



National Academic Integrity Network

Terms of Reference 2025-2026

Background

The National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), established in 2019 by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is a peer network of higher and further education institutions and associated organisations established to foster a national understanding of academic integrity and what it means in the higher education context. The network aims to inform, educate, support positive behavioural change, and explore effective ways to cultivate and promote practices consistent with the imperatives of academic integrity.

The quality of qualifications and the trust and value attributed to educational achievements are inextricably linked with academic integrity. Plagiarism, collusion and exam cheating have been long-standing challenges for education institutions, however, the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence, methods of data manipulation and agencies offering contract cheating or similar services present new and dynamic threats to academic integrity. It is certain that these threats will become more sophisticated and present more complex issues for educators. NAIN has an important role to play in advocating for and providing leadership in the field of academic integrity, developing and publishing guidelines and educational materials and supporting educational providers and institutions in upholding the highest standards of academic integrity.

Aims

The aim of NAIN is to:

- 1. Empower NAIN Members**
Equip NAIN members with the tools, resources, and support needed to champion academic integrity and embed it meaningfully within their institutions.
- 2. Foster Institutional Ownership**
Encourage a strong sense of ownership and advocacy for NAIN's mission across all levels of further and higher education.
- 3. Strengthen Stakeholder Relationships**
Build and sustain collaborative relationships with key stakeholders to promote shared progress and sector-wide alignment on academic integrity.

4. **Enhance Visibility and Representation**
Support NAIN members to actively represent the network at national and international events, raising the profile of academic integrity and facilitating knowledge exchange.
5. **Develop and Disseminate Resources**
Create, refine, and disseminate practical, high-quality resources that respond to stakeholder needs and reflect evolving challenges in academic integrity.
6. **Advance Research and Scholarship**
Promote and support targeted research that informs policy, enhances best practices, and ensures NAIN's work remains evidence-based and forward-looking.
7. **Align with Policy and Regulation**
Ensure NAIN's activities are aligned with national regulatory frameworks, particularly those of QQI, to reinforce consistency and credibility. This includes but is not limited to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and Amendment of the Act (2019).
8. **Engage in Broader Initiatives**
Actively contribute to national, European and international academic integrity initiatives, ensuring NAIN's work remains relevant and influential in a global context.
9. **Promote Collaborative Innovation**
Encourage sectoral collaboration on innovative projects and assessment practices that uphold integrity, fairness, and academic excellence.
10. **Lead Advocacy Efforts**
Champion academic integrity through advocacy and awareness-raising, engaging stakeholders at all levels to foster a culture of honesty, responsibility, and ethical practice.

The Network has a further role in terms of raising awareness of academic integrity and related issues to other relevant stakeholders.

The Network may establish working groups for the purpose of meeting these objectives.

Membership

The network comprises of a Chair, ex officio members from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and nominated members, including learners (e.g. student union representatives), from education providers, institutions, agencies and organisations which have an interest in further and higher education and training, and academic integrity. A full list can be found in Appendix 1.

Each CEO, Director of FET, Registrar, or equivalent is invited to affirm, change, or add to their NAIN members, usually at the start of each academic year. Normally, a maximum of four individuals per institution/organisation may be nominated. The NAIN Chair is appointed by QQI in consultation with representatives of the sector.

NAIN may also advise related agencies and departments of work ongoing or recently completed, e.g. the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, SOLAS. QQI acts as the coordinator of the Network and provides administrative support.

Governance

Governance of the Network is provided by a Steering Committee comprising of the NAIN Chair, Deputy Chair representatives from further and higher education institutions, private institutions and student representatives and the QQI Academic Integrity Executive. The Steering Committee meets prior to plenary Network meetings to agree the agenda and to discuss any issues arising and at other times as required.

The NAIN Strategy outlines the mission, values, objectives and performance indicators for the Network. The Strategy will be formally reviewed and revised at a minimum of every three years. It may be necessary to revise the Strategy at more frequent intervals if there are significant changes in the academic integrity landscape.

Meetings

Plenary meetings are scheduled quarterly. Normally two meetings are conducted online and two in-person. NAIN members can offer to host the in-person meetings or members can also be approached by QQI. NAIN members are invited and encouraged to actively participate in these meetings. The Network may invite observers to meetings/parts of meetings, as appropriate to its work. The meeting outcomes are disseminated within their institutions and organisations by NAIN member(s).

Shortly after each meeting the key points as agreed are circulated by email to all NAIN members. A detailed note of each meeting is circulated at a later stage.

Working Groups

The Network may convene Working Groups to achieve its objectives, as set out in the NAIN Strategy. Each Working Group has a Chair, and a Deputy Chair as needed. Chairs are responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings. QQI provides administrative support for the Working Group meetings as required.

Each Working Group has its own ToRs which are published on the NAIN website. Chairs of the Working Groups will provide periodic updates to the Steering Committee. Working Groups produce material for the consideration and agreement of the overall Network membership.

Communication

Meetings and communications with the Network are managed by QQI through the academicintegrity@qqi.ie email address. All communications, including meeting invitations, minutes, news items, etc., are circulated through this address to members and other stakeholders as agreed. QQI also hosts the NAIN webpage: [National Academic Integrity Network \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.nationalacademicintegritynetwork.ie).

Term of Office

The Terms of Reference for the network are reviewed annually in light of objectives for the coming twelve months.

Appendix 1. NAIN Membership September 2025

Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD)	NAIN Chair
Atlantic Technological University (ATU)	National College of Ireland (NCI)
Cavan and Monaghan ETB	National Forum on Research Integrity (NFRI)
CCT College Dublin	National Tertiary Office (NTO)
City of Dublin ETB	National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)
Cork ETB	Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI)
Donegal ETB	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
Dublin Business School (DBS)	Student Affairs Ireland (SAI)
Dublin City University (DCU)	South East Technological University (SETU)
Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)	Technological University Dublin (TUD)
Further Education Support Service (FESS)	Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)
Galway and Roscommon ETB	The Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)
Griffith College	The Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)
Hibernia College	Tipperary ETB
Higher Education Authority (HEA)	Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
IBAT College	Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ)
ICD Business School	University College Cork (UCC)
Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)	University College Dublin (UCD)
Irish College of Humanities & Applied Sciences (ICHAS)	University of Galway
Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)	University of Limerick (UL)
Kildare and Carlow ETB	Waterford and Wexford ETB
Kilkenny and Carlow ETB	
Laois and Offaly ETB	
Library Association of Ireland (LAI)	
Limerick and Clare ETB	
Louth and Meath ETB	
Marino Institute of Education (MIE)	
Mary Immaculate College (MIC)	
Maynooth University (MU)	
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim (ETB)	
Munster Technological University (MTU)	