicly. However, the institution ensures that sufficient information is available to stakeholders to understand the scope and purpose of its external collaborations.

COMMENDATION 20
The review team commends the institution on its long-standing, stable and intensive collaborations and partnerships, underpinned by all necessary legal and quality assurance arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The institution should capitalise on the opportunity to highlight and publicise partnerships with its industry, community and voluntary partners. By dedicating a section on the website or including references across publications, the institution could emphasise the strategic importance of these external relationships by showcasing success stories, and profiles of key partners and the tangible benefits that these collaborations provide for both students and the wider community.

Section 4

Conclusions

Section 4: Conclusions

The review team would like to thank Griffith College for the hospitality extended to the team during their review visit to the Dublin campus. The team recognises the focus that was placed on the CINNTE review by all staff within the institution and acknowledges the significant amount of work that was undertaken by the institution in completing the review, particularly by the Director of Academic Programmes and his team in the QAE Department as well as the ISER Steering Group. The team reviewed a large amount of quality assurance and enhancement documentation including the ISER, AQRs, Strategic Plans, the QAE Manual and ancillary documents both prior to and during the review visit. Over the course of the review visit, the review team met with a wide range of institution stakeholders, including senior management, academic and administrative staff, students, collaborative providers and other external organisations. These meetings supplemented the team's understanding of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures at Griffith and facilitated the generation of this report.

It was evident to the review team that Griffith College is a successful higher education institution in Ireland, that has been active and a leader in the sector for 50 years. The institution has developed and grown significantly over the past decade; student numbers have increased (particularly at postgraduate level), new campuses have been acquired and collaborations with external providers have been set up and are running successfully. The institution has exhibited sound business acumen in carefully managing and building valuable assets in its campuses. In addition, it has proven itself agile in responding to opportunities in the education environment including responding quickly to changing conditions in the international student market, implementing apprenticeship programmes, enabling transfer of students from other private higher education institutions into the institution under Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) and building linkages with employers. The institution has had a strong focus on the student

as a customer and is responsive to student issues. There are numerous student feedback mechanisms activated throughout the academic year and issues identified are acted on quickly. There is evident care for students' personal and educational needs, especially the particular needs of the international student cohort, and a strong focus on career progression.

The review team gave due consideration to the three objectives set in the Terms of Reference for this review; Governance and Management of Quality; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; and Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review. It was evident to the team that the institution has developed and implements a sound quality assurance and enhancement framework over its 50 years of experience in delivering education and related service to date. It was also evident to the team and expressed by the institution during the review that Griffith College is on a journey of growth, with ambitions to further grow student numbers, increase capital expenditure, become more active in academic research and research projects, and seek to obtain delegated authority from QQI, when it becomes available.

The review team are of the opinion that Griffith College has an effective set of quality assurance procedures in place to underpin its current activities, and these procedures are reasonably well documented and implemented routinely. The documentation is incomplete in places, but this is recognised by the institution and is being addressed, which is an indicator of active process development and review. The quality assurance and enhancement procedures are robust and compliant with ESG 2015 and adhere to the relevant QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines.

As this report attests, the review team had many commendations to include with regard to the quality of the provision of Griffith College's educational and related services. The report also

includes a number of recommendations, which are intended to be constructive and designed to support the institution as it moves forward in achieving its future ambitions.

The review team believes that should the institution engage with and address the top five recommendations in particular, this will strengthen the existing quality infrastructure at Griffith College to the benefit of the Institution, its students and all stakeholders. Recommendation 1 and 2 will ensure that the institution's governance structures are strengthened so that the quality is overseen in a more effective, data-driven manner, with increased externality and a stronger focus on risk management. Recommendation 3 will set clear parameters and criteria around how full-time and part-time academic staff are assigned to the delivery and management of Griffith College programmes, and provide for ongoing monitoring in this regard, which will positively impact both staff and students. Recommendation 4 relates to Griffith College students and will provide for a student experience which meets the needs of the institution's various student cohorts. Finally, recommendation 5 sets out the review team's advice regarding the institution's research ambitions. The institution needs to carefully consider and set out its research ambitions and the direction the institution will take with regard to research and develop appropriate quality assurance mechanisms to underpin this activity.

A list of all commendations and recommendations follows.

COMMENDATIONS
1. The review team commends the QAED team in Griffith College on its approach to institutional review and the extensive support and guidance it provided to the institution community, thus ensuring a comprehensive and extensive review was undertaken, with active participation across all levels and functional areas of the institution.

2. The review team found that a thorough and complex consultation was conducted by the institution during 2024 on the strategic development areas and directions across all

internal stakeholders, including some industry partners.

3. The institution's financial situation appears very stable due to owning property and maintaining considerable financial reserves as well as applying strict yet agile financial management, allowing for ambitious investment planning.

4. The institution has a dedicated management team with a strong commitment to the institution. This has allowed agile decision-making which has helped the institution to survive and thrive through recessions and changes in demand which have proved challenging for others.

5. The institution has a rigorous process for monitoring of teaching, including a mock lecture as part of the selection process, and comprehensive monitoring through students' feedback and oversight by Programme Directors.

6. The College actively supports the development of its own staff, both through the provision of the Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development, and the provision of support for those undertaking doctoral studies, or other relevant programmes.

7. There is evident camaraderie amongst staff and a collegiate atmosphere which gives an impression of a satisfied and happy community and provides a setting for efficient pedagogy, good pastoral care and high academic morals that are maintained across the institution.

8. Griffith College has efficient and effective programme approval, validation and revalidation processes in place, that are clearly documented and multi-layered in terms of approval structures.

9. With managing the PEL arrangements well, the institution has proven both responsible and responsive through proactively stepping in and supporting students at other private colleges that have closed; and has developed positive partnerships as well as sound procedures in this respect.

10. The institution produces annual progression reports which present statistical information on student progression. The availability of this data

in a standard form, and the annual reporting of the information to APC are both appropriate QA measures.

11. The institution is to be commended for its systematic, objective and unbiased approach to learner assessment, in using blind and anonymised mechanisms, external voices ("critical friends"), multi-level approval of assessments and various appeal procedures. Moreover, the oversight of learner integrity and governance is clearly consistent with QQI requirements.

12. The alignment and coordination of the IT staff and adjacent steering groups concerning IT management systems, data compliance and cyber risk management is highly commendable.

13. Griffith College is to be commended for its proactive approach to maintaining relationships with third-party providers, which supports consistent alignment and communication across all collaborations. Furthermore, the institution's commitment to fostering and expanding third-party collaborations is notable and should continue to be encouraged as a core strength of its educational offerings.

14. Assessment processes are robust; tasks, criteria, standards and deadlines are well communicated to learners; the study environment including the system of assessment enables good planning of various activities of students (necessary parallel work engagements etc.). The institution has attained a good balance of summative and formative assessment, for example by enabling the possibility of consultation on the results with teachers after their release; there also appears to be a good balance of formal and informal assessment and feedback mechanisms (surveys and questionnaires/individual approach and communications between learners and teachers and PDs was evidenced in many faculties).

15. The institution provides a broad range of support services for learners, and the enthusiasm and student-focussed nature of the staff in these areas is to be commended. The co-location of the services is a welcome development and increases the visibility of

services on the Dublin campus. The recent expansion of counselling provision is a welcome enhancement of the services.

16. There are particular services for international students that are highly appreciated by the students. These included the pre-arrival briefing information and videos, the "buddy system" of peer contacts, the accommodation service and the airport pickup.

17. The review team commends Griffith College for its robust quality culture; the institution actively promotes professional development and collaboration among staff, fostering continuous improvement across faculties and departments. Quality culture and self-evaluation procedures at the institution appear to have been consistently promoted among a range of staff and student representatives, especially over recent years.

18. The robust and overarching monitoring of student opinion and wellbeing that permeates quantitative and qualitative, formal and informal mechanisms is paramount and central to the institution's efficient student-centred approach.

19. *The Limerick and Cork campuses – together with programmes recently included from other institutions - are well integrated into the Institution's monitoring and review processes.* In addition, QQI-validated programmes run by the institution with collaborative partners, including placements and apprenticeships, show a high level of integration into the QA system with regard to monitoring and review, and are well-supported by its IT system.

20. The review team commends the institution on its long-standing, stable and intensive collaborations and partnerships, underpinned by all necessary legal and quality assurance arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Visibly consolidate, formalise and embed into the QAE system the current planning of institutional and programme development arrangements, to form a complete strategic management practice that complements

the current agile way of action-planning. To underpin their QAE integration, mission and strategy should be completed and consistently communicated to all stakeholders, followed by managerial integration (such as action-plan based monitoring, KPIs etc.) across the entire governance and quality systems of the institution. Leaning on a well-organised QAED team and a fast-developing quality culture, the Institution's governance should include strategic analysis and follow-up to the outcomes of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring in their decision-making systems.

2. To ensure sustained resilience and transparency, Griffith College should strategically diversify its governance structures, both in the managerial as well as in the academic realm, by incorporating independent peer review, objective externality and a stronger student voice.

3. Griffith College should develop a formal institutional risk register, which is reviewed annually.

4. The review team recommends that work continues to complete all areas of the QAE Manual which are "under review", with particular emphasis on updating, approving and publishing the Admissions, Transfer and Progression Policy and the sections relating to Faculty and Department Review as soon as possible, and implementing a schedule of Faculty and Departmental reviews.

5. With regard to staffing policies, the review team recommends that the institution document a clear principle regarding academic staffing, which will provide clarity regarding full-time and part-time staff and the appropriate balance of each managing and delivering its programmes. Principles regarding the following two scenarios should be included:

   • The circumstances where someone outside of the full-time staff could be a programme director, and the QA measures that may be needed in such circumstances.

   • The QA measures to support situations where thesis supervision is being done by part-time staff should also be considered,

to ensure quality and consistency of supervision.

6. Although the BambooHR system and recruitment processes appear robust, it is recommended that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team schedule and oversee a complete and thorough review to finalise the system's implementation. This review should focus on achieving full alignment, particularly by addressing integration issues with payroll records to ensure seamless and accurate data management across HR and payroll functions.

7. Griffith College should consider expanding the access to work placement and internship across a greater range of programmes, as this is clearly valued by and beneficial for many students.

8. Griffith College should examine the possibility of greater analysis of its progression data. It would be valuable to have information about, for example, the progression rates of students who enter through APL, and those who enter with lower levels of English language proficiency. This data, formally analysed and reported, would provide a robust evidence base to support changes in admission requirements as needed. Some of this analysis may already be in place informally, but it was not evident during the review.

9. *As the institution clearly states its ambition to develop more research-oriented study programmes, and at the same time has been attracting a much larger scope of learners' nationalities, the review team recommends an even more robust approach to academic integrity in learning and research, given the specific nature of more research-oriented work, which is particularly critical at master level.*

10. The review team recommends that the institution publishe results of feedback surveys and core performance metrics. These should be tracked in a multi-year format, enabling the institution to further define its core strategies and clearly communicate these to stakeholders.

11. Griffith College should promote its QAE services and information on-site also, across pedagogical and social settings on the

campuses, in order to efficiently complement their manifold online presence and promote involvement of students especially in the QAE procedures and activities.

12. To strengthen the quality assurance of its collaboration processes, the institution should consider consolidating QA of collaborative procedures into a single policy document and contract for all third-party arrangements. Additionally, improvements in the recording and data management of QA systems would support enhanced oversight.

13. It is necessary for Griffith College to define and align research ambitions with the institution's long-term strategy to ensure that the necessary infrastructure (financial governance and staffing), as well as QAE policies and procedures, can be established within the institution to realise these ambitions in a coherent manner.

14. Griffith College should seek to manage cohorts with respect to both the increased numbers and the quickly changing profile of international students in order to further develop a multicultural atmosphere that corresponds to the institution's ambitions on quality teaching and learning, including the stated decolonisation priority. The review team recommends that the institution:

   • Embeds both QA and governance of internationalisation firmly into the institution's strategic management, using a proper set of tools and procedures, including sound data-informed action-planning, targets, ceilings, KPIs etc. Special attention should be paid to the fact that lectures and classes are attended by students with a variety of linguistic competences, with native English speakers and students with English as an additional language from various parts of the world.

   • Ensure proactive and strategic positioning into Erasmus+ and similar financing mechanisms, including bigger cooperation projects and broad alliances as well as long-term certification arrangements, grant schemes etc.

15. The institution should continue to provide ongoing support in pedagogy to teaching staff in order to optimise teaching of each module, especially in large class situations.

16. The institution should work to establish clear data on the level of use of the services, the staffing levels, and the student population to provide a clear empirical basis for making decisions about resourcing levels. It should also continue review its language policy and language supports provided to ensure that the changing student population at the institution have access to appropriate supports for as long as is needed.

17. The review team recommends that the institution develop and implement an institution-wide standardised student survey template, and integrate the resulting data into the Institutional Analytics Dashboard, providing faculties with near real-time access to analysed feedback.

18. The institution should capitalise on the opportunity to highlight and publicise partnerships with its industry, community and voluntary partners. By dedicating a section on the website or including references across publications, the institution could emphasise the strategic importance of these external relationships by showcasing success stories, and profiles of key partners and the tangible benefits that these collaborations provide for both students and the wider community.
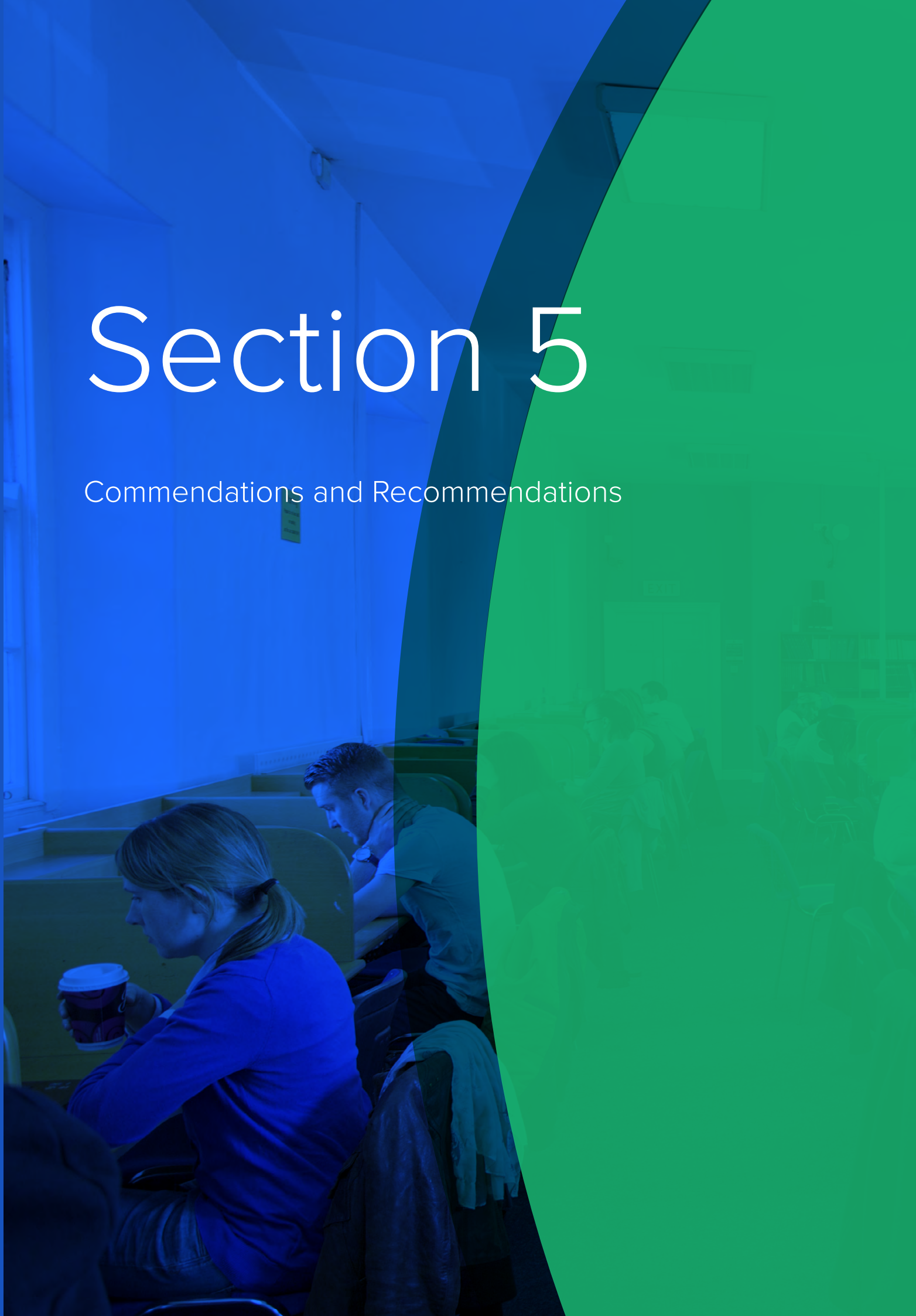
Section 5

Commendations and Recommendations

Section 5: Top 5 Commendations and Recommendations

TOP 5 COMMENDATIONS

1. The robust and overarching monitoring of student opinion and wellbeing that permeates quantitative and qualitative, formal and informal mechanisms is paramount and central to the institution's efficient student-centred approach.

2. The alignment and coordination of the IT staff and adjacent steering groups concerning IT management systems, data compliance and cyber risk management is highly commendable.

3. With managing the PEL arrangements well, the institution has proven both responsible and responsive through proactively stepping in and supporting students at other private colleges that have closed; and has developed positive partnerships as well as sound procedures in this respect.

4. There is evident camaraderie amongst staff and a collegiate atmosphere which gives an impression of a satisfied and happy community and provides a setting for efficient pedagogy, good pastoral care and high academic morals that are maintained across the institution.

5. The institution's financial situation appears very stable due to owning college property and maintaining considerable financial reserves as well as applying strict yet agile financial management, allowing for ambitious investment planning.

TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Visibly consolidate, formalise and embed into the QAE system the current planning of institutional and programme development arrangements, to form a complete strategic management practice that complements the current agile way of action-planning. To underpin their QAE integration, mission and strategy should be completed and consistently communicated to all stakeholders, followed by managerial integration (such as action-plan based monitoring, KPIs etc.) across the entire governance and quality systems of the institution. Leaning on a well-organised QAED team and a fast-developing quality culture, the institution's governance should include strategic analysis and follow-up to the outcomes of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring in their decision-making systems.

2. To ensure sustained resilience and transparency, Griffith College should strategically diversify its governance structures, both in the managerial as well as in the academic realm, by incorporating independent peer review, objective externality and a stronger student voice.

3. With regard to staffing policies, the review team recommends that the institution document a clear principle regarding academic staffing, which will provide clarity regarding full-time and part-time staff and the appropriate balance of each managing and delivering its programmes. Principles regarding the following two scenarios should be included:

4. The circumstances where someone outside of the full-time staff could be a programme

director, and the QA measures that may be needed in such circumstances.

5. The QA measures to support situations where thesis supervision is being done by part-time staff should also be considered, to ensure quality and consistency of supervision.

6. Griffith College should seek to manage cohorts with respect to both the increased numbers and the quickly changing profile of international students in order to further develop a multicultural atmosphere that corresponds to the institution's ambitions on quality teaching and learning, including the stated decolonisation priority. The review team recommends that the institution:

   • Embeds both QA and governance of internationalisation firmly into the institution's strategic management, using a proper set of tools and procedures, including sound data-informed action-planning, targets, ceilings, KPIs etc. Special attention should be paid to the fact that lectures and classes are attended by students with a variety of linguistic competences, with native English speakers and students with English as an additional language from various parts of the world.

   • Ensure proactive and strategic positioning into Erasmus+ and similar financing mechanisms, including bigger cooperation projects and broad alliances as well as long-term certification arrangements, grant schemes etc.

7. It is necessary for Griffith College to define and align research ambitions with the institution's long-term strategy to ensure that the necessary infrastructure (financial governance and staffing), as well as QAE policies and procedures, can be established within the institution to realise these ambitions in a coherent manner.

Section 6

Institutional Response

Section 6: Institutional Response

I am delighted to welcome the publication of this CINNTE Institutional Review Report, marking the culmination of the College's Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (ISER) and its subsequent consideration by an external Review Team of national and international experts.

I would like to thank the expert review team members for their detailed evaluation of the College's ISER and its related extensive documentation, and for their positive and collegiate engagement with our College community throughout the process. It was a pleasure for the College to host the Review Team at the College's South Circular Road campus in October 2024, and to benefit from their insights, reflections and external perspectives.

The review team's commendations confirm the maturity of the College's long-standing values, and established quality assurance and enhancement processes, in designing and delivering learner-centred, career-focused, accredited programmes for over 50 years. Similarly, the review team's recommendations affirm and advance the College's shared reflections, plans and proposals for its ongoing development.

The College's community actively embraced the institution-wide process from the outset, viewing it as a valuable opportunity for shared reflection, evaluation, and a basis for future development. I would like to thank everyone in the College, and across our collaborative partners and external stakeholders, for their active, open and meaningful participation throughout the process. Their direct engagement, experience, and suggestions enabled the identification of shared recommendations for enhancement, ensuring the enduring value and benefit of the process to our learners, staff and the entire College community.

Throughout the College's development, it has undertaken successful institutional reviews under the auspices of the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), and a re-engagement process with QQI. Undertaking this CINNTE review, on a par with established public and private institutions, marks a welcome development for the College on its path towards Delegated Authority.

I would like to thank all our learners, staff, collaborative partners, and the employers and other external stakeholders for their enthusiastic support to the College's self-evaluation process and for their ongoing contribution to the College's quality assurance and enhancement processes.

I would like to give special thanks to the members of the College's ISER Coordinating Group who managed the process on behalf of the College, and to the many staff, learners and external stakeholders who had the opportunity to actively engage in the various meetings with the Review Team throughout their visit.

I would also like to express the College's gratitude to QQI, and the staff of QQI's Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review Unit specifically, for their support and valuable insights as we progressed through the various stages of the CINNTE process.
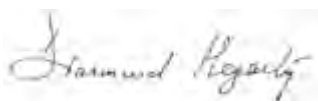
We are particularly pleased that the Review Team recognised our *"robust quality culture"* and the *"evident camaraderie amongst staff and a collegiate atmosphere which gives an impression of a satisfied and happy community and provides a setting for efficient pedagogy, good pastoral care and high academic morals that are maintained across the institution"*. Our collective focus on quality assurance and enhancement is further reflected in the Review Team's commendation that

Griffith College "*actively promotes professional development and collaboration among staff, fostering continuous improvement across faculties and departments*".

Looking forward, we greatly value the recommendations of the external Review Team, which reflect and complement enhancements identified during our own institutional self-evaluation process. These shared recommendations will be actively used to inform and guide the further development of the College's activities and our related quality assurance and enhancement processes into the future. We look forward to their advancement as part of the resulting implementation plan and their integration into the College's already established quality monitoring and reporting processes.

Finally, reflecting on the process as a whole, I would like to acknowledge the collegiate approach engendered and sustained throughout the process by QQI, the Review Team, and the College's community in trusting the review process and the opportunity it afforded for meaningful reflection, evaluation and enhancement. The resulting and lasting benefits arising from the review for learners, staff and the entire College community are a tribute to all involved.

Fifty years since the foundation of the College, it's a pleasure to see all that has been achieved to date, the journey that has been travelled, and we look forward with commitment and excitement to the many further developments in the years ahead.

Professor Diarmuid Hegarty
President, Griffith College

Appendices

Appendices
Appendix A: Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

These are the terms of reference for the review of independent and private providers, including those that intend to request the delegation of authority[2] (DA) when it becomes available.

QQI's Core Quality Assurance Guidelines have been established for all providers and collectively address the quality assurance responsibilities of those providers. The scope of the guidelines incorporates all education and training leading to QQI awards, other awards recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or awards of other awarding, regulatory or statutory bodies. The guidelines outline that quality, and its assurance, are the primary responsibility of the provider and review and self-evaluation of quality is a fundamental element of the provider's quality assurance system. Sector-specific QA guidelines have also been published and address the more specific requirements of independent and private providers. Reengagement[3] by those providers confirmed that quality assurance procedures were approved by QQI in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

A provider's external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI. The reviews relate to QQI's obligation under Section 27(b) of the 2012 Act (to establish procedures for the review by QQI of the effectiveness and implementation of a provider's quality assurance procedures) and to section 34 of the 2012 Act (the external review by QQI of a provider's quality assurance procedures).

QQI established its Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions in 2016 which sets out the scope, purposes, criteria and model for cyclical review.

For independent and private providers, the diversity, range and size of organisations varies significantly, and some have been subject to rigorous oversight by QQI regarding their internal quality assurance systems for a lengthy and sustained period. The outcomes of the review will inform the future development of quality assurance and enhancement activities within independent and private institutions and across the sector.

For those institutions that are planning to seek DA, the external institutional review will constitute a first

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2   The delegation of authority (DA) to make awards is the legal mechanism to recognise a provider's growing autonomy and capacity to take on responsibility for academic quality. DA enables a provider to establish its own award brand and affords it autonomy to establish programmes, or classes of programmes of education and training, which lead to awards that are awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). DA is a recognition by QQI that a provider has the rigour, independence and consistency in its programme approval processes and can be entrusted with the responsibility to make reliable decisions regarding the standards of programmes subject to validation and revalidation.

3   Re-engagement was a one-off process for legacy providers to establish: (i) Quality assurance procedures approved by QQI in accordance with either Section 29 or Section 30 of the 2012 Act as relevant; and (ii) The provider's scope of provision i.e. the range of programmes for which quality assurance procedures and organisational capacity are deemed appropriate and within which future programme applications for validation can be made.

step towards an assessment by QQI.

PURPOSES

QQI's Policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions highlights five purposes for individual institutional reviews. These are set out in the table below.

Purpose		Achieved and measured through
1.	To encourage a quality culture and the enhancement of the learning environment and experience within institutions.	• emphasising the student and the student learning experience in reviews; • providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them; • exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures; • exploring quality as well as quality assurance within the institution; • piloting a new thematic review methodology.
2.	To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance.	• emphasising the ownership of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution; • pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level; • evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards; • evaluating relative equivalence with institution-identified benchmarks and metrics; • emphasising the improvement of quality assurance procedures.

3.	To improve public confidence in the quality of independent and private providers by promoting transparency and public awareness.	adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent; publishing a periodic review cycle; publishing terms of reference; publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences; publishing brief, easy to read institutional quality profiles; evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible.
4.	To support systems-level improvement of the quality of higher education.	publication of periodic synoptic reports; ensuring that there is sufficient consistency in approach between similar institutions to allow for comparability and shared learning; publishing institutional quality profiles.
5.	To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice.	using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution; ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence; facilitating institutions to identify metrics and benchmarks for quality relevant to their own mission and context; promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation.

Review Objectives, Outputs and Criteria

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the review are summarised under the following headings as follows:

1. Governance and Management – to review the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the governance and management of quality throughout the organisation.

2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment – to evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the provider and a high-quality learning experience for all learners.

3. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review – to evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the provider's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them.

OBJECTIVES (INCLUDING INDICATIVE MATTERS4 TO BE EXPLORED)

OBJECTIVE 1 – GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

To review the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the governance and management of quality throughout the organisation.

This will include a review of:

- the oversight arrangements and transparent decision-making structures for the implementation of the QA procedures of the provider as set out in the annual quality report (AQR).
- the enhancement of quality by the provider through governance, policy, and procedures.
- the flexibility and adaptability of quality assurance procedures and quality enhancement with the provider's own mission and goals or targets for quality. To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.
- the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.

The scope of this objective includes the procedures for reporting, governance and publication. It also incorporates an analysis of the ways in which the provider applies evidence-based approaches to support quality assurance processes, including quantitative analysis, evidence gathering and comparison. Consideration will also be given to the effectiveness of the AQR and ISER procedures within the institution.

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4   The indicative matters highlighted for each objective do not comprise the full range of areas that could be explored during the review. The review team has the capacity to expand this within the scope of QQI's Statutory Core QA Guidelines and sector specific guidelines as appropriate.

The scope of this objective will also extend to the overarching procedures of the provider for assuring itself of the quality of its research activities, where applicable.

The governance and quality management systems would be expected to address:

Indicative matters to be explored	
The provider's mission and strategy	• Do the provider's quality assurance arrangements contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and strategy? How? • Is the learner experience consistent with this mission?
Structures and terms of reference for the governance and management of quality assurance	• Are the arrangements sufficiently comprehensive and robust to ensure management and governance structures are proportionate and appropriate to support both the education and training activities and the general operations of the institution (e.g. separation of responsibilities, externality, stakeholder input)? • Is governance visible and transparent? • Has the provider ensured there are robust structures in place to identify, assess and manage risk? How effective are these arrangements? • How does the provider ensure the system of governance protects the integrity of academic processes and has institutional wide oversight of its QA standards? • Do the processes in place demonstrate the provider's confidence in its capacity for critical self-evaluation and remediation?
The documentation of quality assurance policy and procedures	• How effective are the arrangements for the development and approval of policies and procedures? • Are policies and procedures coherent and comprehensive (i.e. do they incorporate all service types and awarding bodies?), robust and fit for purpose? • Are policies and procedures systematically evaluated? • Are there effective innovations in quality enhancement and assurance?

Staff recruitment, management and development	• How effective are the QA procedures in maintaining and managing a resource base that sustainably supports (i) the quality assurance system and (ii) the programmes of education and training, research and related services offered by the provider?
	• How effective are the QA procedures for the recruitment, management and development of staff in the context of all education and training activities and related services[5] offered by the provider?
	• How does the provider assure itself as to the competence of its staff?
	• How are professional standards maintained and enhanced across the organisation?
	• How are staff informed of developments impacting the organisation and how can they input to decision-making?

5   This includes those education and training activities leading to awards of awarding bodies other than QQI, such as professional bodies and local provider provision, so that the overall commitments of staff are taken into account by the provider.

79

Programme development, approval and submission for validation	• What arrangements are in place to ensure alignment of programme development activity with the provider's mission and strategic goals, as well as learner needs?
	• Are the arrangements for the approval and management of programme development robust, objective and transparent?
	• What arrangements are in place to facilitate and oversee a comprehensive programme development process in advance of submission for validation (e.g. the conduct of research, inclusion of external expertise, writing learning outcomes, curricula etc., professional approval/accreditation)?
	• How does the QA system support the development of programmes requiring professional approval / accreditation? What additional measures are in place to support these programmes?
	• How effective are those arrangements in meeting and facilitating the standards required by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs), where relevant?
	• What impact has increased demand for (i) the use of online technology for programme delivery and assessment and (ii) the provision of short, standalone programmes had on the provider's resource base? How effective are the QA procedures in supporting these programmes' developments?
	• Are there effective structures in place to support and quality assure collaborative programme development with other providers, both national and transnational?
	• How does the institution assure itself that work-integrated learning6 is fully embedded within the structure and provision of educational programmes so that the taught and work-integrated elements constitute a coherent whole?
	• How effectively has the provider managed its responsibility of arranging independent evaluation reports under devolved responsibility (where applicable)?
	• What has the provider learned from its experience of devolved responsibility?

6   Work-integrated learning (WIL) may take place in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to, practice placement, apprenticeship, applied learning and profession-oriented further and higher education where WIL elements are integral to an educational programme leading to a qualification in the NFQ.

Access, transfer and progression (ATP)	• How does the provider measure and monitor access, transfer and progression systematically across all programmes and services? • How effective are the processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on learner progression and completion rates? • Are there flexible learning pathways, respecting and attending to the diversity of learners? • Are admissions criteria and processes clear, transparent and fit for purpose? • Are progression and recognition policies and processes in line with (i) the national policies and criteria for ATP and (ii) the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and (iii) any appropriate European recognition principles, conventions and guidelines including the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)? Are these implemented on a consistent basis?
Integrity and approval of learner results, including the operation and outcome of internal verification and external authentication processes	• What governance and oversight processes are in place to ensure the integrity of learner assessment and results data, which provide the basis for making and certifying QQI awards? • Have the provider's QA procedures evolved to combat emergent threats to academic integrity? How adaptable are they to continued threats and/or change? • How does the provider ensure that the processes in place provide for consistent decision-making and oversight across all services, centres, campuses?
Information and data management	• What arrangements are in place to ensure that data are reliable and secure? • How are data utilised as part of the quality assurance system? • What arrangements are in place to ensure the integrity of learner records? • How is compliance with data legislation ensured?

Public information and communications	Is information on the quality assurance system, procedures and activities publicly available and regularly updated? What arrangements are in place to ensure that published information in relation to all provision (including by centres) is clear, accurate, up to date and easily accessible?
Other Parties involved in Education and Training	How effective is the provider's integrated system of quality assurance to support collaborative arrangements and partnerships with third parties? What arrangements are in place to ensure that the provider's QA policies and procedures are consistent with European commitments as appropriate?
Research, Enterprise and Innovation	What arrangements are in place to ensure that the provider has an integrated system of quality assurance in place to underpin and support its research and enterprise activities? How effectively does research education and training engage with peer review mechanisms used for research funding and publication?

OBJECTIVE 2 – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the provider and a high-quality learning experience for all learners. These will include:

Indicative matters to be explored	
The learning environment	• Is the quality of the learning experience monitored? How? • Are modes of delivery and pedagogical methods evaluated to ensure that they meet the needs of learners? How? • How is the quality of the learning experience of learners engaged in work-integrated activities assured? • Is there evidence of enhancement in teaching and learning?
Assessment of learners	• How is the integrity, consistency and security of assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures and records ensured – including in respect of recognition of prior learning? • How does the provider assure that the standards regarding the assessment of learners engaged in work-integrated learning are maintained? • Do learners in all settings have a clear understanding of how and why they are assessed and are they given feedback on assessment? • How is the feedback analysis used to further enhance assessment methodologies? • Can the QA procedures in place support the management, integrity and retention of learner results data which provide the basis for making and certifying QQI awards?
Supports for learners	• How are support services planned and monitored to ensure that they meet the needs of learners? • How does the provider ensure consistency in the availability of appropriate supports to all learners across different settings, including work-integrated learning? • Are learners aware of the existence of supports?

OBJECTIVE 3 – SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

Evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the provider's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them. It will also reflect on how these processes are utilised to complete the quality cycle through the identification and promotion of effective practice and by addressing areas for improvement. This will include:

Indicative matters to be explored	
Self-evaluation, monitoring and review	• What are the processes for quality assurance planning, monitoring and reporting? • Are the processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and review (including the self-evaluation report undertaken for the institutional review comprehensive, inclusive and evidence-based? • Is there evidence of strategic analysis and follow-up of the outcome of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring (e.g. review reports, external examiner reports, learner feedback reports etc.)? • How is quality promoted and enhanced?
Programme monitoring and review	• Are mechanisms for periodic review and revalidation of programmes comprehensive, inclusive and robust? • How are programme delivery and outcomes monitored across multiple campuses (including collection of feedback from learners/stakeholders)? • How are the activities and processes associated with work-integrated learning monitored? • Is there evidence that the outcome of programme monitoring and review informs programme modification and enhancement? • Are the outputs of programme monitoring and review considered on a strategic basis by the provider's governance bodies to inform decision-making?
Oversight, monitoring and review of relationships with external/ third parties and other collaborative partners.	• How does the provider ensure the suitability of the external parties with which it engages? • Is the nature of the arrangements with each external party published? • Is the effectiveness of these arrangements monitored and reviewed through provider governance?

Review Outputs

In respect of each dimension above, the review will:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the provider's quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of higher education, training, and related services;
- identify perceived gaps in the internal quality assurance procedures and the appropriateness, competence, prioritisation and timeliness of planned measures to address them in the context of the provider's current stage of development; and
- explore achievements and innovations in quality assurance and in the enhancement of teaching and learning.

Following consideration of the matters above, the review report will include specific and high-level qualitative statements on:

- the overall effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the provider and the extent of their implementation and enhancement.
- the extent to which the quality assurance procedures can be considered compliant with the ESG.
- the extent to which existing quality assurance procedures adhere to QQI's Quality Assurance guidelines and policies (as listed in section 3.4).
- identified effective practice and recommendations for further improvement. (These may also be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements.)

The review report may also include recommendations for conditions in reference to each of the objectives.

CRITERIA

The implementation and effectiveness of the provider's quality assurance arrangements will be considered in the context of the following:

- The provider's own mission and vision, including objectives and goals for quality assurance.
- QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines
- QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent and Private Providers
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015
- Section 28, Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
- QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training

Where appropriate and indicated by the provider, additional QQI guidelines may be incorporated:

- QQI Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes
- National Framework for Doctoral Education
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes

The Review Process

The primary source for the review process is the Cyclical Review Handbook for Independent and Private Providers.

REVIEW TEAM PROFILE

QQI will appoint the review team to conduct the institutional review. Review teams are composed of peer reviewers who are learners; leaders and staff from comparable providers; and external representatives including employer and civic representatives.

The size of the team and the duration of their visit will depend on the size and complexity of the independent and private provider.

QQI will identify an appropriate team of reviewers for each review who are independent of the independent and private provider with the appropriate skills and experience required to perform their tasks. Collectively, the review team will have knowledge of and expertise in:

- Higher education quality assurance processes;
- Governance;
- The advancement of teaching, learning and assessment methodologies;
- Managing research within or across institutions (where applicable);
- International reviews; and
- European standards in higher education and qualification frameworks, e.g. ESG, EQF and Bologna process; and

The team will include international representatives and QQI will seek to ensure diversity among the reviewers. The provider will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of its review team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. QQI has final approval over the composition of each review team. The roles and responsibilities[7] of the review team members are as follows:

CHAIR:

The chair is a full member and leader of the review ream. Their role is to provide tactical leadership and to ensure that the work of the team is conducted in a professional, impartial and fair manner, and in compliance with the Terms of Reference. The chair's functions include:

- Leading the conduct of the review and ensuring that proceedings remain focused.
- Organising the work of reviewers with the support of the coordinating reviewer.
- Fostering open and respectful exchanges of opinion and ensuring that the views of all participants are valued and considered.
- Facilitating the emergence of evidence-based team decisions (ideally based on consensus).

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7   Further detail on the conduct of reviewers is outlined in QQI's Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators.

- Contributing to, and overseeing the production of, the review report within the timeline agreed with QQI, approving amendments or convening additional meetings if required.

COORDINATING REVIEWER:

The coordinating reviewer is a full member of the team and secretary of the review team. Their role is to capture the team's deliberations and decisions during the proceedings and express them clearly and accurately in the team report. It is vital that the coordinating reviewer ensures that sufficient evidence is provided in the report to support the team's recommendations. The role of the coordinating reviewer includes:

- Acting as the liaison between the review team and QQI; and, during the main review visit, between the review team and the institutional review co-ordinator.
- Maintaining records of discussions during the planning and main review visits.
- Coordinating the drafting of the review report in consultation with the team members and under the direction of the chair within the timeline agreed with QQI.

STUDENT REVIEWER:

The student reviewer is a full member of the review team and participates in all aspects of the review. The student reviewer represents the 'voice of the learner' and brings a valuable perspective which can inform and enrich discussions. They may have a particular focus on the learner experience and topics of interest might include, for example:

- Academic matters such as the curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning;
- Support services, such as library, IT, sports, societies, welfare and careers services etc.; and
- Learner input into decision-making and involvement in quality assurance.

EXTERNAL REVIEWER(S):

The external representative reviewer is an equal member of the team and takes part in all aspects of review. The external representative may bring knowledge and expertise of the Irish Higher Education sector more widely and/or contribute to the 'third mission' perspective (i.e., represents the economic and social mission of the institution) which can inform and enrich discussions.

By way of example, they may have specialist knowledge of some of the following areas:

- External expectations of graduate skills and competencies;
- Issues and trends in industry or the wider community;
- Responsibilities of independent and private providers of education and training in the Irish HE sector;
- The external perception of the institution and its activities;
- Pedagogy, programme architecture, skills development, teaching, learning and assessment and related quality assurance activities.
- Knowledge of the area identified in any specific enhancement themes for the review;
- Quality assurance practices in other sectors; and
- Good management practices in other sectors.

ALL REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS:
The role of all review team members includes:

- Preparing for the review by reading and critically evaluating all written material.
- Investigating and testing claims made in the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and other material during the main review visit by speaking to a range of staff, learners and stakeholders.
- Contributing to the production of the review report, ensuring that their particular perspective and voice (i.e. learner, industry, stakeholder, international etc.) forms an integral part of the review.

REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINES
The key steps in the review process with indicative timelines are outlined below. Specific dates for each provider review will be outlined by QQI in accordance with the published Review Schedule.

Step	Action	Timeframe	Outcome
Preparation – Terms of Reference (ToR)	Consultation and confirmation of ToR with providers	9 months before the main review visit (MRV)	Publish ToR
Preparation – Institutional Profile (IP)	Preparation of an institutional profile by each provider (e.g. outlining mission; strategic objectives; local context; data on staff profiles; recent developments; key challenges).	6 months before the MRV	Publish IP
Preparation – Review Team (RT)	Appointment of an expert review team Consultation with the provider on any possible conflicts of interest	6-9 months before the MRV	Publish RT Profile
Self-evaluation – Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)	Forwarding to QQI of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and a repository of additional information (optional).	min. 12 weeks before the MRV	Published ISER (optional)
Desk review	Desk review of the ISER by the team	At least 1 week before the Initial Meeting	ISER initial response provided

RT Briefing (via MS Teams) – 2 sessions (half days)	Session 1: An initial meeting of the review team, including introductions, reviewer training and briefing. Session 2: RT discussion of preliminary impressions and identification of any additional documentation required.	c. 5 weeks after the ISER, c. 7 weeks before the MRV	RT training and briefing is complete. RT identify key themes and any additional documents required.
Planning visit (via MS Teams)	A visit to the institution by the chair and coordinating reviewer to receive information about the ISER process, discuss the schedule for the main review visit and discuss additional documentation requests.	c. 5 weeks after the ISER, c. 7 weeks before the MRV	An agreed note of the planning visit.
Main Review Visit	To receive and consider evidence on the ways in which the institution has performed in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference	12 weeks after the receipt of ISER	A short preliminary oral report to the institution
Report – drafting stages	Preparation of a draft report by the team Draft report sent to the institution for a check of factual accuracy Institution responds with any factual accuracy corrections Preparation of a final report	6-8 weeks after the MRV 12 weeks after the MRV 2 weeks after receipt of draft report 2 weeks after factual accuracy response	QQI review report
Report – institutional response	Preparation of an institutional response	2 weeks after final report	Institutional response
Outcomes	QQI considers findings of review report and the institutional response through governance processes. Review report is published with institutional response.	Next available meeting of QQI Awards and Reviews Committee (ARC)	Formal decision about the effectiveness of QA procedures In some cases, directions to the institution and a schedule for their implementation
	Preparation of QQI quality profile	2 weeks after decision	Quality profile published

The form of the follow-up will be determined by whether 'directions' are issued to the institution. In general, where directions are issued the follow-up period will be sooner and more specific actions may be required as part of the direction.

Follow-Up	Preparation of an institutional implementation plan by provider	3 months after publication of report	Publication of the implementation plan by the institution
	One-year follow-up report to QQI for noting. This and subsequent follow-up may be integrated into annual reports to QQI	1 year after the MRV	Publication of the follow-up report by QQI and the institution
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through the annual institutional reporting and dialogue process	Continuous	Annual quality report Dialogue meeting notes

Appendix B: Main Review Visit Schedule

DAY 1: MONDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2025

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09:00 - 09:20	Institutional Coordinator	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Preparatory meeting for Day 1
09:20 - 9:50	Private Review Team Meeting		
09:50 – 10:20	1. President	President Registrar / Director of Academic Programmes	*Private Meeting to discuss institutional mission, strategic plan, including roles and responsibilities for QA and enhancement.*
10:35 - 11:15	2. Senior Management Team (SMT)	Operations Director Chair, Management Board Director, International Office and Vice-Chair, Management Board Finance Director Director of Academic Programmes Head of IT Head of Academic Admin & Learner Services Head of Faculty, Law Head of Faculty, Design HR Manager Head of Cork Campus Head of Limerick Campus	*Discuss institutional mission, strategic plan, including roles and responsibilities for QA and enhancement.*
11:05 – 11:15	Comfort break		
11:15 – 11:55	3. Governing Authority Rep-resentatives (corporate)	President Operations Director Director of International Office Finance Director Director of Academic Programmes HR Director Non-Executive Director	*Discuss strategic management and QA structures, including arrangements for QA across the institution and within schools/ departments.*

12:00 – 12:40	4. Quality Committee and Academic Council (academic)	(Outgoing) Chair of APC	*Discuss mechanisms employed by the Academic Council for monitoring QA & QE and how it ensures effectiveness.*
		Head of Academic Admin & Learner Services	
		Head of Faculty, Business	
		Head of Faculty, GBS	
		Group Head of Apprenticeships, Limerick Campus	
		Deputy Head, Cork Campus	
		Head of Department of Apprenticeships	
		Director of Post Graduate Programmes & Research, Innopharma Education	
		Manager, International/Global Engagement Office	
		Global Student Mobility Manager, Greater China and Mongolia	
		Head of QAE	
12:45 – 13:05	5. Demo of Data Analytics Dashboard	IT Operations Manager	*Demonstration of user view of the data analytics dashboard used by staff and other stakeholders.*
		Group Head of IT	
13:05 – 14:00	Lunch		
14:05 – 14:30	6. Governance & Management of QA systems relating to Protection Enrolled Learners/ Access Transfer, Progression	Chair, APEL Committee	*Discuss mechanisms and systems within the Institution to oversee the QA relating to PEL and ATP*
		Head of Faculty, Design	
		Programme Director, BA (Hons) in Psychology [formerly of St Nicholas Montessori Institution of Ireland (SMSI)]	
		Project Manager, QAE [former-Registrar, Dublin Design Institute (DDI)]	
		Senior Admissions Officer	
		Head of QAE, and PEL Coordinator	
14:30 – 14:55	Private Review Team Meeting		

15:00 – 15:40	7. Student Union Representatives and Class Representatives	SU President SU Vice-President (Education) SU Vice-President (Cork) Former SU president Class Rep, HC in Healthcare Support Practice/ Advance Healthcare Assistant Practitioner Apprentice programme Class Rep, LLB (Hons), stage 2, Cork-based learner Class Rep, LLB, stage 2; President of the African Society (and President's Award winner) Class Rep, HDip in Computer Science	*Discuss student engagement and student role in QA, Strategic Planning and decision-making processes within the institution.*
15:40 – 15:50	Comfort break		
15:50 - 16:30	8. Student Representatives (Undergraduates)	BA (Hons) in Music Production, Year 3 [Pulse College] HC in Healthcare Support Practice/ Advance Healthcare Assistant Practitioner Apprentice BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance, Year 2 Certificate in Music Production for Games LLB (Hons), Year 3 (blended) HDip in Computer Science BA in Interior Architecture and Design, year 3 Certificate in International Foundation Studies	*Discussion with students from across the institution, to include representation from different years, disciplines and service users.*

16:35 - 17:15	9. Student Representatives (Postgraduates)	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Scoring for Film, TV & Interactive Media [Pulse College]	*Discussion with postgraduate students from across the institution, to include representation from different years, disciplines and service users.*
		MSc in International Business and Law	
		PgD in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology [Innopharma Education]	
		MSc in International Business (and ACCA)	
		MSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management (Limerick)	
		MSc in International Business (Limerick)	
		Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance	
		MBA in International Business	
17:15 - 17:45	Private Review Team Meeting		*Day 1 debrief*

DAY 2: TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2025

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09:00 - 09:10	Institutional Coordinator	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement	*Preparatory meeting for Day 2*
09:15 – 09:55	10. Members of the ISER development group	· Director of Academic Programmes · Project Manager, QAED (Academic Policy) · Project Manager, QAED (Programme Monitoring and Evaluation) · Project Manager, QAED (Programme Development) · Head of QAE · Head of Academic Administration · Deputy Head of Academic Administration · Operations Director · Director, International Office · International Office Manager · Head of IT Services · Programme Development Director, GBS/ Chair of APEL Committee · HR Manager · Lecturer Development & Support/ Programme Director, Teaching and Learning Department · Head of Marketing	*Discussion on experience of implementing quality assurance throughout the institution.*
10:00 – 10:40	11. Subcommittees of the APC: i. Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC) ii. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee (QAED)	· Project Manager, QAE (Programme Development) (and convenor of PPRC) · Programme Development Director, GBS/ Chair of APEL Committee · Deputy Head, Cork Campus · Group Head of Apprenticeships in Limerick Campus · Careers and Employability Advisor · Head of Griffith College Professional Academy · Head Librarian (and convenor of QAES) · Head of Faculty of Law · Lecturer, Faculty of Business · Faculty Administrator, Limerick Campus · Programme Director, LLB (Hons), Cork Campus	*Discuss role of the relevant sub-committee in the governance and monitoring of the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures, and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.*
10:40 – 11:00	Comfort break		

11:10 – 11:50	12. Subcommittees of the APC: (i) Education Learning and Development Group (ELDG) and (ii) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee	· Lecturer Development & Support/ Programme Director, Teaching and Learning Department · Head of the Digital Learning Department (DLD) · Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement · Learning Technologist · Head of Learning Support · Learning Support Coordinator · Project Manager, QAED · Chair, EDI Committee · Project Manager, QAE (and convenor of EDI Committee) · Lecturer and Programme Director, Faculty of Law · HR Generalist	*Discuss the governance and monitoring of the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures, and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.*
11:50 – 12:00	Comfort break		
12:00 – 12:40	13. Heads of Schools / Department	· Head of Faculty, Graduate Business School · Head of Faculty, Professional Accounting · Head of Faculty, Design · Head of Faculty, Professional Academy · Head of Faculty, Pharmaceutical Sciences Innopharma Education · Head of Faculty, Leinster School of Music and Drama · Head of Faculty, Law (and Professional Law) · Head of Faculty, Business · Head of Faculty, Creative Arts and Media Studies · President, Pulse College (Music Production and Animation) · Head of Faculty, Computing	*Discuss how the institution monitors the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.*
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch		

13:45 – 14:25	14. Programme Directors and Academic Staff	· Programme Director, Innopharma Education · Programme Director, Graduate Business School · Programme Director, BA in Bar Management (Apprenticeship) · Programme Director, Faculty of Computing · Programme Director, Faculty of Design · Programme Director, Faculty of Business · Programme Director, Pulse College · Programme Director, Psychology · Programme Director, GBS Limerick · Programme Director, Law · Programme Director, Law, Cork · QAE Officer (as Observer)	*Discuss how the institution monitors the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.*
14:30 – 15:10	15. Faculty Administrators and Academic Administration	· Faculty Administrator, Cork Campus · Faculty Administrator, Limerick Campus · Faculty Administrator, Faculty of Business (and Chair, FA Meeting) · Faculty Administrator, Faculty of Design · Faculty Administrator, T&L and Psychology · Faculty Administrator, GC Professional Academy · Programme Administration Manager, Innopharma Education · Faculty Administrator, Pulse College · Deputy, Head of Academic Administration · Examinations Officer · Learner Services Officer, Academic Administration · Learner Services Officer, Academic Administration · QAE Officer (as Observer)	*Discuss how the institution monitors the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.*
15:10 – 15:40	Private Review Team Meeting		

15:40 – 16:20	16. Managers and Officers of Student Support Services, e.g. Careers Officer, Student Experience Manager, Counsellors etc.	· Head of Learning Support · Learning Support Coordinator · Head of Student Activities · Student Activities Co-ordinator · Careers Advisor, SCR campus · Career and Industry Liaison Officer, Cork campus · Learner Engagement · HR Generalist (re: Counselling Service) · Operations Manager, Pulse College · Apprenticeship – Academic Success Coach [Bar Management] · Manager, International/Global Engagement Office · Alumni Officer	
16:20 – 16:30	Comfort break		
16:30 – 17:10	17. Graduates and Alumni	· Graduate, BA (Hons) in Audio & Music Technology, 2023/24 [Pulse College] · Graduate, HC in HealthCare Support Practice/Advanced Healthcare Assistant Practitioner [Apprenticeship] · Graduate, MSc in Big Data Analysis · Graduate, MSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management · Graduate, BA (Hons) in Interior Architecture · Graduate, BA (Hons) in Business, Cork · Graduate, BA (Hons) in Journalism/MA in Communication and Digital Media · Graduate, MSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management · Graduate, MSc in International Business · Graduate, Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance Management	
17:10 - 17:40	Private Review Team Meeting	*Day 2 debrief*

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2025

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09:00 - 09:15	Institutional Coordinator	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement	*Preparatory meeting for Day 3*
09:15 – 09:55	18. Third party partnerships and collabora-tions (i.e. aca-demic national and transnation-al)	· Programme Manager, Training Office, ESS Ltd (Collaborative Partner) · Director of Post Graduate Programmes & Research, Innopharma Education (Collaborative Partner) · President, Pulse College (Collaborative Partner) · HR Advisor, Nursing Homes Ireland · AHAP Apprenticeship Consortium Steering Groups (CSGs) · Learning and Development Network Manager, Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet · Irish Institute of Pensions Management (IIPM) · Director of International Office, Hebei Finance University · National President, Network Ireland · Apprenticeship workplace mentor - Sunhill Nursing Home (AHAP Apprenticeship)	*To discuss arrangements re QA/ QE including monitoring with collaborative providers and partners in industry.*
09:55 – 10:05	Comfort break		
10:05 – 10:45	19. External Stakeholders (i.e. ATP, indus-try, community, third mission)	· MD, Kube Kitchens and Interiors, Sandyford, Dublin 18 · Manager, Styletex Ltd · CEO, Donore Credit Union · Marketing and Business Dev Manager, Dubco Ireland Credit Union · Chair, Tech Industry Alliance	*To discuss arrangements re QA with PSRBs and other industry and community partners.*
10:45 – 11:15	Private Team Meeting		
11:15 – 11:55	20. Interna-tionalisation: students	· BA (Hons) in Music Production, Year 3 [Pulse College] · MSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management · BA (Hons) in Business (HRM), year 3 · BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance, year 2 · MSc in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology, Innopharma · BA (Hons) in Business (Marketing), year 3 · English Language	*Session on international student engagement in the institution, particularly the student learning experience.*
11:55 – 12:05	Comfort break		

12:05 – 12:45	21. International-isation: manage-ment and staff	· Director, International/Global Engagement Office · Manager, International/Global Engagement Office · Senior International Student Services and Admissions Officer · Manager, Student Mobility · Global Student Mobility Manager, Greater China and Mongolia · Global Student Mobility Manager, Europe and Gulf Region · Head of Faculty, Griffith Institute of Language (GIL) · Programme Director, Certificate in International Foundation Studies · EAP Director of Studies · Faculty Administrator, Innopharma Education	*To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement in Internation-al Education.*
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch		
13:45 – 14:25	22. Manage-ment and staff involved in IT, Library Services, Events, etc	· Group Head of IT Services Department · IT Operations Manager, IT Services · System Administrator & Service Desk Lead, IT Services · Head Librarian · Librarian, Griffith College - SCR campus · Librarian, Griffith College - Cork campus · Library Assistant, Griffith College - Limerick campus · Librarian, Innopharma Education · General Manager, Griffith Halls of Residence (GHR) · Sales Manager for Conference Centre	*To discuss relevant procedures that support QA & QE among all staff.*
14:25 – 14:35	Comfort break		

14:35 15:15	23. Management and Staff involved in HR and Staff Development, Careers.	· HR Manager · HR Administrator · Head of Faculty, Business · Lecturer Development & Support/ Programme Director, Teaching and Learning Department · Head of the Digital Learning Department (DLD) · Learning Technologist (DLD) · System Administrator; Staff Training and Development · IT Department - Themis Project Team & Steering Committee; Lecturer; Chair, EDI Committee · Project Manager, QAE (and convenor, EDI Committee/Athena Swan coordinator) · HR Generalist (re: Counselling Service)	*To discuss relevant procedures that support QA & QE among all staff.*
15:15 – 15:25	Comfort break		
15:25 – 16:05	24. Management and Staff involved in Finance, Estates and Capital Investment	· President · Finance Director · Operations Director · Heads of Campus, Limerick · Heads of Campus, Cork · Facilities Manager · Head of Faculty, Graduate Business School · Director of Academic Programmes	*To consider funding prospects and opportunities to further develop the campus facilities to support teaching, research and the wider student experience.*
16:05 - 17:30	Private Review Team Meeting		*Day 3 debrief*

DAY 4: THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2025

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
9:00 – 11:00	Private Review Team Meeting		
10:30 - 11:00	QQI meets with Institutional Coordinator	· Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement · Director of Academic Programmes	*To gather feedback*
11:00 – 11:30	QQI meets with Review Team		*To discuss review team's key findings*
11:30 – 12:00	Private Review Team Meeting		
12:00 – 12:30	Meeting with President and Director of Academic Pro-grammes	· President · Director of Academic Programmes	
12:35 – 13:05	Oral Report	• President, • Senior Management Team and invited Griffith College representatives	
13:05 – 14:00	Lunch reception		

Glossary

Acronym/Term	Definition/meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
APC	Academic and Professional Council
APEL/APL	Accredited Prior Experiential Learning/ Accredited Prior Learning
APRs	Annual Programme Reviews
AQR	Annual Quality Report
ATP	Admission/Access, Transfer and Progression
BoD	Board of Directors
CAO	Cantrel Applications Office
CINNTE	Name/branding for QQI's first external HEI review cycle
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ECCTIS	Provides information, advice and opinion on academic, vocational and professional qualifications and skills from all over the world
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ESG (2015)	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
GenAI	Generative AI capable of generating text, images, videos, or other data using generative models, in response to prompts
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEM	International Education Mark
IP	Institutional Profile
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MAELD	Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development
MB	Management Board
MRV	Main Review Visit
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PD	Programme Directors
PEL	Protection of Enrolled Learners
PETALS	Programme for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning Spaces
PPRC	Programme Proposal and Review Committee
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number

PRP	Performance Review Process
PSRBs	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory and Bodies
QAE	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
QAEC	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-committee
QAED	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SU	Students' Union
SysOps	Systems Operations
THEMIS	Academic Management Information System to manage all learner records from admissions through to graduation