

Quality in Irish Higher Education: An Overview of the 2025 AQR Thematic Analyses

Andrea Durnin (Senior Manager)

Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Overview: 2025 AQR Thematic Analyses

- System-level analysis of Annual Quality Reports 2025
- AQRs, prepared in accordance with QQI's quality assurance (QA) monitoring framework.
- 2 reports: 15 public HEIs & 6 independent/private HEIs



Purpose of synthesis reports

- Sector-wide overview of QA developments
- Supports transparency & sectoral learning
- Complements external QA insights
- Identifies sector-wide themes
- Informs policy & practice
- Encourages collaboration



Methodology

- **Iterative Qualitative Analysis** - MAXQDA software
- **Coding Framework** - based on the AQR template
- **AI-Driven Thematic Analysis** - MAXQDA Tailwind
- **Extraction & Synthesis**
- **Proofreading:** MS Copilot (Proofreader Agent)



Thematic Analysis

Collaborative & Transnational Provision
Data Academic Integrity & GenAI
Staff Development & Communities of Practice
Management & Leadership
Sustainability & Climate Action
Curriculum Reform
Strategic Planning & Alignment
Digital Transformation
Internationalisation
Programme Development & Review
Societal & Community Engagement
Inclusivity and Equity Funding
Student Experience
Engagement & Supports
Graduate Attributes
Work-Integrated Learning
Research
CINNTE Reviews
Cybersecurity QA Indicators & Benchmarking
Teaching, Learning & Assessment
Internal Monitoring & Review Governance

Strategic Planning & Alignment



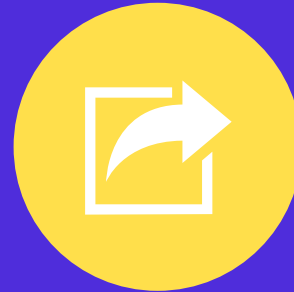
Multi-year strategic plans
- Emphasis on inclusivity, equity, and societal engagement



Common goals - student success, sustainability, digital transformation.



Data-driven approaches and benchmarking



Forward-looking goals



**Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann**
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Governance, Management, Leadership

- Structural evolution & leadership renewal
- Strengthened governance frameworks
- Student representation in governance
- QA leadership roles
- Policy development



Internal Monitoring & Review

• Public HEIs:

- Periodic reviews, annual monitoring are standard.
- Implementation of external review recommendations (CINNTE) is ongoing.
- Digital tools increasingly support monitoring and review.
- Student feedback and engagement.

Private/Independent HEIs:

- Programme reviews, policy updates
- Programme development aligned with NFQ and other statutory/regulatory requirements.
- Governance structures to support IQA framework
- Student feedback and engagement.

Sustainability & Climate Action

Strategic priority and integration of sustainability goals

Governance and Leadership

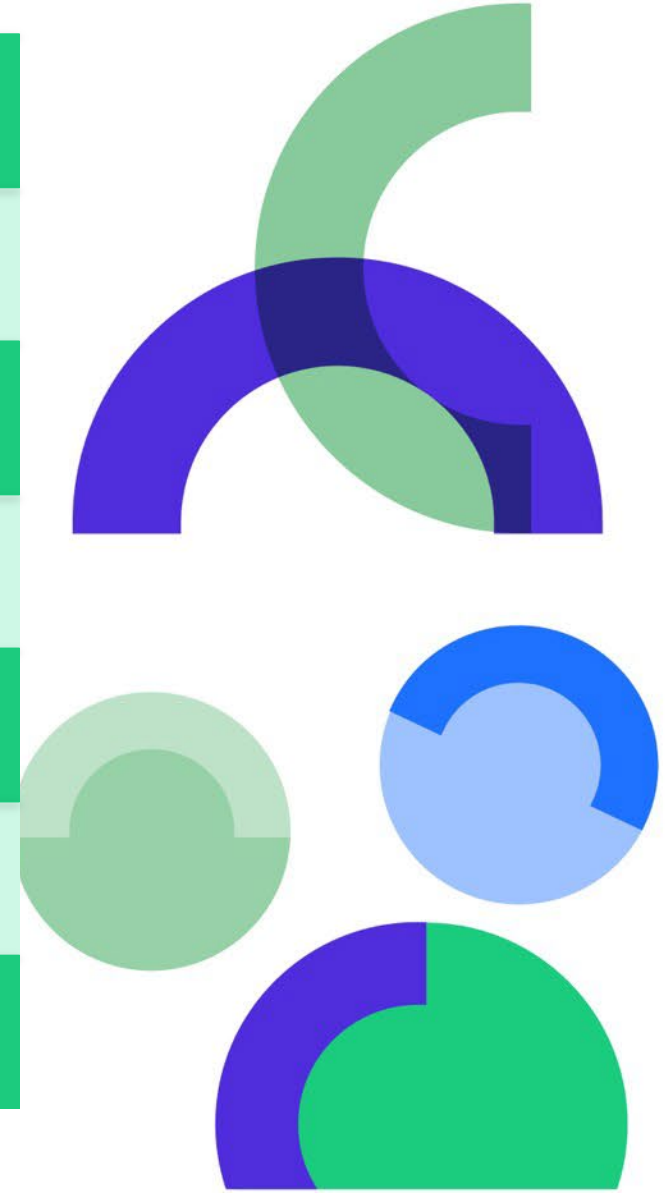
Operational actions - reducing environmental impact

Curriculum development - embedding sustainability

Research and Innovation

Stakeholder Engagement

External Recognition



Student Experience

Student Voice

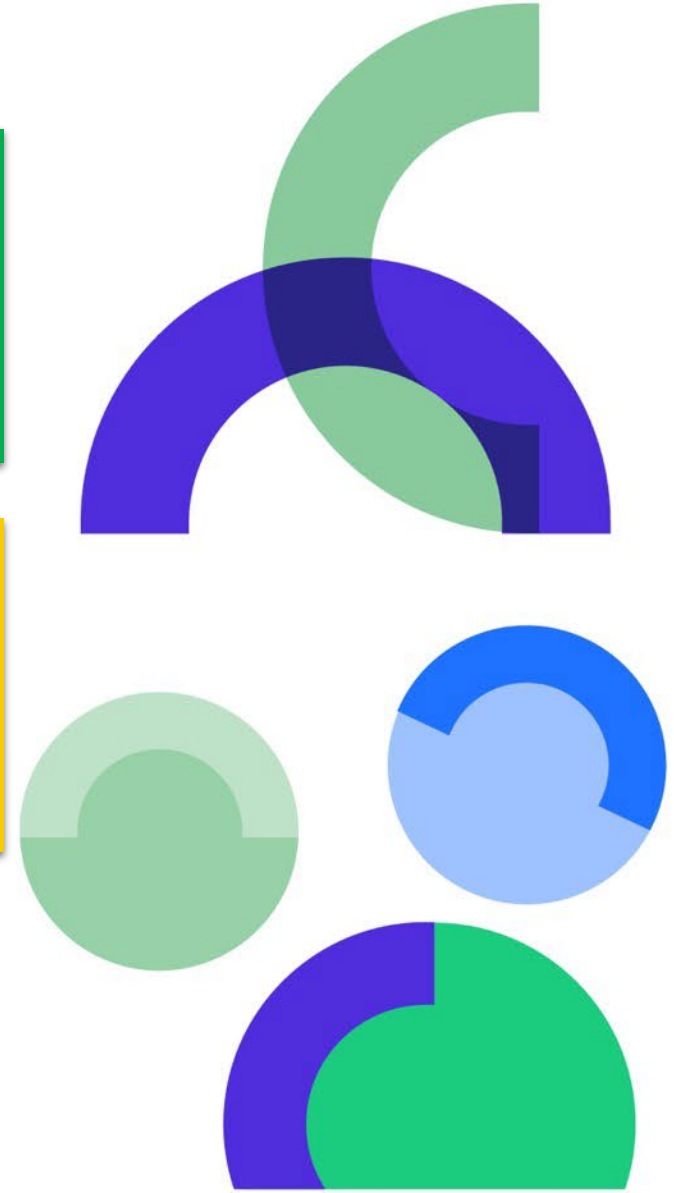
Support Services

Digital
Integration

Student
Partnership

Inclusivity

Continuous
Improvement



Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Digital Transformation and Integration

GenAI Impact & Integrity

Active & Inclusive Pedagogies

Continuous Improvement in QA activities

Strong focus on Student Partnership



Internationalisation: Key Themes



Strategic
partnerships

Transnational
Education (TNE)

Curriculum and
programme
innovation

Student
recruitment,
experience &
support services

Governance and
QA Alignment



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Academic Integrity

Policy Updates and GenAI Response

Training & Awareness

Assessment adaptation and redesign using authentic and multi-layered approaches

National coordination and sharing of best practice



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Digital Transformation

System
modernisation

Expansion of
blended/online
learning

Use of online
assessment and
feedback tools

Increased use of
digital tools

Enhanced use
of data and
analytics

Aligning digital
transformation
with QA

Focus on digital
accessibility for
all students

Strengthening
digital resilience
and
cybersecurity



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Looking Ahead ...

- GenAI and Digital Transformation
- Sustainability and EDI
- Governance and Strategic Alignment
- Student Experience and Supports
- Programme Review and Flexible Pathways
- Research and External Engagement
- Funding and Resource Constraints
- Cybersecurity



