

2025

Irish College of Humanities and
Applied Sciences

2025 Annual Quality Report (Institution)
CASE STUDIES RELATED to
Academic Year September 2023 –
August 2024

CASE STUDIES

Case Studies Guidelines

Guide:

This section provides the institution with the opportunity to provide details of key themes or specific topics arising during the reporting period, as well as more detail on related cross-institutional quality enhancement initiatives that occurred during the reporting period.

In a specific reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific national thematic areas/topics or may invite the institution to submit a case study from a list of topics linked to national policy developments. Themes or topics may also be identified by the institution which arise from specific local initiatives or activities, and/or from national policy initiatives. They should be developmental, reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions, relate to quality, QA and QE and would benefit from wider dissemination. Selected case studies should not have been submitted previously as part of the institution's AQR.

Guidance for Drafting Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length (c. 500 to 1,000 words);
- Have a reasonably short title,
- include the theme, keywords, and an optional short abstract;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Avoid long descriptions of processes, but rather focus on the any challenges encountered (and how these were overcome) and impacts (intended and unintended) achieved;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

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

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CASE STUDY 3

Title: Reappraising the TeSLA framework - Assessing the quality of e-assessment

Theme: The application of external standards to internal processes

Keywords (2-3 words): E assessment, TeSLA Standards

Insert Case Study 3 below

Description

While we very much value our autonomous policy generation space, as a small independent provider, the College relies on evidence-based sectoral directives in the formulation of robust QAE. This does not involve a parroting of directives but thoughtful integration with due consideration to organisational culture. One example which arose during the reporting period pertains to quality assurance of e-assessment. The Horizon 2020 TeSLA project (Adaptive Trust-based e-Assessment System for Learning), in alignment with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), was developed to address challenges in online assessment. Initially focusing on learner authentication and authorship verification, the TeSLA framework, which was published in 2019, aimed to create a framework that supported higher education institutions in implementing reviewing, evaluating and continuously improving e-assessment procedures. The value of the tool from our perspective was that it specifically addressed e-assessment which was a useful distillation from the broader assessment context. The framework consists of eight standards with accompanying “indicators” and “minimum evidence requirements”:

1. Policies, structures and processes for the quality assurance of e-assessment
2. Learning assessment
3. Authenticity, transparency and authorship
4. Infrastructure and resources
5. Learner support
6. Teaching staff
7. Learning analytics
8. Public information

It remains a key support framework for assessing the quality of e-assessment internally and the College undertook a round table review focussing on the continued efficacy framework chaired by the QA Officer and included senior Academic Staff, the IT Manager and the Educational Technologist.

Analysis

It was firstly acknowledged that the TeSLA Standards are widely dispersed across the suite of policies and procedures and that considerable generation has occurred since they were published in 2019. But it was also very much the case that the Standards offered a very useful tool in assessing this policy progression which coincidentally coincided with Institutional Re-engagement with QQI. Apart from discussions centring on the need to update some of the terminology used in the standards, there was general consensus that the framework remained surprisingly robust. Clusters around stakeholders (e.g. Learner Support and Teaching Staff) were considered optimal with perhaps some potential to extend that approach to technology specialists perhaps through a revision of Standard 4. It was also suggested that Standard 3 may benefit from extension and elaboration to incorporate the breadth of significance of AI in assessment. There was some discussion as to whether Indicator 6 of Standard, captured the complexity of GDPR requirements but a retention of a generic indicator was deemed satisfactory. While references in Standard 2 were acknowledged, it was also felt there was scope to include standards on affordances most especially in the context of diversity and inclusion with reference to universal design. Scalability and transferability, most especially across modes of learning, (e.g. Blended to Online Only) was also identified as important indicator that might be included. Greater specificity around usability, perhaps in the form of stakeholder feedback was also suggested.

Outcome and Implications

It was generally agreed that the TeSLA Framework retained relevance and was a remained a robust assurance support instrument with strong symmetry with the College's approach to quality assuring e-assessment. However, the issues raised the possibility of blind-spots and, while the QAE Officer was confident that most of these had been addressed through policy generation in the intervening five-year period since the publication of the framework, it was suggested that the possible expansions and identified gaps would serve as a useful auditing exercise. The QAE Officer was tasked with exploring the following:

- Assess the feasibility of refiguring and extending the stakeholder-based approach to IT and ET management
- Assess whether the current suite of QAE policies and procedures adequately addresses the role of AI in the formation and delivery of e-assessment
- Assess whether the current suite of QAE policies and procedures adequately addresses scalability of assessment types across modes of learning
- Assess whether assessment issues as they relate to diversity and inclusion could be better clarified and/or specified in QAE documents

- Assess whether principles of universal design are sufficiently visible within policies and procedure relating to e-assessment.

References

Foerster, M., Gourdin, A., Huertas, E., Möhren, J., Ranne, P. & Roger Roca (2019). *Framework for the Quality Assurance of E-Assessment*. TeSLA. <https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/D4.7-Framework-screen-TeSLA-2606.pdf>