HOLMES INSTITUTE DUBLIN

CINNTE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

Self-Evaluation Report

Holmes Institute Dublin

October 2026

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Holmes Institute Dublin (**HID**) is an independent higher education provider within the Holmes Education Group (**HEG**), a global, multi-sector education group established in Australia in 1963.

Drawing on HEG's extensive international experience, resources and expertise in higher education, HID is committed to delivering high-quality, accessible education to students from diverse backgrounds.

HID's first intake was in September 2022. We started with one programme, a Bachelor of Arts in Business (Hons) (**BA**), which was validated by QQI in 2021. That programme was recently re-validated in June 2026, with slight modifications, for a further five years.

In 2025, HID successfully applied to QQI to extend the scope of its delivery to Level 9 provision. HID had an MSc in Strategic Information Systems (**MSc**) validated by QQI in June 2025 (first cohort February 2026).

HID also recently completed the TrustEd Ireland process and was approved without conditions.

HID is proud that its learner body represents more than 50 nationalities. HID draws on HEG's longstanding international experience and resources in higher education.

1.2 Compiling this Review

The Self-Evaluation Report (**SER**) was developed as an institution-wide exercise designed to support critical reflection on the effectiveness of HID's quality assurance and enhancement arrangements. While responsibility for coordinating and compiling the SER rested with a small core review team comprising the Dean, Director of Risk and Compliance and Director of Global Engagement, the evaluation drew on evidence and perspectives from across the institution and its wider stakeholder community.

The purpose of the SER process was not simply to describe HID's existing quality assurance arrangements, but to evaluate how those arrangements operate in practice, identify areas of effective practice and areas requiring further development, and establish a focused set of quality enhancement priorities for the next phase of HID's development.

The review team adopted an evidence-based approach drawing on both quantitative and qualitative sources. Evidence considered included:

- institutional and programme-level policies and procedures;
- the HID Quality Assurance Manual (QAM);
- Academic Board and Programme Board records;
- programme monitoring and review documentation;
- admissions, retention, progression and completion data;
- learner feedback, module evaluations and focus-group findings;
- examination and assessment records;
- External Examiner reports and responses;

- staff feedback and professional development records;
- graduate and alumni information, where available;
- benchmarking and external reference points;
- validation and revalidation documentation;
- stakeholder and industry engagement;
- administrative and operational records; and
- evidence of actions taken in response to previous reviews, feedback and monitoring.

The review team considered both the existence of quality assurance processes and the extent to which there was evidence that those processes were effective. Particular attention was therefore given to examples where monitoring or feedback had resulted in a change to policy, practice, programme delivery, assessment, learner support or governance.

The final enhancement priorities were developed by considering the significance of each finding against four broad criteria:

- the potential impact on academic standards and the learner experience;
- the extent to which an identified weakness represented a risk to the effectiveness of HID's QA arrangements;
- the importance of the issue to HID's strategic and organisational development; and
- the extent to which further evidence, monitoring or action was required.

The resulting priorities were then translated into the draft action plan in Section 7.

The core review team was responsible for coordinating the process and ensuring that the SER was coherent, evidence-based and aligned with HID's institutional context. Its role was therefore one of coordination, synthesis and critical review rather than sole ownership of the self-evaluation. The involvement of the wider HID community (via focus groups, surveys, comment rounds) was important in ensuring that the SER reflected different perspectives on the operation of quality assurance, including the perspectives of those responsible for governance, programme delivery, learner support, administration and the learner experience.

The final draft of the review was approved (by correspondence) by the Academic Board prior to submission.

1.3 Executive Summary

Holmes Institute Dublin welcomed its first learners in September 2022. In the four years since, it has moved from a single-programme provider to an institution with extended scope for Level 9 provision. Along the way it has had the BA (Hons) in Business revalidated for a further five years, has had the MSc in Strategic Information Systems validated (first intake February 2026), and has been approved for TrustEd Ireland without conditions. This is HID's first CINNTE review. The review team has approached it as a genuine exercise in self-evaluation rather than a description of existing arrangements, and has tested its conclusions against data, stakeholder feedback and external benchmarks wherever these were available.

HID concludes that its quality assurance arrangements are effective, proportionate and fit for purpose for an institution of its size and stage of development. The QAM provides a coherent and regularly

reviewed foundation for all operations. Governance has been deliberately streamlined, and it benefits from close links with the wider Holmes Education Group while HID retains ownership of its own academic decisions.

The review identified particular strengths in several areas:

- **Admissions:** a robust admissions and document-verification process.
- **Programme design:** a whole-programme approach to design and integrated assessment.
- **Assessment:** 100% administrative verification of examination scripts, reflected in the fact that no appeal has proceeded beyond the recheck stage.
- **Staff:** strong staff continuity, with 91% of lecturers who delivered the first iteration of each BA module still teaching.
- **Learner experience:** classroom-quality ratings that exceed the closest national benchmark in every category.
- **Learner success:** an 85% Stage 1 pass rate among engaged learners, which supports the soundness of the entry criteria.

The review has also been candid about where HID must do better. The findings group into six themes:

1. **Mission and values:** embedding HID's mission and values across the learner journey.
2. **Learner engagement in governance:** moving learner participation from formal representation to active engagement.
3. **Governance and QAM:** maturing governance as a two-programme institution, including a stand-alone Teaching and Learning Committee and a refreshed QAM.
4. **Data and benchmarking:** reducing manual data reconciliation and developing more meaningful benchmarks, particularly for retention.
5. **Graduate outcomes:** strengthening career readiness, graduate-outcome tracking and alumni engagement.
6. **Postgraduate ethos:** consolidating the postgraduate ethos, CPD and the use of physical space as the MSc cohort reaches dissertation stage.

Many of these reflect HID's youth. The graduate population is still small and the first Level 9 dissertations have yet to be completed. Some important questions can therefore only be answered with time and data.

The findings in each section below (and compiled in Section 7) will form the basis of HID's quality enhancement action plan. Several actions are already under way. Implementation will be overseen by the Academic Board and reported through the Programme Boards, and progress will be revisited in HID's ongoing monitoring and in its next institutional review. HID enters its next phase of growth confident in its foundations and committed to continued enhancement.

2 Objective 1 - Governance and Management of Quality

2.1 Mission and strategy

2.1.1 Mission Statement

HID's mission is stated within our **Quality Assurance Manual** (**QAM**) Section 2.3 (Folder 1 – document 2.1) and is also on our website.

The QAM is HID's definitive document which underpins all HID's QA arrangements.

2.1.2 Vision and Values

HID's vision and values are stated within our QAM (Section 2.2) and are also found on our website.

2.1.3 Strategic Direction

HID's strategic direction is based on five connected priorities. These are found on our website (see also Appendix 2.1).

2.1.4 HID's Principles and Goals

HID's Principles and Goals are contained within our QAM (Section 5.5, Table 5.1).

2.1.5 HID's Graduate Attributes

HID's graduate attributes are described in our QAM, (Section 5.5 Table 5.2) and are also outlined on our website.

For HID to be deemed a success, its graduates should have the independence, knowledge, judgement and confidence required to shape their careers and contribute positively to their communities and workplaces.

It should be noted that the HID graduate attributes have been updated for 2026. These are currently out for staff and learners' consultation and are likely to be adopted by next semester. Refer to **HID Graduate Attributes Review** in Folder 4 – document 2.1.

2.1.6 Evaluation

HID considers that its QA arrangements contribute to the fulfilment of its mission and strategy. The QAM is HID's authoritative document, which is the bedrock for all HID's operations. The QAM outlines HID's mission, vision and values, principles and goals and its desired graduate attributes.

HID considers, by virtue of this review, that its delivery and operations to date broadly reflect its mission through learner-centred teaching, academic and welfare support, inclusive practice, international perspectives, and an emphasis on progression and employability. As will be evidenced later in this review, learner surveys show positive classroom-satisfaction results and positive retention performance (see 5.3.2 Retention Reports).

Therefore, it is considered that the stated intention of HID's mission substantially reflects the learners' experiences.

However, in coming to this view, HID must accept certain limitations. For example, HID has only been operational since September 2022 and has had a limited number of graduates completing the BA (Hons) - 159 including the latest graduation. Therefore, evidence concerning graduate employment, career progression, and longer-term outcomes is limited, restricting the extent to which HID can presently demonstrate its achievements as regards graduate pathways.

Whilst anecdotal and/or exploratory evidence suggests that HID students are moving onto further study and into jobs, a greater sample size across cohorts of graduate data is required to come to a final view. Promisingly, by way of a recent exercise of searching LinkedIn for recent HID graduates (see **LinkedIn Anecdotal Evidence**, Folder 5 – document 2.1)**,** there can be a certain degree of confidence that HID students are moving on to a broad range of careers following graduation, including further higher education (at public sector providers in Ireland), employment and self-employment. However, HID does not regard this evidence as a substitute for systematic graduate-outcomes data, which is a project it is prioritising in 2027.

The process of drafting this review also identified a potential gap in the communication of HID's mission and the institution's values to its students and broader stakeholders. Although HID's mission, values and graduate attributes are in our QAM and on our website, ongoing communication and reinforcement of these matters is an area for improvement. For example, in a survey of HID's 3rd year students, only 4 of 19 students who responded to the survey said they were aware of HID's mission. 6 of 19 said they were aware of HID's values. (see Appendix 2.2)

These results are not overly surprising, but they do demonstrate more needs to be done internally to communicate HID's values and mission, and more about who we are, and who and what we hope our graduates become. This reinforcement should occur for both staff and students, and it should begin during recruitment, into induction, and continue throughout the student journey, including at and beyond graduation.

2.2 Governance and management structures

2.2.1 Context

HID's **Governance Charter** (**GC**) (contained in Folder 1 – document 2.2) outlines HID's governance and management structures. The GC was established and presented at our Initial Access to Validation event in 2020 (see Folder 1 – document 2.3). It is due for further review next year.

In early 2023, following the first two intakes, HID's Dean reviewed the GC and the Board and Committee Structure therein (see p. 4 of the GC)[1]. That review found that HID's governance structure was overly complex for an organisation of HID's current operational structure and headcount. A more streamlined committee structure was proposed to be 'rolled in' with various committees being subsumed in other committees[2].

[1] This structure is reflected in the QAM at s. 4.1 - The Establishment and Growth of Governance & Management Structure.

[22] For example, the 27 March 2023 Academic Board minutes contained in Folder 2.

As part of the CINNTE review process, HID's governance arrangements have been evaluated with reference to the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines[3], the QQI Sector-Specific Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers[4] and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)[5].

HID's management structures are broadly aligned with expectations for proportionate and fit-for-purpose governance, academic independence, stakeholder participation, documented decision-making and continuous monitoring and enhancement.

The following is an evaluation of the effectiveness of HID's key governance bodies under the headings of "*Teaching and Learning*" and "*Learners in Academic Governance*".

2.2.1.1 Teaching and learning

Structure: There were initially three committees under the general theme of "Teaching and Learning" in HID's GC[6]. These were: the Teaching and Learning Committee, Professional Development Committee and e-Learning Committee. With only one programme being delivered since September 2022 and a second programme commencing in February 2026, HID determined that there were insufficient full-time staff to warrant a dedicated Professional Development Committee. For the same reason the e-Learning Committee was not initially established (both committees being subsumed under the Teaching and Learning agenda item in the Programme Board (**PB**))[7].

Specifically, for e-Learning, it was agreed, at least initially, that HID should collaborate directly with HIA, where HID would learn and benefit from the similarly named committee which operates in Australia.

This approach is reflective of HID's size, scale and stage of development. QQI guidance provides that governance and QA structures should be appropriate to provider context and that alternative arrangements may be used where scale does not warrant additional internal committees[8].

Effectiveness: Currently Teaching and Learning is a standing agenda item of the PB. HID considers this has worked well. For example, initiatives undertaken by the PB include:

- Developing HID grade criteria and later extending them to level 9.
- Developing groupwork guidelines and involving learners in the initiative.
- Reviewing digital skills support and developing an institutional approach to generative AI.
- Reviewing HID's approach to Academic Integrity - resulting in the appointment of an Academic Integrity Mentor.
- Overseeing CPD and managing a peer review process[9]. Refer to 4.3.1.2 Programme Delivery

[3] https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-08/core-statutory-quality-assurance-guidelines.pdf
[4] https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-2-sector-specific-qa-guidelines-for-private-and-independent-providers.pdf
[5] https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf
[6] Page 4 of the GC.
[7] As of October 2026, there will be two Programme Boards, one for each of HID's programmes. The Teaching and Learning Committee will be standalone and report into both Programme Boards.
[8] Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, s. 1.1, p.5. See also QQI Sector Specific Guidelines s.2 and s.3 pp.1-2.
[9] See for example the Minutes of the Programme Board of 4 April 2025 located in Folder 2.

The development of these initiatives can be tracked through the **PB Minutes** (Folder 2).

These initiatives support the conclusion that a streamlined structure at HID has to date supported the active monitoring and enhancement of teaching and learning, staff development, assessment and academic integrity. Similarly, it was pleasing, in this review, to see these align with QQI expectations for ongoing improvement of teaching and learning and with ESG requirements relating to student-centred learning, teaching staff and continuous programme monitoring.[10]

As HID has now achieved Extension of Scope and has introduced a master's programme and an MSc Programme Board, a broader review of the governance structures will be undertaken with external stakeholder engagement (this is scheduled to take place early next year).

2.2.1.2 Learners in academic governance

Learners are members of both the Academic Board (**AB**) and PB, refer to QAM Section 4.2.5.

At the time of writing this review, the AB has met 15 times. Of the 12 meetings where learners were enrolled in the college and invited to meetings, they attended only half. Learner attendance has been variable at both AB and PB - for example, for the first 6 meetings despite invites and reminders/encouragement to attend, learners attended only two meetings. Feedback from learners indicated this was due to the early start time of the AB (8:30am), which is deliberately set early to accommodate Australian members of the AB.

To encourage broader participation, invitations were then extended to all class representatives. Although this initially increased participation, it has recently again been variable. This is an obvious area for improvement for HID.

In October 2024, HID joined NSTEP. To date, two learners have completed Advanced Representative training with NSTEP[11], one has won a national award and has been engaged with at least three QQI panels to date. All class representatives are encouraged to pursue this opportunity.

The inclusion of learners on both the AB and PB is consistent with QQI and ESG expectations for learner participation in quality assurance and academic governance[12]. However, the attendance data of learners on both boards indicates that formal representation does not always translate into engagement.

2.2.2 HID's collaboration with the wider HEG

The governance and management structures at HID integrate into the wider HEG group. There are tangible links with HIA's Academic Board. For example, the Chair of HID's AB is the Dean, Academic for HIA. The Dean, Academic for HID sits on the HIA Academic Board.

HID is invited to attend HIA's Teaching and Learning Committee meeting and receives its reports and minutes. Likewise, members of HIA's executive attend the HID AB. Such collaboration has resulted in

[10] QQI Core Guidelines, s.5.1–5.3, pp.13-14; ESG 2015, Standard 1.9, p.15.
[11] In fact, the first HID representative to engage in NSTEP training has gone on to gain a digital badge in Introductory Class Rep Training, Advanced Class Rep Training, Representing Diversity Training, Reflective Representation and has also won a Student Engagement Recognition Award for Advanced Academic Representation. He has undertaken three QQI programme reviews as a student reviewer to date, 1 public and 2 private institutions.
[12] ESG 2015, Standard 1.1, p.11 and QQI Core Guidelines, s.7.1(d), p.17.

HID adopting certain academic tools and initiatives that were working at its Australian counterpart, such as the move to Blackboard Ultra from Blackboard Original and the planned pilot of Cadmus (a platform for assessments and better ensuring academic integrity). HIA has also benefitted from HID input, particularly from insights into how HID deals with academic integrity matters.

These links provide HID with access to wider academic expertise and established practice, and support engagement with the broader higher education community. Importantly, however, HID retains responsibility for its own academic decision-making and quality assurance, consistent with the principle of provider-owned QA.

2.2.3 How well is HID's governance structure working?

In addition to HID's consideration above, to evaluate how well the boards are functioning, we sought comments from two individuals: Professor Paul Hawking, the Chair of the AB; and Professor Ellen Hazelkorn, an external member of the AB. A summary of their feedback is provided at Appendix 2.3.

The Dean of HID, Dr. Eileen Buckley-Dhoot evaluated the effectiveness of the PB and its relationship with AB. A summary of Dr. Buckley-Dhoot's feedback is provided at Appendix 2.4.

HID considers that its governance arrangements have been effective and proportionate during its establishment and initial growth. HID also considers that its governance structure is mostly visible and transparent to stakeholders, including learners. Increasing learner participation in HID's governance should be an area of focus going forward.

2.3 QA policy and procedural documentation

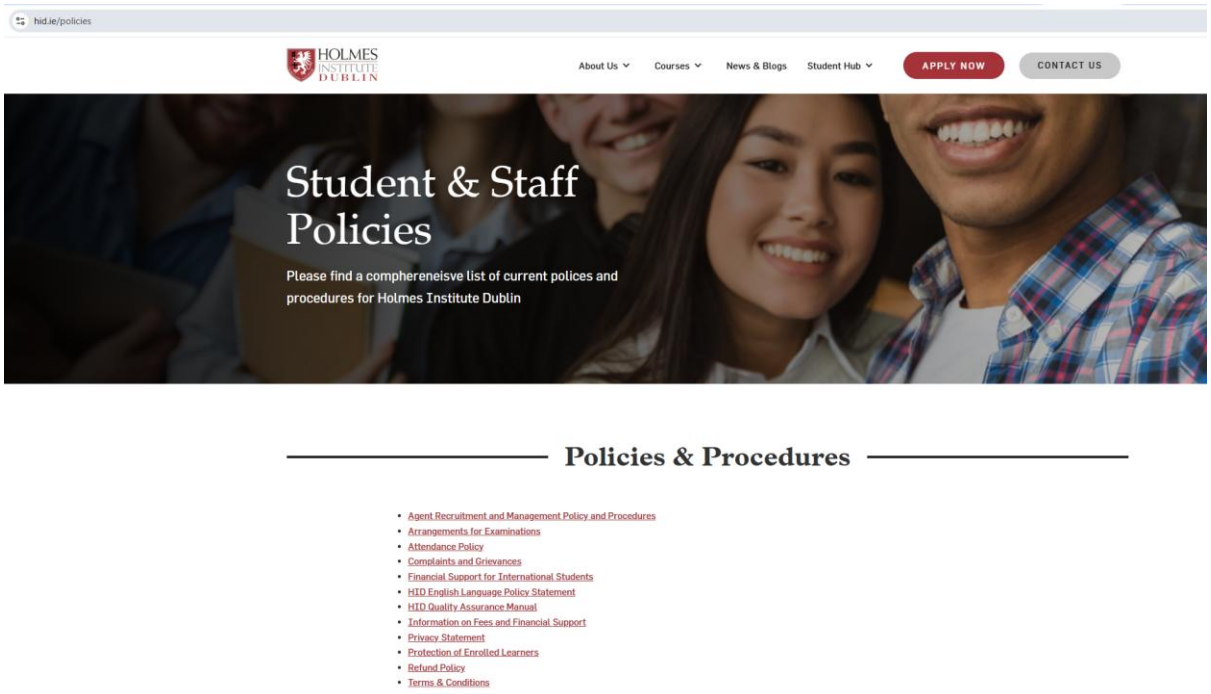
QA policy and procedural documents in the public domain include:

- HID Quality Assurance Manual
- HID Examination Arrangements
- HID Learner Attendance Policy
- HID Complaints and Grievance Policy
- English Language Policy Statement
- HID Privacy Statement
- Protection of Enrolled Learners

These are all contained on the HID website under the "Policies" section.

Further policies/procedures published under this section on HID's website include:

- Agent Recruitment and Management Policy and Procedures
- Financial Support for International Students
- Information on Tuition and Other Fees
- HID Refund Policy
- Holmes Institute Dublin - Terms and Conditions of Enrolment



2.3.1 Evaluation of the effectiveness of HID's QA documentation

The QAM, HID's authoritative governance document, is comprehensive and reviewed and updated annually. Changes and enhancements, aligned with QQI QA policies and guidelines are approved through the AB. HID's QAM is published online, and is shared with students and staff.

Recent updates to the QAM have included additional material arising from HID's Extension of Scope, which is discussed later in this review, as well as amendments reflecting changes to the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) scheme.

All published policies are consistent with the QAM, and where the QAM is revised a check is conducted on any relevant policies which may be affected by such an alteration.

Learners access policies through the student handbook, the QAM or on the HID website. A brief survey of third-year students found that 89% knew where to find HID's QAM, 84% knew where to find HID's policies, while 74% reported having read the QAM[13]. Positively, no respondent expressed concerns about a lack of transparency with HID's policies (see Appendix 2.5).

There have been occasions where it was determined that the QAM may not have been written in easy-to-understand, accessible language. In these instances, rather than paraphrasing or allowing readers to interpret the manual, the QAM itself has been modified, iteratively, to make it more accessible or more "readable" to learners.

Under the recent annual review of the QAM the following enhancements were identified:

- **Update Section 8:** (Ongoing Programme Monitoring), now having undergone our first programme re-validation with QQI.

[13] This question may have been better phrased, as there was likely confusion between having read it or referred to it. It would be surprising for a student to say they had read the full QAM (193 pages), but it is possible that the question may have been interpreted as such.

- **Style change**: at the outset of each major section - reference the applicable ESG standard and list the external policies referenced in the chapters. This has already been revised for Section 9.
- **Restructure:** the manual itself to identify areas of overlap and reorder content.

Appendix 2.6 gives an example of the proposed changes to the QAM Edition 4 (2026/2027).

In short, HID considers its policies and procedures to be systematically reviewed and evaluated and considers them to be visible and accessible to stakeholders.

2.4 Staff recruitment, management and development

The process for recruiting, managing and developing staff is outlined in the QAM (Section 15).

2.4.1 Academic staff

All academic staff have been through the QA process of shortlisting, interviews and, in most cases, a short teaching demonstration pitched at the level the staff member will be employed to teach.

At the time of writing, all staff teaching on academic programmes, except for the programme leader and one full-time lecturer, are hourly paid lecturers (**HPL**).

HID is satisfied that the recruitment and management processes are working well. This is evidenced by the fact there is very little staff turnover, despite most staff being HPL.

Normally staff previously engaged to develop a module for HID will deliver that module. 55% of the original development team who were involved at the inception of HID (in 2020/2021) remain HPLs as at the time of writing. Refer to Section 5.4.

The BA was re-validated in June 2026. 91% of lecturers who taught the first iteration of a module are still teaching on the programme.

For the MSc, 9 of 11 modules are being taught by the same staff who developed them for validation (82% retention).

All staff are suitably qualified, experienced and competent. There is one member of staff teaching the Level 8 qualification (BA) without a level 9 qualification. However, this is at Stage 1 (NFQ Level 6) and is more than compensated for by them holding a teaching qualification and significant relevant industry experience.

HID has an effective succession planning strategy for its teaching staff. Refer to Section 4.3.1.2.

HID take a whole-programme approach to learning and assessment. HID believes that it is very important that staff meet regularly and are familiar with each other's work. This is further enhanced by the formal introduction of integrated assessment and the effective peer review process. The process is described in Appendix 2.7. To date, HID considers this review process to be successful.

2.4.1.1 Academic staff development

There is a significant section of the HID QAM (Section 15) dedicated to staff development.

At the time of writing, the following development initiatives have been conducted:

- staff induction (including longer inductions) and training on Holmes' systems;
- Programme Development Meetings;
- Peer Reviews; and
- on site CPD - e.g., cultural diversity, GDPR, AI seminars etc.

In addition:

- a CPD register is kept for full-time academic staff;
- staff are encouraged to participate in academic scholarship; and
- a Blackboard shell where teaching and learning references referred to at Programme Board are stored.

2.4.2 Non-academic staff

All non-academic staff are recruited through a comprehensive recruitment process, normally after two or three interviews, where the final interview occurs with a senior Director of HID. Staff are usually selected on the basis that they have at least a bachelor's degree, relevant industry experience, and, ideally, previous similar job experience, although none of the aforementioned criteria are individually mandatory. Once selected, staff are taken through a comprehensive onboarding and training on HID's QA.

Where staff request further training or support on processes or on any technology/software that HID uses, such training is always provided.

Where staff have ideas on improvements as to processes, they are encouraged to raise these in weekly operational meetings. At such meetings, staff are consulted on any challenges and opportunities impacting the college that week (see Appendix 2.8 for an example of the agenda of a weekly operations meeting attended by HID's non-academic staff).

2.5 Programme development, validation processes and approvals

The policies, processes and procedures for the validation of new programmes are laid out in Section 7 of the QAM and revalidation is covered in Section 8.4 of QAM. See also Section 5.4 of this document.

2.5.1 Programme development

HID considers that its arrangements for the approval and management of programme development are robust, objective and transparent.

For example, pp. 35 to 38 of the QAM provide what we consider to be clear guidance as to the steps needed to be undertaken to approve and manage the development of a new programme.

Since 2021 HID has successfully validated two major programmes both with an embedded exit award.

Programme Title	QQI Code
MSc in Strategic Information Systems	PG26135
PG Diploma in Science in Strategic Information Systems	PG26136
BA (Hons) In Business	PG24452
Certificate in Business	PG24453

2.5.2 Programme review and revalidation

Similarly, HID is assured that its arrangements regarding programme review and revalidation are equally satisfactory. The process outlined at 8.4 in the QAM provides a clear roadmap for programme re-validation, and this process was recently followed and proved successful, with HID's BA revalidated for a further 5 years in June 2026.

Programme Title	QQI Code
BA (Hons) In Business	PG26810
Certificate in Business	PG26915

2.5.3 Evaluation

As HID have now carried out a comprehensive and successful review of the BA, section 8.4 of the QAM will be reviewed and revised to ensure complete alignment with the QQI revised processes. As part of this process, section 7 of the QAM will also be reviewed.

2.6 Information and data management

HID uses a combination of group and institution-level systems to manage information across the applicant and learner journey. HubSpot is used for applications and admissions. LUNA is the principal student-records system used after the learner is enrolled, supported by tightly controlled Student Registration Sheets and Exam Board Broadsheets. MARS was the predecessor admissions system (decommissioned in September 2025).

HID has taken the opportunity in this review to document the flow of information between these systems and evaluate the effectiveness of access, accuracy, security, retention and reporting controls. An example of the *Learner information flow* is shown at Appendix 2.9**.**

2.6.1 HubSpot - applications and admissions

HubSpot is HEG's current application and admissions customer relationship management system for higher education. HID transitioned from its proprietary MARS software to HubSpot in September 2025. The change was intended to improve data capture, reporting and analysis as HID moved from its establishment phase towards a more developed and data-driven operating model and system.

2.6.2 The Registration Sheet

The Registration Sheet is locked and is only accessible by the Dean, the Registrar or approved delegate. Initially it contains a list of students who are Ready to Enrol. Following a successful registration process, a student's status is moved to Enrolled on Stage 1, see Section 3.2.1.1.

2.6.3 LUNA

LUNA is HID's student-records system. It has been used by HIA for approximately a decade.

LUNA supports Registry, Student Services and other authorised staff in recording and understanding each learner's position and status throughout the student journey. It also records file notes on student interactions with the college. There is also a student view on LUNA, unlike the Registration sheet, which is strictly for internal purposes.

LUNA is used to record and manage:

- students' current contact details;
- registration statuses (which must mirror the Registration sheet);
- file notes;
- final module results approved through the Examination Board process; and
- the downloading of an internal transcript for students to see their grades.

As a centralised student-records system, LUNA provides a consistent source of data across Registry, Student Services and academic functions.

2.6.4 Staff feedback

As part of this review, HID conducted a short interview with registry and student services staff on how they view their role within Holmes' information and data management arrangements, and how they consider Holmes' data assists HID in its operations (see Appendix 2.10 for this feedback).

2.6.5 Evaluation

HID has appropriate systems in place to support evidence-based decision-making, with HubSpot, the Registration Sheet, LUNA and Exam Board Broadsheets providing reliable information across the learner journey. Staff reported that these systems are accurate, well controlled and actively maintained, with established processes for checking discrepancies and keeping records current. However, the current reporting environment remains relatively manual.

Information must often be reconciled across separate systems and spreadsheets, creating additional administrative work and some risk of inconsistency. Greater integration between systems would strengthen governance and institutional oversight.

2.7 Public information and communication

2.7.1 Overview

HID provides public information principally through our website. The website is the primary source of institutional and programme information and is intended to enable prospective learners, enrolled learners, families, employers and other stakeholders to understand HID's identity, programme information and admissions requirements.

HID's approach is informed by the principle that public information should be clear, accurate, accessible, relevant and current. This is particularly important for HID because most of its learners are

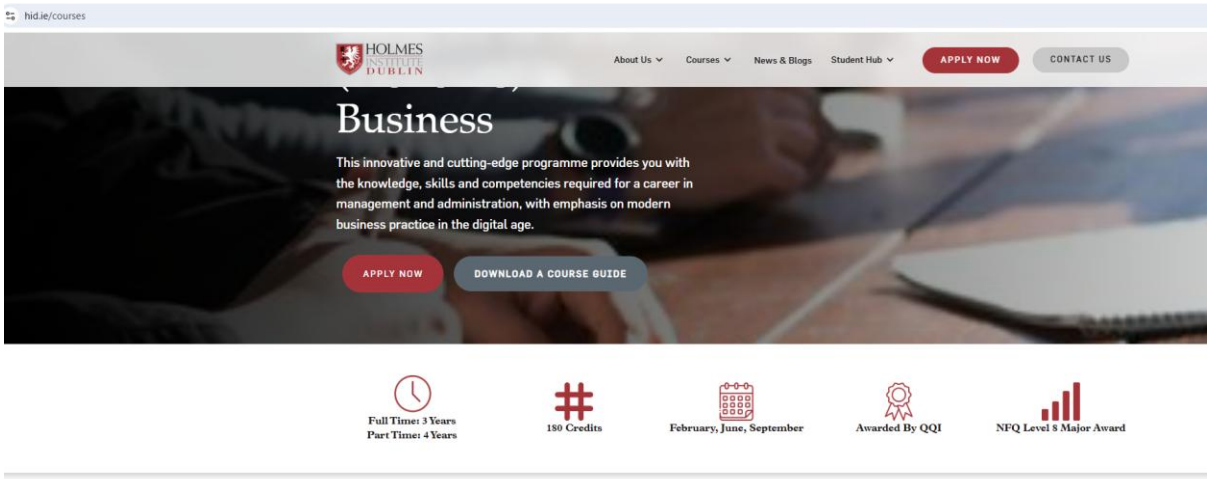
international and families are making significant educational, financial and relocation decisions based on information provided to them before enrolment and while still outside Ireland.

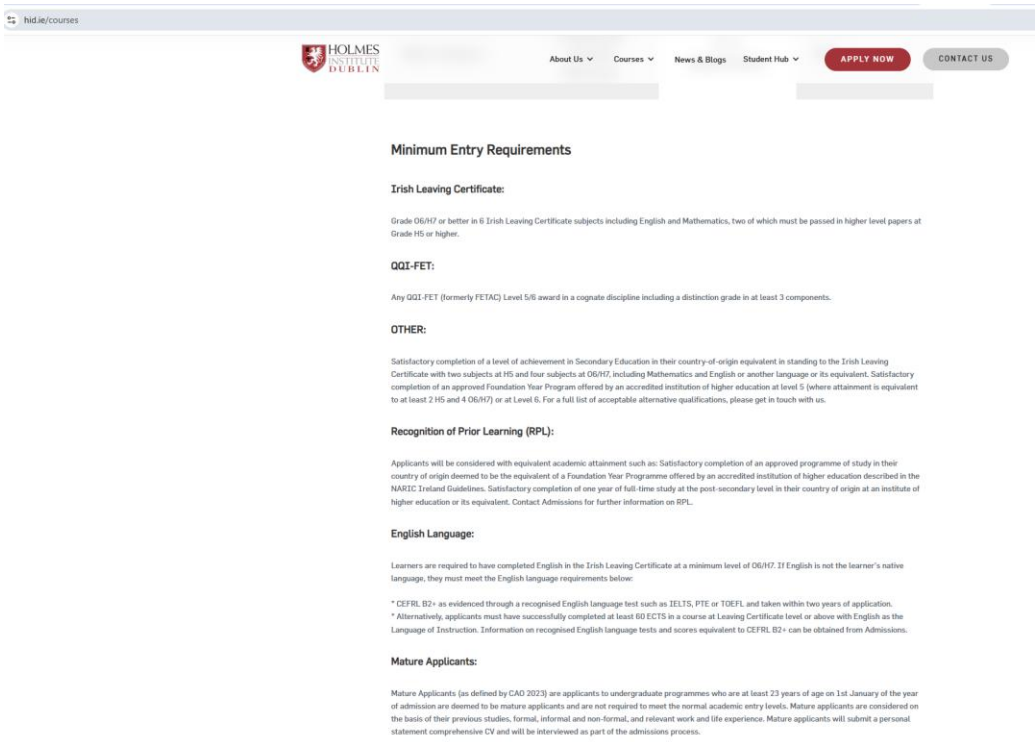
The arrangements that HID recently documented through its TrustEd Ireland application process provide a useful foundation for HID's wider public-information responsibilities and are summarised further below.

2.7.2 Institutional and programme information for prospective learners

HID publishes information about its institutional background, location, contact details and relationship with the wider Holmes Education Group. HID's public information describes the programmes offered, the intended purpose of each programme and the academic and professional opportunities available to graduates.

Programme information is published on the website, where it is easily accessible to prospective learners (screenshots below):





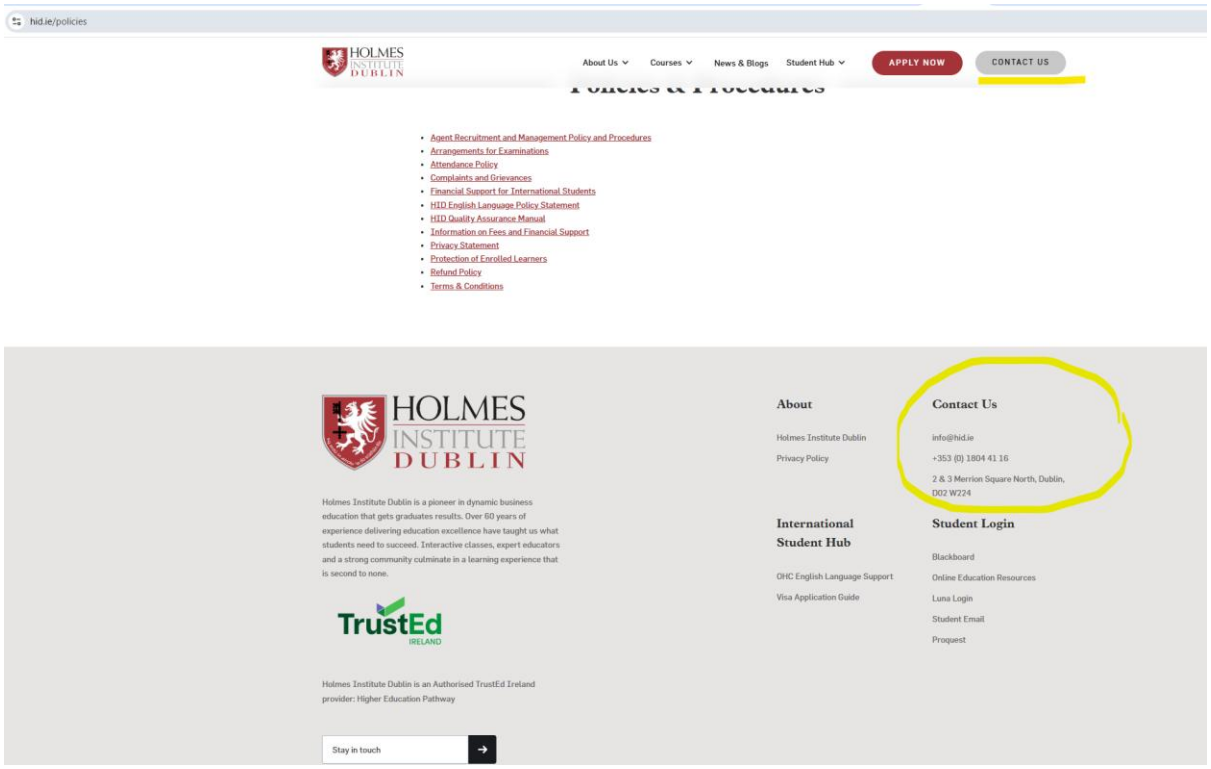
Offer Letters (Folder 5 – documents 2.2 & 2.3), issued to students, provide specific information including the intake start date, fees, conditions of admission and relevant terms and conditions.

Critically, and as indicated in section 2.3 above in this review HID publishes vital information concerning the Protection of Enrolled Learners and its Refund Policy. HID also publishes its QAM on our website.

Once a student applicant, or an agent on their behalf, expresses their interest in studying with HID, applicants are communicated with through HubSpot or directly by email.

Prospective international learners receive additional information concerning immigration requirements, medical insurance, accommodation, transport and the estimated cost of living in Ireland. The **Pre-Arrival Guide** (Folder 4 – document 2.2) and country-specific visa checklists supplement the website and assist applicants in preparing for study and relocation.

HID publishes its contact details through which prospective and current learners can make direct queries to the Institute.



2.7.3 Fees and other costs

HID is transparent about its fees on its website as previously shown.

All Offer Letters prior to acceptance communicate HID's fees. Further incidental costs as well as accessing financial support and hardship are also disclosed to its students in the Information on Tuition and Other Fees Document.

2.7.4 Marketing, social media and external representatives

HID uses its website and social-media channels to communicate institutional news, programme information, learner activities and how to apply. Publicity materials are developed or approved centrally. HEG's Director of Global Engagement approves all brochures, flyers and social-media content before publication to ensure that only accurate information is being published to the market.

Where authorised education agents use the HID name or logo, materials require institutional approval. Education agents receive current programme and admissions information through training and an online resource library. Where an agent shares unapproved or misleading information, they risk disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of their agency contract.

2.7.5 Communication with enrolled learners

Once learners enrol, public information is supplemented by direct institutional communication through email, Blackboard, Extended Induction, the Student Handbook, announcements from academic and support staff and the physical noticeboard on campus. See also sections 3.4 and 4.6.1.

Learners receive information at regular intervals about their timetable, assessment, academic integrity, examinations, complaints, appeals, learner representation and available supports.

2.7.6 Staff feedback

To evaluate the effectiveness of our outbound communications, HID interviewed our Group Marketing Manager. Her feedback is found at Appendix 2.11.

2.7.7 Evaluation

HID has established a substantial body of public and learner-facing information. HID has recently reviewed its external-facing information as part of its application to join the TrustEd scheme, where it was approved without conditions. However, maintaining clear, accurate, current and accessible information is an ongoing institutional responsibility rather than a one-off exercise. As programmes, policies, fees, systems and learner needs evolve, HID must continue to review and refine how information is presented, governed and kept up to date.

2.8 Third-party arrangements

HID has no third-party arrangements.

2.9 Findings

- 1. Embed HID's mission, vision and values more prominently throughout the student journey.
- 2. Continue to measure awareness of the mission, vision and values through periodic staff and learner surveys (and once knowledge of these is better established, asking more directly if HID lives up to its mission and values).
- 3. Establish a graduate outcomes framework to track HID graduate outcomes and destinations as HID's graduate population grows and outcomes data improves.
- 4. Review HID's governance structure next year (a year after the start of delivery of a second programme) and consider HID's ongoing governance requirements (particularly the feedback of Professors Hawking, Hazelkorn and Dr. Buckley-Dhoot).
- 5. Consider the ongoing scope of embedding various committees in the PB and whether those committees should now be stand-alone.
- 6. Actively work on strategies to encourage better student engagement in HID's governance structures.
- 7. Increase awareness of students of where to find the QAM key policies through regular updates and reminders with a benchmark to increase awareness about HID's policies to 90%+.
- 8. Consider CPD staff development as HID's faculty and student body numbers increase - implement a more formal seminar CPD series using resources from the HEG (12-18 months).
- 9. Progressively reduce manual reconciliation between systems through improved integration, defined completeness checks and clearer processes for resolving status discrepancies, while exploring greater use of LUNA for attendance, timetabling, fees and student self-service.
- 10. Formalise a periodic review cycle for public information, with clear ownership, so that website content, programme information, fees, policies, handbooks and agent materials are routinely checked, updated and superseded versions removed.
- 11. Use feedback and usage data for continual improvement, including applicant queries, learner feedback and website analytics, to improve accessibility, navigation, FAQs, calls to action, partner materials and pre-arrival information.

3 Objective 2 - Access, Transfer and Progression

3.1 Context

This chapter has been written as an evaluation by the review team, underpinned by external reports, data collected under HID's procedures for monitoring and review, and stakeholder feedback either already collected or undertaken for the purposes of this CINNTE review.

Stakeholder evaluation includes:

- Learners
- Agents
- Recruitment staff
- Admissions Staff

3.2 Policy and Procedures Governing Admissions

The policy and procedures governing admissions are laid out in Section 9 of the HID QAM and this includes formal definitions of the terminology used in this section.

3.2.1 Access

HID considers its processes and procedures for access are amongst the most robust in the sector. This can be demonstrated by learner success (refer to Sections 3.5 Learner Mobility and Sector Collaboration and 5.3.2 Retention Reports) and formal external feedback such as the TrustEd Report (refer to Appendix 3.1 for an abstract).

3.2.1.1 Admissions Process

The admissions process functions via a dedicated admissions team who work closely with the Dean. All admission decisions are signed off and set at 'Ready to Enrol' by Registry prior to the registration process.

HID monitors and reports admissions trends routinely to Programme and Academic Boards as can be seen in the sample **Admission Reports** in Folder 3. Comprehensive data is also kept in a readily accessible format to facilitate quick response to queries and/or provide performance data related to admissions to bodies such as Department of Foreign Affairs. This data is also used to inform the recruitment function at Holmes. A sample of **Admissions Dat**a can be seen in the HID Programme Review Report for the BA (Hons) in Business Section 3.1.2 (contained in Folder 1 – document 3.1).

The admissions process culminates in Registration. HID defines a registered student as a student who has:

- been made an unconditional offer to a named programme;
- paid their stage 1 fees in full;
- verified their identity, visa status, academic and language entry documents; and

- presented themselves, in person, to the college within the first two weeks of the start of term.

Registered students are enrolled onto a programme stage. A student registers once and enrols on each stage of a programme. So, a student may be registered with HID but has not passed enough credit to progress to the next stage. In such a scenario, they remain registered, but their Stage 2 enrolment is pending completion of the requisite credit. This may seem complex, but it ensures the status of all learners is clear at any given time and that there are formal definitions and formulas to provide data on learner success under various criteria at any given time.

An important step in the Registration process is verification. HID considers verification a significant element of its quality control processes and its processes are aligned to the "Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications - Verification of the authenticity of documents, Paragraphs 25 – 28".

Anecdotal feedback from agents was initially negative. Agents believed applicants would be put off HID by being asked to provide original transcripts, a problem if they had initially been in Ireland as an English language student and may not have their documents to hand. Over time agents have come to understand the process and it no longer attracts negative feedback. A recent survey of 19 local agents was undertaken, focused on the verification process. 79% of them were aware that HID carries out verification on admissions documents at registration. 42% consider HID's process to be more robust than most, 32% said the process was standard compared to other institutions with 21% of respondents considering it onerous. 74% of agents told us they have experience of applicants attempting to use fraudulent documents. HID considers the process to be not only compliant with the Lisbon Recognition Convention but good practice of quality control.

With each new intake the time taken for all students to complete verification is improving. Where an applicant cannot fully verify all documents, they remain at Ready to Enrol status until they complete the verification checks. As enrolment letters are not issued to non-enrolled students, most learners find a way to provide originals or arrange for their schools or university to formally verify their prior qualifications.

These checks appear to work well in practice. To date only two learners have been refused registration; one for presenting forged documents and the other, whilst having provided legitimate and verifiable documents, was found to have been impersonated in the oral element of the English Language test (as it was demonstrably clear at registration that the student's English competency did not match his test results). This was reported to the relevant English language test provider, and all appropriate actions were taken.

Good Practice – Verification Process

As per the EAR Manual: The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions, chapter 5[14], HID is compliant and is also aligned to the ESG Std 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification. Refer to HID's QAM, Section 9.12.2.

The verification process, initially met with resistance from learners and agents, is becoming more efficient year on year as:

[14] EAR Manual - 2025.

1. More qualifications can be verified online;
2. Agents and recruiters are aware of the process and can ensure learners come prepared with original documentation; and
3. Withholding an enrolment letter until fully enrolled is an incentive to comply.

HID maintain a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for verification purposes complete with credentials for verifying English Language tests and links to a series of national verification sites for example:

- An apostille might be presented from Argentina, instructions and links are supplied in the SoP.
- The WAEC from Nigeria can be verified with a link in the SoP.

All staff involved in registration are trained in this and a common-sense approach is used when looking at originals and informed by Guidance on Examining Identity Documents (accessible) Updated 15 July 2025 – UK Gov.

3.2.1.2 Admissions Criteria

HID classify admissions as:

- Standard, where the learner achieves or exceeds the admissions threshold as published in the relevant validation document or international equivalent.
- Non-Standard, where a candidate may not have achieved the required grade and other qualifications are used to supplement the application at the appropriate level and performance.
- Mature, as defined in the QAM in Section 9.4.3, and based on current CAO definitions[15].

Aligned to the Lisbon Recognition Convention article IV, HID '*recognises the qualifications issued by other Parties meeting the general requirements for access to higher education in those Parties for the purpose of access to programmes belonging to its higher education system'*. Every effort is made to fairly assess the candidate's suitability for successful engagement with the programme.

HID enrols primarily international learners and currently has representation from 54 nationalities on the BA and 17 nationalities on the first two intakes of the MSc. We are particularly proud of the diversity of nationality within the college.

For access to the BA, the equivalent level to the Irish Leaving Certificate (at 2H5s and 4O6s) was determined for 82 countries, and 12 further internationally recognised tests such as the International Baccalaureate. This was a significant investment in time, resulting in a comprehensive document that lays out the rationale and justification for each determination. This has ensured there is a robust, consistent and well researched equivalence for each entry qualification determined. The process used for determining equivalence and some examples are laid out in Appendix 3.2, and an example of a determination of an assessment of equivalence for Uganda and Tanzania, can be seen in Folder 5 – document 3.1.

In some cases, dialogue with QQI NARIC will result in a revised formal equivalence, for example, Kenya. In early 2022 HID were attracting a good number of applicants from Kenya. QQI NARIC had set the

[15] Central Applications Office - Central Applications Office.

Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) at Level 4 Certificate, as can be seen in the Comparability Statement Kenya ID 558, (25th August 2015).

Based on research and conversations with the HEG team in Kenya, HID had established an honours profile in the KCSE should be sufficient to undertake the HID programme and shared the information with QQI. QQI NARIC issued a revised comparability statement Kenya ID 1723 (5th April 2022) setting a performance of 'Mean Grade C+ (Plus) and above' in the KCSE to be equivalent to a Level 5 Certificate. HID have confirmed the equivalent entry requirement to be *"KCSE Mean Score of C+ or more and at least a C- in maths. (If only 5 or 6 subjects taken then 2*C+, no subject less than C)."*

Two years after admission, the performance of those students was measured against their entry qualifications and found to be satisfactory and the entry criteria confirmed.

There have been 96 learners admitted to HID from Kenya to date. 26 of those are at the stage where they would be due to complete in 3 years, 65% have completed on time, 59% of those with an upper second. A further 19% are still in the system pending resits and are expected to complete within 4 years, refer to Appendix 3.3.

The suitability of the entry requirements and the effectiveness of the process for determining equivalence is measured by the performance data of the learners admitted under each criterion and extensive benchmarking. For further detail, refer to 5.3.2 Retention Reports under Objective 4 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review. Whilst some retention data is not where we would like, some of it can be explained by learners transferring to lower cost colleges. Therefore, the metric used to measure the effectiveness of the entry criteria is, amongst others, the pass rate of 'engaged' learners and this is reported regularly as part of the Retention Report to Academic Board. This metric excludes those learners who disengaged to the point they were withdrawn and did not engage in the final assessment. The average pass rate of engaged learners from Stage 1 to Stage 2 is 85% which benchmarks well with OECD Indicators (2025)[16].

3.2.1.3 English Language

As per QQI validation requirements[17] HID only accepts learners who have successfully passed an independent accredited English Language Test approved by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (DoJ) or an appropriate score in a National Level 5 Examination from an English-speaking country, as listed, such as:

- Irish Leaving Certificate, with a score of OD3 or O6/H7 in English; and
- GCSE English Language or GCSE English literature with Grade C.

Independent tests with a score equivalent to CEFR B2+ as determined by the Dean and approved by Academic Board are kept on a list managed by the Dean and can be found in Appendix 3.4.

External anecdotal feedback: at HID's second graduation (November 2025), gowning company staff complimented HID staff on the standard of English of the HID graduands. It was indicated that the

[16] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/09/education-at-a-glance-2025_c58fc9ae/full-report/who-is-expected-to-complete-tertiary-education_a1099e2e.html.
[17] Section 4.2.4 of https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-04/het-guidance-document-april-2024_0.pdf.

standard of English was "well above" other recent graduations that the gowning staff had worked at (where the graduating cohort was majority international students).

3.2.1.4 Monitoring Performance Against Admissions Criteria

A good example of HID's continuous monitoring of student performance to ensure appropriateness of entry requirements is the case of adapting the Duolingo score for entry to HID programmes.

HID only accept externally validated English Language tests, all verified electronically, there are no exceptions therefore all learners are linguistically capable of full engagement from the outset. The equivalence to CEFR B2+ is assessed by the Dean and benchmarked nationally. HID also undertake an evaluation of learners' performance against entry criteria for specific purposes. The case below illustrates one such analysis.

HID accept the Duolingo Test of English (DL) because it is approved by the DoJ who accept it at 75 for courses other than 2nd level or preparatory English, for immigration purposes only.

HID had initially accepted a DL score of 90, which had been benchmarked against other providers. When Duolingo was recalibrated, the threshold score rose to 105. Whilst HID determined the equivalence to be 105, and supported the uplift, it disadvantaged some applicants who were found to be competent.

HID reviewed learner performance against their DL scores and found that a DL score of 100 was suitable for entry. HID contacted QQI explaining the rationale for accepting a score of 100 and trialled it for a further two years. A further review was undertaken in 2025 and the revised score was then approved at Academic Board.

Refer to Folder 5 – documents 3.2 & 3.3 for:

- Case for Adjustment to Duolingo Score July 2023; and
- Rationale for a Modification to the Duolingo Entry Requirement October 2025.

3.2.2 Transfer

HID have no formal articulation arrangements for transfer or progression. Any learner who wishes to transfer is provided with all the information the receiving provider requires. For learners transferring in, HID use the policies for RPL as described in 3.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) below.

HID have accepted 16 students to date as transfers into Stage 2 of the BA.

The learners transferring fall into three broad categories:

- Applicants with a 'partially-cognate' award where some of the credit maps onto Stage 1 of the programme, (2 learners).
- Applicants with a partially complete cognate award, most of which have at least 60 ECTS from a cognate QQI award, (the majority of learners).
- Applicants who fall short of the standard required for direct entry to the award stage. i.e. the digital currency assessment, (1 learner).

Two learners have completed already and have received a First and an Upper Second.

3.2.3 Progression

3.2.3.1 Stage 1

HID accepts learners into Stage 1 with NFQ level 5 or 6 FET awards. This is a progression route into Higher Education. HID is not part of the formal Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS)[18] but is informed by the scheme and will accept any level 5/6 award in a cognate discipline with a specified performance. To date whilst some learners take a level 5 award in healthcare during their studies, no applicants have presented with an FET award for access to Stage 1.

In 2023, before HID had learners progressing from Stage 1, through Stage 2 to the award stage, HID raised with QQI the prospect of running the final year exclusively for direct entrants. This was for two reasons:

I. HID was eager to commence all modules as the teaching team was identified and ready to engage; and
II. There was clear demand for the opportunity.

QQI agreed and asked that HID monitor progress of those learners and keep records of how they were assessed for admission as a possible future case study. HID set up a rigorous entry process and two cohorts (26 learners) were admitted and taught the final year before the *de novo* HID learners progressed to the award stage.

The admissions process was robust. In addition to a complete cognate award of at least level 7 benchmarked against the programme, all applicants were assessed for their digital currency. Applicants were given a series of questions to prepare in writing and on receipt of the documentation they were then interviewed by the digital business lecturer who made recommendations to the Admissions Team. This was to ensure all learners were sufficiently prepared for the digital nature of the final year. This selective process ensured all learners were prepared for success. Feedback from lecturers was that the learning environment was more akin to postgraduate in respect of learner engagement and participation. The completion rates were 93% and 100% respectively. The 7% non-completion represents one learner who needed to return to their home country shortly after the programme commenced.

Now that the programme has run for three years all 'direct entry' learners joining Stage 3 are taught alongside the learners who started in Stage 1. To date a further 42 learners have progressed directly into Stage 3 with a cognate award at, at least, level 7.

3.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

HID's policy and process for RPL can be found in the HID QAM at section 9.8.

RPL has been used to date to evaluate applicants who wish to transfer into the programme at Stage 2 or 3, or for those learners wishing to progress directly into the award stage of the programme from a cognate level 7 award.

18 https://qsdocs.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Progression%20Opportunities%20into%20Higher%20Education%20HELS.pdf

To date all RPL has been routine. The Dean has managed the process for progression to the award stage, and the Programme Director manages Stage 2 entry. This process requires granular mapping of subjects, level and credit.

The process for the evaluation of progression to the final year is now tried and tested and comes under the remit of the Head of Admissions, with the Dean or delegate doing a final check on all learners prior to registration.

Despite our size, HID believe we have strong in-house expertise in QA and can demonstrate current self-development in RPL. For example:

- HID participated in a collaboration with QQI on the "Spotlight on Recognition" tool; and
- The Head of Admissions recently earned a Digital Badge in Recognition of Prior Learning from the National Forum in June 2026.

The Head of Admissions reported that the RPL training provided useful external reference points for reviewing HID's practice, and that HID was in line with Irish higher education norms.

Good Practice - Interview Process

An element of good practice under both RPL and mature entry is the interview process.

For mature learners, including international learners, the equivalence is determined by a portfolio and interview clearly benchmarked to the Knowledge, Knowhow and Skill and Competence at Level 5, informed by the Business Awards Standards. In addition, all candidates who have been out of full-time school education for 7 years, or higher or vocational education for 10 years, are also interviewed.

This was revised from this year, and now the interview for qualified candidates is undertaken by the admissions team rather than Programme Director and the focus of the interview is managing expectations and the workload a return to full-time education involves.

The process has now been used routinely for Stage 2 and Stage 3 admission, with documented mapping and final academic oversight.

3.4 Learner Information at the Admissions Stage

In addition to the information accessible on the website, all learners who are about to enrol receive a **Pre-Arrival Guide**, (see Folder 4 – document 2.2) and participate in a live online pre-departure meeting.

On arrival there is a general Induction prior to classes commencing, this is usually well attended. All learners are provided with a **Student Handbook** (Folder 4 – document 3.1) when the semester starts.

In addition, over the first Semester for Stage 1 undergraduates and direct entrants to stages 2 and 3 there is an Extended Induction, this covers everything from settling in and registering with a GP to preparing for exams, academic integrity and a review of assessment regulations. HID has also produced additional FAQs for use by our enquiry management team but will continue to deliver and enhance Extended Induction. This is more comprehensively covered in 4.6.1 Information for Learners.

3.5 Learner Mobility and Sector Collaboration

To date HID do not have a lot of data regarding learner mobility. A recent destination survey shows that a number of graduates have progressed to level 9 studies (including to the HID MSc).

175 learners have been certified with QQI. 16 of these are exit awards (Certificate in Business), and 60 have already graduated with a BA (Hons) in Business in 2024 and 2025. A further 99 students graduated in September 2026 with a BA. Of the 60 who graduated in 2024/5, a proportion have gone on to further study: including an MSc in Finance from TCD (graduated with Distinction), Master's in International Accounting with Management at Maynooth University and MSc in FinTech at NCI. Another has been accepted onto a DBA at Maynooth.

Graduate Destinations were surveyed following the second graduation and this is covered in Section 3.1.5 of the **HID BA (Hons) in Business Programme Review Report**, Folder 1 – document 3.1.

This autumn a soon-to-be graduate has won the Global Undergraduate Awards 2026 Regional Award Winner for Island of Ireland, Business & Economics for his final year project proposal.

3.6 Findings

The RPL process is now well established and found to be robust.

- 12. From this year we will consider transfers to the final year under the policies for access, transfer and progression, subject to benchmarking by the Programme Leaders. In addition, the digital currency assessment will now only be used where the applicant has been out of formal education for some time.
- 13. HID will also have a greater focus engaging with alumni and ensuring the alumni register remains current, as Finding 3 in section 2.9 Findings identifies. This will support the focus on graduate readiness and establish an alumni pool who will contribute to the institution as significant stakeholders.

4 Objective 3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment

4.1 Context

To summer 2026 HID has admitted 932 learners onto the BA and a further 60 onto the MSc.

Our undergraduate profile is 99.5% non-EEA, gender balanced (49% female), mature (average age 25.6), and from 54 different countries.

We have students who already have established networks in Ireland, as well as recent school leavers who are facing the transition to third level, living away from home and navigating a new culture.

To date 175 learners have been certified for QQI awards from the BA:

BA (Hons) in Business	L6 Exit Award	Level 8 Award
2024	1	26
2025	5	34
2026	10	99

Table 4.1 HID Graduates

4.2 Introduction

The teaching, learning and assessment ethos at HID is described in the following documents:

- Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Academic Framework
- Quality Assurance Manual
- Graduate Attributes

The **Teaching and Learning Strategy in Preparation** (Folder 4 – document 4.1) is so titled as it is constantly under review and is developing with the College. *Section 7 - A Responsive Strategy* is updated after each formal event such as validation, revalidation or extension of scope to capture enhancements from those processes.

HID is aware the strategy is more practical than strategic. This is intentional, in the first instance, to describe and establish a quality assurance infrastructure within which teaching, learning and assessment can flourish and be innovative. The strategy will become more sophisticated as the College develops. This does not mean that the institute is not aspirational: it is currently focussed on an authentic and realistic achievement of our vision and graduate attributes. The strategy is available to all staff through a dedicated Blackboard Module and referenced at Programme Board. There is considerable learner involvement in programme development and when developing the associated guidelines such as those for Group Work.

The **Academic Framework** (Folder 4 – document 4.2) is a document clearly outlining the delivery structure for all HID programmes and it has been updated to include postgraduate programmes. This document lays out how HID manages learners across three intakes per year and complies with all validation requirements. It also lays out the Examination Board and Resit Board schedule. Since it has been published, validation panels have been satisfied that programmes are being delivered as validated and cohorts are not being merged. The logical structure and layout, coupled with the fact all elements of the organisation work in sync around dates, mean calendars can be planned years in advance, for example there is an Examination Board scheduled for 2pm on Wednesday 15th June 2033 subject to confirmation of attendance by External Examiners.

The sections of the QAM **(**Folder 1 – document 2.1) relating to teaching, learning and assessment include:

- Section 7 New Programme Development and Validation
- Section 10 Assessment of Learning Achievement
- Section 15 Staff Recruitment management and development
- Section 22 Academic integrity policies and Guidelines
- Section 23 The Learning Environment
- Section 25 Research Policy

In addition, all sections relating to student supports are considered below.

The HID QAM is under constant review and clearer benchmarking against the ESG is underway. HID are informed by ESG standards: 1.2, 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6 in this regard.

The manual is updated annually with stakeholder feedback:

- Section 7 gives a good overview of the process, but as this is an externally managed process the chapters do not need further development. The External Programme Advisory Committee is working constructively, as is elaborated below.
- Section 10 on Assessment is found to be comprehensive and accessible.
- Section 15, however, was found not to be referred to very often and it is recommended that it be comprehensively reviewed as the college has developed. The sections are very prescriptive for an institute with a lean full-time team and mostly Hourly Paid Lecturers.
- Section 22 is continually updated as this is a significant development in academia. The Academic Integrity Mentor supports staff and trains learners on this and makes them aware of the policies, the chapter reflects practice.
- Section 23 is not a sufficient reflection of the Learning Environment. This is clear from panel feedback where HID has been asked to provide additional information on the Learning Environment and postgraduate ethos.
    - Section 23.2 Generative Artificial Intelligence has been added recently.
    - Section 23.3 has been updated to include postgraduate programmes.
    - Section 23.5 Approval of Additional Physical Premises was also added recently and informed the evaluation and the approval of new teaching location.
- Section 25 was a new section for 2026, prepared for the Extension of Scope. Further discussion of this section will be covered under Objective 5 below.

The **Graduate Attributes** (Folder 1 – document 4.1) can be found in all programme handbooks, on the website and in section 8 of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. See also Section 2.1.5.

4.3 The Learning Environment

4.3.1 Programme Learning Environment

Refer also to the Postgraduate Ethos covered under Objective 5.

4.3.1.1 Programme Design and Validation

HID invest considerable effort in the initial design of a programme. The institution's approach to designing is a *whole-programme* approach and the assessment strategy and teaching and learning strategies are established at the outset. The modules are then designed to contribute to the programme as a whole. This ensures that core skills and competencies informed by stakeholder feedback and the graduate attributes are embedded throughout the programme and assessed at appropriate stages. For example, a key skill such as communication is assessed in a variety of ways and each skill builds on the ones already developed, video presentations are followed by in person presentations, there is opportunity for advocacy and debate, culminating in a *viva* and defence.

The *whole-programme* approach is reinforced throughout, as lecturers communicate and reference other modules, this has been further reinforced with the formal introduction of integrated assessment which has been welcomed by validation panels.

Learner workload is also an important consideration when developing a supportive learning environment. HID have developed guidelines to support programme design such as the **Assessment Workload Guidelines**, Folder 4 – document 4.3, which are based on research and benchmarking and are used to ensure equitable and realistic workload directly related to credit.

The effectiveness of programme design itself is monitored through annual meetings under our programme review processes which draw together feedback from learners, lecturers and data and makes recommendation for either minor changes which can be approved through the Academic Board, or more significant changes which are monitored and acted upon at Programme Review. This is evidenced in the Programme Review Report, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business, February 2026.

4.3.1.2 Programme Delivery

All programme delivery is face to face in classrooms equipped with large screens and suitable audio-visual equipment. HID is facing a space challenge and have recently started to use a lecture hall within 5 minutes of the campus which is also used for invited speakers. This works well and also provides additional breakout space. Module feedback is taken during each module iteration and despite the rigorous selection processes there have been some cases where lecturers have not attained the expected standards and, in these cases, we have replaced them.

The quality of delivery depends on the quality of the academic staff and how they are briefed. There is a staff induction which includes an introduction to policies and procedures, teaching learning and assessment strategies, teaching policies, guidance and good practice, and regular updates from the Programme Director. The peer review process has proved effective and is described below. Good practice where identified is shared through Programme Board, but more usually informally in staff

conversation. This could be more effective if this were formalised as part of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

At the time of writing there are two Programme Boards and the Teaching and Learning Committee is being reconfigured as a stand-alone committee.

Having and maintaining a collegiate environment for staff has ensured we attract and retain the quality of staff we would wish for our students. Staff are formally informed of college business, through Chair's Communication at Programme Board three times a year and informal networking events. There is also academic staff representation at Academic Board.

The staff who deliver programmes are generally the same individuals who developed the programme, ensuring there is ownership of the modules and continuity from development to delivery. 55% of the original programme development team from 2021 are still engaged with the programme and 91% of staff who delivered the first iteration of each module are still with HID.

Each module is delivered by a module leader who normally lectures, tutors and assesses the module in its entirety. However, there are some cases where we have paired new lecturers with more experienced lecturers to tutor on the modules. This has been an effective mentoring scheme and succession planning strategy. This will be required more if established BA lecturers take up new postgraduate modules.

To date, as most lecturing staff are currently HPLs, there has not been much demand for subject specific CPD. However, it is anticipated with the new full-time staff appointed for an autumn start, there will be greater impetus to formalise CPD arrangements. At the time of writing one full-time position has already commenced.

4.3.1.3 Monitoring the Learning Environment

The peer and management review process is one method of monitoring the learning environment. Another process is learner feedback.

Learner feedback is collected by:

- Student satisfaction Survey;
- Module Evaluation;
- Class Representative Meetings; and
- Focus Groups, specific purpose.

The class representative and learner feedback is covered in the QAM in Section 12. Refer to Section 2.2.1.2.

Learner feedback on the learning environment is most informative at module level. Class Representative Meetings seek to get more feedback on the overall delivery of the programme. To date there have been no real issues raised about programme delivery in Class Representative Meetings. Where an immediate issue may be raised in future, it can be addressed in real time.

As part of learner feedback, we take an early satisfaction survey after week 6 in Semester 1. Two questions from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement are used to facilitate benchmarking. This can be seen in **Satisfaction Survey**, Folder 3.

A further analysis of the benchmarking over time has been undertaken for this review and can be seen in Appendix 4.1. HID performs well in the classroom, with the quality of delivery exceeding the most similar benchmark in every category. This and similar benchmarking activities are undertaken regularly and considered alongside stakeholder engagement (learner and lecturer feedback) to enhance delivery.

HID performs less well compared to the Benchmark HEIs in respect of student-student interaction, refer also to Appendix 4.1. This has been explored with learners through Class Representative Meetings and is attributed to the lack of extracurricular student interaction outside of the classroom. This has been addressed somewhat with additional activities; however, a concerted effort needs to be made on establishing relevant and sustainable clubs and societies.

The national Student Survey, has been recently updated with new questions from 2026 and HID will review and revise our own questions to ensure benchmarking can continue.

Module Questionnaires are analysed and presented every semester at Programme and Academic Board. A challenge in this area is, on moving to electronic collection of data, response rates have fallen. There is concerted effort to improve these through continuous reminders and time allocated in class to complete the surveys.

It can be seen from the **Module Review summaries** (Folder 3) that overall satisfaction (*'Overall how would you rate the quality of your educational experience in this module?'*) for all modules is good to excellent, accounting for, on average 87% of responses.

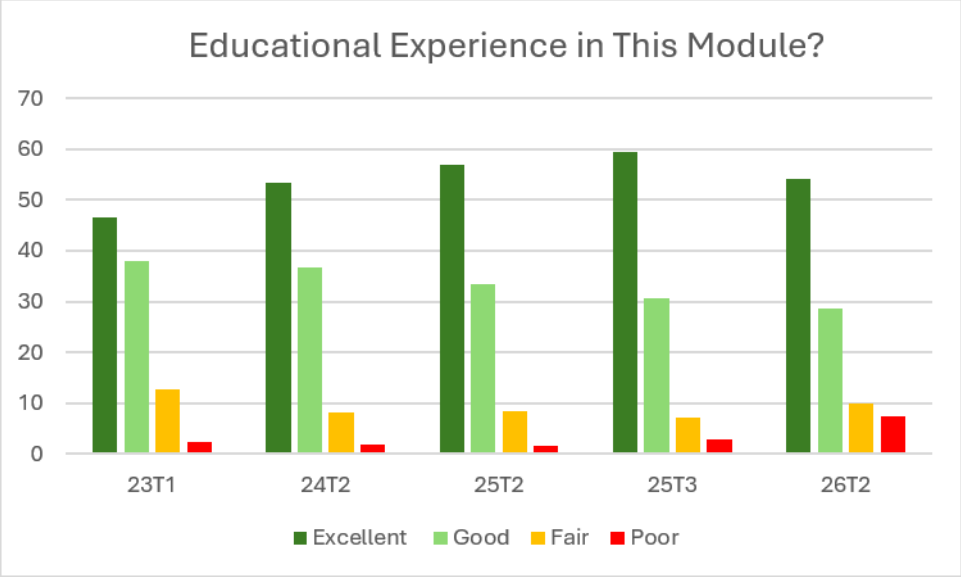


Figure 4.1 Examples of feedback from different trimesters

Individual module feedback is shared with the academic staff on a one-to-one basis with the Programme Director and may, with other considerations, contribute to performance evaluation and continuation (or otherwise) of contract.

4.3.1.4 Physical Learning Environment

HID programmes are delivered in two conjoined houses in Merrion Square Dublin 2, with additional lecture space where needed in Chartered Accountants House (CAH), Pearse St, Dublin 2. The Merrion Square Campus is shared with OHC English who have designated rooms. Some facilities are shared.

HID keeps an **Updated Capacity Statement** (Folder 5 – document 4.1), which includes a capacity statement for the theoretical maximum student intake. Lectures are delivered in groups from 60 to 100 depending on programme, tutorials are delivered to smaller groups, and IT workshops are limited to groups of 25.

Two-thirds of enrolled students are on site at any one time. For the BA the maximum intake threshold has been achieved four times since 2022, and not yet for the MSc. Learner drop out exceeds direct entrant students, so we have not had to double deliver stage 2 or 3 to date. Therefore, the College has not reached maximum capacity, and the additional lecture room can be extended to more days to accommodate new programmes.

Learners use the building in different ways. In winter it can get crowded in the student breakout area, but staggered lunch breaks and the 8am to 6pm delivery slots have mitigated that somewhat. In response to a condition from the revalidation event, HID initiated later opening of the study areas in the summer trimester. Learners had been surveyed, the outcome of which can be found in **Extended Open Hours for Study** in Folder 5 – document 4.2. Learners did not avail of the opportunity; the next trial will be the autumn trimester to determine if seasonality has an effect.

Learners tend to use online resources and local libraries (68% of those surveyed) near to where they live and that has worked well.

4.4 Assessment

4.4.1 Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for each programme is designed by the programme team, aligned to the HID Principles of Assessment (Section 10.1 QAM) and agreed at validation.

HID design assessment strategies drawing from a diverse range of assessment instruments. Stakeholder feedback and research inform the strategies deployed. It is recognised that attainment of most module learning outcomes can be demonstrated in more than one way. In addition to defined learning outcomes there are also skills and attributes associated with any academic programme and these are developed and evidenced through assessment. In summary assessment supports learning, develops skills and competencies, and is managed in a way that does no harm.

The overarching strategy is agreed prior to the development of the individual module assessments. A typical strategy would include a diverse range of assessment instruments aligned to the skills and competencies articulated in the programme and module learning outcomes. It is important both for assessment of learning and student welfare that the assessment load is reasonable and aligned to credit. HID have developed the **HID Assessment Workload Guidelines** (Folder 4 – document 4.3) which provide a simple metric of effort based on research and stakeholder feedback. In addition, each module descriptor lays out the percentage activity for activities such as contact hours, directed

learning, independent learning and preparing for and undertaking assessment which is normally between 20 and 25% of learner effort.

A programme assessment strategy will lay out, for example, how many presentations are required, the type of presentation and at what stage of the programme they are undertaken. The team then agree which modules are suitable and align the assessment instrument to the module learning outcomes. Research and stakeholder consultation at the time of programme development ensures the selected assessment instruments are suitable, effective, and in line with current teaching practices and industry expectations.

Industry feedback has influenced the skills profile of HID programmes. There were two skills surveys with industry stakeholders. December 2020 was a comprehensive survey on skills development with follow up discussions with respondents and June 2024 included feedback on both hard and soft skills including strategic thinking skills, there is also regular general engagement such as interviews with key industry stakeholders.

In addition, significant literature research such as CEDEFOP, Ireland's National Skills Strategy, GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey as well as industry surveys contribute. For an example refer to **MSc Programme Descriptor** Section 3.3, Folder 1 – document 4.2

HID keep the skills requirements updated with ongoing programme development and industry engagement.

Learners are significant stakeholders in assessment design. For example, a recent survey on examinations was prompted by validation panel feedback from an ongoing validation event. Whilst the survey was undertaken by three distinct cohorts the overall outcome is summarised for this process. Of fifty-three surveys returned, 100% of the population sampled, the learners consider that proctored unseen examinations are fair and reliable assessment. They also agree they are hard work compared to other assessments and drive them to review more of the curriculum. Although the quantitative feedback showed more learners (63%) preferred 2-hour examinations, qualitative feedback suggested shorter exams were more stressful. 68% of students either liked (33%) or didn't mind examinations - this was qualified by how well they were prepared by way of formative assessment; and some noted examinations, whilst valuable, should have a lower weighting.

4.4.2 Assessment Standards

Academic standards are established at programme design and validation with learning outcomes set at the level of the award and aligned at the appropriate NFQ level at the interim stages. Staff and students are aware of the learning outcomes and level indicators. The HID grade criteria have been updated to reflect level 9 see Section 6.5 and these are included in assessment briefs.

External Examiners are a key measure of academic standards achieved by learners. All External Examiners are approved by Academic Board and undergo a formal onsite induction. With three intakes the External Examiners are on site at least three times a year and have access to all learning materials and Blackboard. The External Examiners assure HID that our standards are aligned nationally and our processes and procedures are robust. They have also contributed to Programme Review. Reports can be found in Folder 2.

Dr. Louise Gorman (TCD) was appointed November 2022 and completed Nov 2025

Current External Examiners BA:

- Dr. Hugh O'Donnell TUD, selected April 2024 – approved by AB 28th May 2024.
- Mr Fabián Armendáriz NCI, selected December 2025 – approved by AB 7th April 2026.

Current External Examiner MSc:

- Dr. Shazia Afzal DBS, selected April 2026 – approved by AB 5th August 2026.

4.4.3 Assessment Integrity

HID believe our approach to academic integrity is robust. For example, in Extended Induction there are two sessions devoted to Academic Integrity delivered by the HID Academic Integrity Mentor, who is responsible for co-ordinating training, maintaining the misconduct register, advising academic staff handling misconduct and also coordinates the Holmes Institute Academic Integrity Assessment during induction.

Programme and module assessment strategies are developed considering the HID academic integrity policies and the NAIN Academic Integrity Guidelines[19]. The potential for academic misconduct is considered and addressed in the programme design, assessment strategy and guidelines, for example the **HID Group Work Guidelines** and **HID Group Contribution Record** (Folder 4 – documents 4.4a and 4b).

Assessment design supports academic integrity so examinations, where they add value, presentations and *vivas* contribute to authentic assessment. This is elaborated in Section 6.4 Objective 5.

The QA procedures are updated to reflect current learning and national policy on academic Integrity.

4.4.4 Integrity of Assessment Processes

Proctored Examinations, where used, are carried out in appropriate spaces on campus and managed under a comprehensive set of protocols, such as the *Code of Conduct in Examinations for Learners* (available in the Student Handbook) and the SoP for Exam Preparation and **Regulations for the Operations of Examinations** (see Folder 4 – document 4.5a).

All learners have an assigned seat which is numbered and recorded on their answer book. This can be related back to a seating plan, if necessary, which is archived. Invigilators are trained and record any issues arising on the attendance sheets and any breaches of academic integrity are reported to the Academic Integrity Mentor for action. An examination report is included in the Exam Board minutes. These are confidential, but an abstract can be seen in Folder 2.

When the examinations are returned, with marks entered onto mark sheets, the processes of moderation and verification commence. A sample of at least 20% of scripts are moderated by academic colleagues.

In addition, every examination script is checked for completion of marking - referred to as verification. This is an administrative task carried out by both administrators and academics working together. The marks on the scripts are recalculated and checked against mark sheets. Any errors are raised and

[19] https://www.qqi.ie/national-academic-integrity-network.

confirmed with the assessor. Whilst an onerous process that will likely not be realistic at scale, the fact this process is undertaken has improved accuracy, as assessors are more likely to check the material more thoroughly to avoid having to address errors in this process. This is good practice and is reflected in the appeals record, i.e. there have been no appeals brought forward to the formal stage; all to date have been satisfied at recheck or review of paper stage.

4.4.5 Continuous Assessment and Feedback

Learners are made aware that all assessment instruments are constructively aligned to the module learning outcomes and that they support skills development. Whilst learner feedback tells us they dislike groupwork, they see its value in preparing them for life after their degree. Groupwork was surveyed in general as part of a focus group in September 2025 and a further focus group on the HID Group Contribution Record was held on 19th November 2025 with 19 participants.

It can be seen from Section 4.1.3 of the BA (Hons) in **Business Programme Review Report** (Folder 1 – document 3.1) that learners' performance data and feedback influenced the assessment design for the revalidated programme, and we believe this demonstrates our efforts to include learners in programme development.

The term formative assessment is used to include informal feedback in class, but realistically continuous assessment has both elements of formative and summative assessment and learners are more likely to engage in assessments that carry marks. Assessment is distributed across the semester overseen by the Programme Director.

A recent initiative introduced for the newly revalidated programme is that all assessment briefs will include a table of the level of permitted Generative Artificial Intelligence, see **Table of Permitted AI for Assessment Briefs** in Folder 4 – document 4.6.

Feedback is also very important where a learner is reassessed. If a learner has to resubmit a project or dissertation, it is very unlikely they will be approved to change topic for reassessment, as demonstrating how feedback has informed the resubmission is considered as part of the reassessment process.

All learners pending reassessment are permitted to join ongoing classes and tutorials in the module they are being reassessed and are encouraged to review their papers with the relevant academic in preparation for reassessment.

4.4.6 Reassessment

Learners who have resits are informed via their transcript whether they need to resit an exam, a CA or retake a module. The resit CA is put on their cohort Blackboard Module, and the student must engage with it. A new initiative has been implemented based on both staff and learner feedback. A new set of Repeat Module shells have been developed per subject, so resit CA is in the same place and the lecturer knows which students are eligible for resits from any cohort. This way support tutorials for resit candidates are more easily arranged and all eligible students are informed at the same time. Refer to **Repeat CA Blackboard Shell Information Guide**, Folder 4 – document 4.7.

4.4.7 Artificial Intelligence and Challenges to Assessment

This section has been included as AI is one of the most significant challenges to assessment and standards facing higher education in some time. It requires a significant change in approach to assessment, both at the programme design stage and the assessment element itself. To date HID has used a wide variety of assessment instruments, including the traditional unseen proctored examination, to assess learners in a variety of ways. This is combined with small class tutorials so learner's communication style is known to assessors so they have some benchmark to determine if an assessment piece is authentic. Another approach is to assess the assessment process as well as the product, such as interim drafts etc, an approach taken for large assessment such as projects or dissertations. This can be supported by software such as Cadmus.

Holmes Institute Australia is currently piloting Cadmus[20]. The Dean Academic in Australia has reported Cadmus as a 'game-changer' as reflected by its adoption by nearly all the major universities in Australia and its increasing adoption internationally. Cadmus is promoting itself as a tool to monitor the development process of assessments, but it is also an efficient way of ensuring assessment integrity. Functionality of the system looks good, and as adoption increases more functionality is being added.

One example of future potential: One of the methods for authentic assessments is the adoption of presentations by individual students. Whilst appropriate for small groups, HIA have found presentations difficult to operate at scale. In reviewing the current and future functionality of Cadmus:

1. Students record themselves presenting in Cadmus based on uploaded questions
2. Cadmus develops questions for the presentation based on the students submitted work
3. Cadmus marks the presentation based on the answers to the questions in regard to the student's submission.

HID expect to be trialling Cadmus this year and will explore using the presentation facility for formative feedback and preparing for tutor assessed face to face presentations – both of which are a feature of HID programmes.

4.4.8 Appeals

After release of results learners have 5 days to request a recheck before the appeal process is implemented. The most common issue is where a continuous assessment has been incorrectly submitted, submitted late, or in some cases marked and overlooked. This is resolved by the Programme Leader very quickly. In some instances, a learner is disappointed by their examination mark and starts the appeals process. Step one is a requirement for the learner to review their script (see Section 10.10 of the QAM), learners are usually satisfied at that stage and this provides useful formative feedback for the learner. Due to the rigorous verification process no examination appeal has gone beyond the recheck and script viewing stage.

[20] Cadmus Supporting Academic Integrity https://cadmus.io/news/academic-integrity-with-cadmus/.

4.5 Learner Records

In addition to LUNA (the formal student records system) there are two important sources of information and learner data used to compile various reports and contribute to the monitoring and review, refer to Objective 4 for an elaboration on these reports.

- Registration Sheets
- Broadsheets

The Registration sheets are managed by intake cohort and all students recorded on census day stay on that sheet as their primary record. In addition to personal information this sheet also holds the learner's enrolment status, and their admission criteria both academic and English language including tests and scores.

These sheets are kept up to date and are a live record of all learner enrolments. They inform the attendance sheets, marksheets for staff, Blackboard population and Broadsheets.

Both the Registration Sheets and Broadsheets have been designed and are maintained to satisfy current internal and external reporting requirements, and we are confident they will satisfy future demands for reporting and benchmarking.

Data for QQI Certification comes directly from the Award Stage Broadsheets and is maintained in a folder used for certification, graduation and alumni information.

4.5.1 Examination Material

Examination Board Minutes are confidential, and if they are sent by email are redacted. External Examiners generally attend the Board in person and view all examination material in advance. Where they can only attend online, they review the material in advance and receive redacted minutes. Results are then transferred to LUNA.

All physical material is retained as per the HID Documentation Policy in Sections 10.12 and 20.1.3 of the QAM. All Examination Material is kept in the Dean's Office and behind two lockable doors.

4.6 Learner Supports

4.6.1 Information for Learners

HID provide reliable information to learners at all stages of their journey. The HID **Pre-Arrival Guide** (Folder 4 – document 2.2) is sent to all learners expected to register. This is followed up by an online pre-departure meeting where there is an opportunity to ask questions prior to arrival.

On arrival learners have an induction session and are provided with a **Student Handbook** (Folder 4 – document 3.1), including a Calendar, Timetable and Examination Timetable, which is also on the website.

Extended Induction commences in week 3, this includes focussed and time sensitive supports such as academic integrity, delivered by the Academic Integrity Mentor, assessment regulations, learner representation etc. For the purposes of the CINNTE exercise learners were canvassed on the Extended Induction. Undergraduate feedback was supportive, most students present for the focus group had attended all sessions, they would like assessment regulations to be brought forward and suggested

more material to be included on grade criteria and what was expected of them in assessment. They also asked for more support on career-readiness, which resonates with other feedback from learners in semester 6.

For this semester the process has been rebranded Extended Induction and is being documented more thoroughly and will include the recommendations from focus groups in respect of grade criteria, learning outcomes, skills development and a new session on permitted AI.

4.6.2 Learner Supports

Once a learner is identified (or identifies themselves) as in need of support, they have access to appropriate supports. Support is consistent for all learners.

Reasonable Accommodations and Mitigating Circumstances are managed through a dedicated learner support email (Hello@HID.ie). To ensure privacy there is a dedicated email address (medcerts@HID.ie) where learners can drop more sensitive medical information - this is restricted access to ensure privacy and dignity.

The challenge in identifying supports for learners is how a student in need of support is recognised. Most of the academic supports required such as academic writing, maths support and IT support are identified in semester one and included in the undergraduate syllabus. These supports are also available as one-to-one support for all learners (including master's) but are rarely taken up.

Other supports include:

- Counselling, identified on a one-to-one basis
- Additional Academic Tutorials for students who have not progressed

Counselling is supported for students who self-identify and they are directed to a counsellor who will advise on specific supports available.

An important learner support is the Retention Strategy. When a learner has fallen behind due to resits, those who have demonstrated engagement are identified and supported by way of a resit plan and support tutorials. They are permitted to attempt a resit, if prepared, during the main exam sitting to allow them to progress with their original cohort (or the next available cohort) and not fall back too far. This has worked well to date and a formal report quantifying those retained is in preparation.

4.6.3 Attendance Monitoring

A method to ensure HID is proactive in supporting learners is attendance monitoring. Attendance is monitored by the hour and reported in two different ways. Firstly, overall attendance profiles are provided for monitoring and review purposes to identify general trends and identify structural enhancements such as timetabling. Secondly, individual learners are also reported weekly at academic operations meeting and those whose attendance profiles have changed, or who have missed a week without certification, are followed up with by the Centre Manager. This has proved to be very useful in reengaging learners and identifying if they need support.

4.6.4 Dignity Before Deadlines

In addition, an initiative referred to as *Dignity Before Deadlines* is also introduced at induction. Based on work by Dr. S Eaton and Dr. M Schroeder (University of Calgary) it was previously referred to as a *Get Out of Jail Free* card and entitled the bearer to ONE no-questions-asked extension of any assignment in the programme, with no judgement. It is designed to support a learner who either does not have documented mitigating circumstances or chooses not to disclose them, and is overwhelmed with an approaching deadline, to use this option rather than compromising their integrity. The use is confidential but recorded that it has been activated. It has been used once since the programme began.

4.7 Findings

- 14. As part of the ongoing review of the HID QAM we will review and update Section 15 of the QAM and include more work on staff development. As the postgraduate programmes are established section 23 will be expanded to include the further development of a postgraduate ethos in addition to further information on the general learning environment.
- 15. The Graduate Attributes as updated by Holmes Institute are out with staff and learners for feedback and adoption for HID, when this process is complete, they will be published on the HID website.
- 16. As Extended Induction is being further developed HID will consider introducing a short series of 'Exit' supports in the last semester for the BA and during the dissertation for master's students.
- 17. Incorporate an overall outline assessment strategy within the Teaching and Learning strategy to inform the development of Programme Assessment Strategies.
- 18. Moderation has been carried out on over 20% of the papers, but moderation forms have not been completed. Also, the percentage to be moderated is not clear in the Handbook. It is suggested a moderation Report could be adapted for use by the Programme Director and completed at the end of each moderation session and the QAM has been adapted for the next iteration in 2027.
- 19. It is our intention to establish the Teaching and Learning Committee as a standalone committee and report on its activity to the Programme Boards and the Academic Board, this will provide a formal mechanism to capture good practice in delivery. It will also oversee a formal CPD register for full-time staff.
- 20. HID will also ensure Programme Delivery is a standard agenda item on the Class Representative Agenda.

5 Objective 4 - Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

5.1 Context

Mechanisms for collecting and analysing data at HID are comprehensive, providing a solid evidence base for self-evaluation and planning future actions and enhancements. The data-based reports described below feed into a series of Boards and Committees, particularly the Programme and Academic Boards (as described in Section 2) to ensure the ensuing actions are overseen, resourced and implemented.

Whilst the college is small, the data collection, analysis, reporting and proposing actions are with the same team. Detailed SoPs are being developed to ensure that, as more people are involved, the systems remain robust. Refer to Folder 5 – document 5.1 for an example.

Data is also collected, recorded and/or generated as a response to various QA processes, summarised in the QAM Section 8.3.

5.1.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Registration sheets record the admissions standards, registration and verification process. They include core learner information held in one place, verified and maintained. As the cohort progresses through the programme, payment, enrolment information, and progression status are included, and programme status is updated. These sheets ensure data can be accessed quickly and easily for most purposes. Together with broadsheets they include all the core learner metrics required.

Each sheet is fully reconciled twice a year for each cohort. Completion and award data is reconciled with QQI data as it is published. HID are confident that the data collection is comprehensive and robust, and this is assured through simple quality control checks and periodic data reconciliation.

5.1.2 Qualitative Data Collection

HID uses learner surveys sparingly, routinely for Semester 1 early satisfaction survey and by module for module evaluation. However, a second student satisfaction survey is being considered in Semester 6.

HID also uses focus groups for specific purposes. To date these have been used for:

- Programme Development
- Programme Review
- Extended Induction and Career Readiness

We have found student surveys followed by focus groups are effective in garnering learners' opinion in specific areas. Where we have asked learners to assemble for a specific purpose, for example programme development, the uptake was not sufficient, but where we added a group to the end of a class and allowed learners to expand on the topics it was very useful. Usually just the output is recorded in note form, an example can be seen in Folder 5 – document 5.2. HID plans to continue to

run focus groups for specific purposes and will continue to exploit these more for learner input to inform Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

5.1.3 Benchmarking

This is the most challenging element of reporting. HID take a scientific view of data analysis, by defining the metrics being measured, clearly describing the analytical procedures used and reporting real data and raw analysis. This is then reported in context. When benchmarking, it has been found that data is often reported differently and adjusted for specific purposes. For example, HID programme retention data is measured for students who started the programme at the census date two weeks after the start of term, and who remain, on track in respect of duration through the programme, it is not mitigated by direct entrants or learners who join from earlier cohorts. Comparing this with non-progression data published by the HEA is not realistic because the HEA census date is 25 weeks into the first stage and therefore does not include learners who change their minds in the first 24 weeks of commencing the programme. Where HID have had access to other colleges' data through sharing they tend to report pass rates and therefore exclude students who pass but do not return.

HID continues to research and benchmark data where reliably available and is engaged in a project benchmarking with other Holmes Institutes internationally. In addition, HID will continue to explore relevant and credible international benchmarks such as the work described in Folder 5 – document 5.3.

5.2 Overview

The policy and procedures governing Monitoring and Review are laid out in the Governance Charter:

- Programme Board
- Academic Board

And in the Holmes Institute Dublin Quality Assurance Manual (QAM):

- Section 8: Ongoing Programme Monitoring
- Section 12: Learner Feedback and Representation
- Section 16: Evaluation of Student Services
- Section 17: Evaluation of Facilities

Section 5.3 below covers all monitoring reports and data that is collected, analysed and acted on during normal college operations, both routine and for specific purposes. Section 5.4 will focus on programmes, validation and revalidation and include input from external panels and other stakeholders.

5.3 Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

HID prepare routine reports for both Programme and Academic Boards for each intake cohort. Feedback from those boards has informed the content and structure of those reports over time. The

reports are designed to report cohort information by trimester and monitor trends over time. The reports also include benchmarking where possible. The formal reports are:

- Admissions Report
- Retention Data Stage 1 to Stage 2
- Retention Data Stage 2 to Stage 3
- Completion Data including awards.
- Student Satisfaction Survey
- Module evaluation
- Programme Attendance

Admissions and Attendance is also reported weekly to the Academic Operations Team (AOT).

5.3.1 Admissions Reports

Data and projections are reported to the AOT weekly, formal admission reports are generated after census date for each trimester. The census for each cohort is then the benchmark for all retention and completion data calculated to determine cohort performance. The trend over time is also reported and can be seen in Section 3.1.2 of **Programme Review Report for the BA Enrolment on the Programme** (Folder 1 - document 3.1).

The formal Admissions Reports as reported to the Programme and Academic Boards can be found in Folder 3 and covers everything from data to admissions standards. The information held on the registration sheets allows reporting on admissions standards and performance at the learner level and has proved very useful if data is needed to support visa applications.

5.3.2 Retention Reports

A learner's retention from one stage to the next is reported in the retention reports:

Stage 1 to Stage 2 Retention Report

- Those eligible to progress (Stage 1 pass rate)
- Those retained (Stage 1 Retention)

Stage 2 to Stage 3 Retention Report

- Those eligible to progress from Stage 2 (Stage 2 pass rate)
- Those retained from Stage 2 (Stage 2 retention Rate)
- Those retained from census date (Programme retention rate)

The level of detail reported gives us a good overview of cohort performance and internal benchmarking. External benchmarking is problematic as the different census dates used by independent providers and HEA funded HEIs differ by about 23 weeks. However, by reanalysing the data with a more comparable adjusted census date, Stage 1 retention data can be compared with HEA non-progression data.

As an example, refer to the Retention Report, '23S Retention Data S1-S2'. HID report our retention as 62.2% for the cohort, i.e. passed progressed, paid their second years fees and engaged in Stage 2. That is a non-progression rate of 37.8%.

The HID cohort is 100% international, and the retention was measured from a census date of 2 weeks. Comparing this with HEA Higher Education Institutes, where 14%[21] of learners are international and the census date is 25 weeks into term, requires an adjustment to HID data. The HID retention rate was recalculated using a census date of 25 weeks into the programme. The retention rate rises to 80% equivalent to 20% non-progression data.

This benchmarks appropriately to HEA data for non-progression from 2021[22] the data available at the time of the report. Comparing to Level 8 programmes in Business Administration and Law with, for example, DkIT at 33% and SETU at 24.7%. Both have improved 'post-covid' and SETU is now 21.4% non-progression.

Whilst the HEA data has improved 'post Covid' the HID raw data has not improved over time, for example the 25C2 stage 1 retention metric is 62% with an adjusted non-progression rate of 32%. There are two factors here that make comparison with the public sector (HEA Statistics) challenging:

- Successful learners are at risk of being attracted to those private colleges who offer significant 'scholarships' to transfer students eligible to progress to stage 2
- With three intakes per year the HID statistics do not report learners who defer a semester for whatever reason, even though they may progress with the next cohort.

Retention data is collated and reported periodically and in response to this evidence, HID have implemented a successful retention strategy - refer to Section 4.6.2. Learners who resit and join the next available cohort are not included as retained in the initial retention reports for their cohort, but they are retained, albeit a trimester later. The retention reports are a 'worst case scenario' and many learners are ultimately captured at the completion stage. This will be further improved with the additional international benchmark of 150% programme duration for completion, refer to Folder 5 – document 5.3 for further information.

Further benchmarking is ongoing to inform actions taken to improve retention, and engagement.

It should be noted from the pass rates, i.e. eligible to progress, that those learners who engage meaningfully with the programme are successful, evidencing the robust admissions process.

5.3.3 Completion Reports

Completion or graduation rate is reported for each cohort as they graduate and then updated annually. Examples of these reports can be found in Folder 3. This analysis includes a breakdown of award classification and benchmarked against national data as published by the QQI and the HEA. HID is aligned with similar institutions and nationally.

[21] https://hea.ie/2023/10/04/higher-education-key-facts-and-figures-2022-23/.
[22] HEA Outcomes – non Progression 2021 HEA Progression – Non-Progression Dashboard-2026 | Statistics | Higher Education Authority.

5.3.4 Attendance Reports

Attendance is monitored by the hour and reported weekly. Formal attendance reports covering trends are reported to Programme and Academic Board by trimester. At the weekly meeting individual learner issues are identified and followed up. In addition, learners are given formal attendance warnings when their attendance drops and again if it does not improve. This happens formally three times per trimester (in weeks 3, 6 and 9). This has proved effective in identifying those that respond to interventions and those that may need additional supports. It also identifies those who have stopped engaging and are not in communication, then they can be withdrawn if they no longer wish to continue or formally apply for a deferral if they have issues that prevent engagement, but they still wish to progress in the future.

Following a discussion on attendance at the Academic Board a specific report was compiled to look more closely into the reasons for declining attendance, and this will form the basis of a series of actions to be taken to address this. The report **An Analysis of Engagement** (in Folder 5 – document 5.4), reflects how the data reported to the Academic Board is monitored and feeds into the Institute's operations. It also makes recommendations as to how some of the issues reflected in the analysis of the data could be mitigated.

5.4 Programme Development, Monitoring and Review

Access to Initial Validation, Stage 1, Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures was the very first formal process that the Holmes Group engaged with QQI. Once that was complete in March 2020 programme development commenced with the first staff identified in September 2020.

Event	Date of Report
Access to Initial Validation	March 2020
Validation BA (Hons) in Business	April 2021
Inclusion on Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP)	2022
Extension of Scope See Section 1A p 8)	February 2025
Validation MSc Strategic Information Systems	June 2025
TrustEd	October 2025
Programme Review and Revalidation	June 2026
Validation MBA *In Progress*	
CINNTE *In Progress*	

The process of programme development is well established within the Holmes Education Group and has adapted positively to Ireland. A strategy was articulated at the 'initial access' stage that HID would develop pairs of programmes starting with Business and then Information Systems. This initial strategy is nearing completion although the order of validation changed slightly based on market information.

In the case of HID's initial development the plan was to use existing Holmes programmes as a starting point, which were then redeveloped in an Irish context.

Initially the programme development team comprised the Dean, HID, the Dean, Holmes Institute Australia, the CEO of Holmes Institute Australia and the Director Holmes Institute Dublin, the team met weekly. Once the structure was proposed the Dean worked on industry surveys and engagement with stakeholders.

Prior to development of individual modules, the programme learning outcomes were established. The programme learning outcomes were first aligned to the relevant QQI awards standards. HID's Dean, a former HETAC nomination to the Irish National Team of Bologna Experts, worked with academic staff in aligning learning outcomes to standards. The overall programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies are agreed prior to individual modules being developed. This works well in ensuring programme coherency and ensures a variety of assessment instruments are utilised across the programme as a whole and skills are appropriately assessed at the right stage of the learner's journey through the programme.

A group of potential lecturers was identified early in the process and took ownership of the development of the modules; all these staff were offered Hourly Paid Lecturer (HPL) positions when the programme was validated. 55% of the original team are still teaching with HID today and have been involved in programme revalidation.

HID works with lecturers and their strengths and academic experience, and encourages academics to innovate, particularly in assessment: for example after some development work during the first iteration of the BA, integrated assessment is now fully deployed at HID further strengthening programme coherency. HID continues to innovate particularly in the age of AI, refer to Section 4.4.7. HID will continue to propose and defend those assessments it considers necessary to deliver a robust high-quality academic programme.

5.4.1 External Programme Advisory Committee

The External Programme Advisory Committee is described in the GC (Folder 1 – document 2.2) as an *ad hoc* committee convened by the Academic Board to advise on Programme Development.

This committee has been convened three times, in advance of each programme validation. The membership comprises Irish based academic experts who are experienced in the development of academic programmes in Irish Universities. The committee has been chaired, on all three occasions, by an Independent Chair Mr John Vickery who has extensive academic and QQI experience and has co-ordinated the reviews of proposed programmes against the QQI validation criteria and provided feedback and a formal report at the conclusion of the process, See Folder 3 for an example.

- 28 September 2020,
- 24 May 2024
- 21 November 2025

One of HID's strengths is engaging the panel early in the programme development process and ensuring the committee get a complete draft of the programme documents early enough to make meaningful contributions to the programme and for recommendations to be considered and adopted prior to validation.

5.4.2 External Validation and Review Panels

HID collate all conditions, recommendations and commendations and revisit them periodically to ensure they are considered and inform the institute's strategy and development. Even when discharged, they are revisited and the college's own development informally benchmarked against those recommendations. This has been particularly useful in informing the development of a postgraduate ethos (refer to Section 6.6).

5.5 Evidence of the Effectiveness of Monitoring and Review

HID's approach to monitoring and review is designed not only to collect information but to use that information to inform decision-making, identify areas requiring intervention and support continuous quality enhancement.

The effectiveness of the arrangements is therefore demonstrated through the extent to which monitoring information is considered through HID's governance structures and results in changes to policy, practice, programme delivery, learner support or resource allocation.

As noted throughout this document, a number of examples evidence this quality loop in operation:

- Changes to the Duolingo threshold
- Revised equivalence for KCSE students from Kenya
- Introduction of Repeat Module shells
- Extended building opening hours (albeit that the extended opening hours were not taken up by learners)
- Changes to the Extended Induction

These examples demonstrate that HID's monitoring arrangements operate as part of a broader quality cycle rather than as standalone reporting exercises. Monitoring data and feedback are considered through the appropriate governance structures, issues are identified and evaluated, and actions are taken where improvement is required.

HID recognises, however, that the existence of an action does not in itself demonstrate that an enhancement has been successful. The next stage of development is therefore to strengthen the systematic recording of the impact of actions and to ensure that subsequent monitoring explicitly considers whether the intervention has achieved its intended outcome. This approach will be supported by the actions in Section 7 and the subsequent Quality Enhancement Plan.

5.6 Findings

- 21. HID will continue to run focus groups for specific purposes, with a greater focus on Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
- 22. HID will continue to engage in benchmarking and identify meaningful benchmarks to support ongoing improvements.
- 23. HID will more formally document the retention strategy, report success and ensure lessons learned will inform the support of learners at risk of non-retention.

6 Objective 5 - Effectiveness of QA Systems in Supporting Postgraduate (Level 9) Provision

6.1 Introduction

At the time of writing, HID has not yet completed a full cycle of postgraduate provision. It is intended in this section to demonstrate how the updated and revised QA is preparing for and supporting the provision of postgraduate learning.

The Extension of Scope of provision undertaken in 2024/25 was completed with a report on 12th February 2025 and QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) approval for the MSc on the 10th of June 2025. Extension of Scope is included in the same report as the MSc, Section 1A. The first intake of learners was February 2026 and at the time of writing learners are completing the taught phase and preparing for dissertation.

The two main foci of the event were:

- Revision of the QA Manual to include postgraduate provision
- The validation of the MSc in Strategic Information Systems

At the 'Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards' event in 2020 Holmes laid out our intention "*that HID will initially apply for validation of business studies degrees at NFQ Levels 7 and 8. It has indicated that after it has successfully delivered one or both programmes it will apply to extend its provision in the business studies discipline through a Higher Diploma in Business and an MBA. At a later stage of development, HI has ambitions that HID will expand its provision, including through a BSc and MSc in Information Systems*."

To align with developments across HEG in respect of Information Systems it was decided to lead with the MSc and validate the MBA shortly thereafter. HID kept QQI informed of its plans and were advised to complete a cycle of the bachelor's programme prior to applying for Extension of Scope. These talks led to HID running the Award Stage (based on student demand) in October 2023 and February 2024 with two intakes of 14 and 12 respectively. All students held business degrees of at least level 7 and were assessed for entry by a written test and an academic interview. This was to ensure HID was fully prepared for the Extension of Scope in 2025.

HID kept QQI apprised in respect of its plans and discussed with QQI how to prepare for and start the process of Extension of Scope. QQI suggested that the two events (extension of scope and validation) should coincide, and it was acknowledged that both Holmes internationally and the team on the ground in Ireland had extensive experience in postgraduate provision.

This section will touch on the outcome of the Extension of Scope event and is arranged as suggested in the letter of commencement of this process. References to conditions in respect of Extension of Scope can be found in the **MSc Validation Report** in Folder 1 – document 6.1.

6.2 Academic governance and oversight

The academic governance and oversight policies and processes do not differentiate between undergraduate and postgraduate provision, refer to Objective 1, Section 2. Each programme has its own Programme Board, see also Section 2.2.1.1. which focusses on monitoring, reporting, learning and teaching and the development of a programme action plan.

At this early stage the actions have been focussed on:

- Reviewing the level 9 level descriptors and grade criteria, see Section 6.5 below;
- Establishing a seminar series;
- Identifying CPD scholarship requirements of the staff; and
- Preparations for research supervision, see below.

In advance of the Extension of Scope HID reviewed and revised the QAM to include postgraduate delivery, a summary is included in **QA Governance and Capacity Summary for Extension of Scope** (Folder 5 – document 5.5).

Section 9: Access, Transfer and Progression, Section 10: Assessment and Section 23: the Learning Environment were adapted to include postgraduate delivery. For example, the repeat option for the dissertation at level 9 is restricted to one attempt and one opportunity to retrieve a failed mark. This aligns to QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2022), Section 2.2.5 referencing sectoral conventions. Whilst the convention states 'learners who fail a module should normally be offered at least three repeat attempts' it also specifies that "*A different arrangement normally applies in the case of a research thesis submitted for a higher degree.*" HID reviewed the arrangements of other QQI providers and engaged with fellow academics in the sector to assure ourselves that our reassessment arrangements for the dissertation are in line with sectoral norms. Engagement with fellow academics is an important strategy for HID benchmarking QA or programme development, see section 6.3 below.

A policy on Generative Artificial Intelligence was added to Section 23 and a new Section, Research Policy, was added to support level 9 projects and dissertations, which covers supervision and mentoring, research integrity, ethics and intellectual property.

The new section has not been fully tested for accessibility as the first dissertations have not been completed. However, the section on supervision and mentoring has informed supervisor induction.

A condition of the Extension of Scope process was to "*update the QA Manual to ensure it is accurate and reflective of the Level 9 processes and delivery.*" Further revisions were made to:

- Update the specifications for teaching staff - the manual had originally required a PhD in the specifications for level 9 teaching, and this was found to be at odds with sectoral norms and the staff we were hoping to attract in operation.
- Update the policy on exit awards – the panel had asked for clarity on whether a learner who accepted an exit award could return to complete the programme. We have updated the manual, but this is actually a question for the awarding body, who do not have a written policy on this. We will continue to engage with the awarding body and work out a sensible approach to dealing with such cases.

- Update the transfer process – this was signposted and a minor reiteration of the impact of transfer on award classifications was made to the QAM.
- Update processes on RPL – a clarification satisfied the panel.

To date HID are satisfied with the governance and Quality Assurance for postgraduate provision but will keep these under review as the programmes progress.

6.3 Research Supervision

At the time of writing the first iteration of dissertations was about to commence. Extension of Scope Condition 2 required HID to develop a Dissertation Supervision staffing plan: "*HID must develop a Dissertation Supervision staffing plan - to include recruitment, specifications, training (including on ethics), mentoring, meeting of learner expectations*", see Folder 5 – document 6.1. HID have held a supervisors' induction (managed locally) and associated CPD is in process - with external speakers from the wider Holmes Group and beyond, such as research experts from the Irish University sector.

The Dean has also been invited onto the HI Australia Curriculum Development Committee for a Master's by Research - the next step in Holmes Institute development based on over eighteen years of provision of taught postgraduate programmes. HID aspires to further develop its research profile through the appointment and development of research-informed academic staff to develop a master's by research in the future.

To support our preparation for dissertation development, the Dean conducted a comprehensive interview with the Programme Director of a similar programme at University of Galway, to explore how some of HID's proposals may work in practice, aligned with our approach of collegiate exchange with colleagues in both the private and public sector.

6.4 Assessment integrity and alignment with Level 9 standards

The integrity of the assessment processes and materials is covered in Section 4.4.3 under Objective 3.

The integrity of the assessment instruments themselves is encapsulated in the HID overall strategy and applies to postgraduate provision in a similar way to undergraduate provision. HID designs assessment strategies that draw from a diverse range of assessment instruments. Stakeholder feedback and research inform the strategies deployed. It is recognised that attainment of most module learning outcomes can be demonstrated in more than one way. In addition to defined learning outcomes there are also skills and attributes associated with any academic programme, and these are developed through assessment. In summary, assessment supports learning, develops skills and competencies, and assessment instruments are designed to allow a diversity of learners to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes and to do no harm.

HID regularly seek stakeholder feedback for specific purposes. On foot of a recent level 9 validation condition (in progress), where HID was required to justify the inclusion of examinations in an MBA, in addition to academic consultation, a learner survey was undertaken. It was deemed necessary to canvass significant stakeholders because the HID strategy does not preclude any one form of

assessment and this condition was not aligned with our own assessment strategy. The global learner response was that proctored unseen examinations are a fair and reliable assessment. Where only level 9 respondents were considered, more students preferred exams than didn't, and 77% responded that an examination prompted them to review the module material more comprehensively. The detailed results and analysis of the responses will contribute to ongoing HID programme development.

6.5 Level 9 Standards

HID's Grade Criteria and Level Descriptors were extended to include level 9, in advance of the first intake. During 2026 these were reviewed by the MSc Programme Director in Holmes Institute UK (HIUK) who benchmarked the **Grade Descriptors** (refer to Folder 4 – document 6.1) against NUI, QQI and other Irish assessment descriptor practice and suggested revisions to the document. These revisions were then implemented by members of the academic team in advance of a meeting to recommend the revisions to be approved and adopted.

6.6 The Support of Independent and Research-Informed Learning

HID have appointed staff experienced in level 9 teaching to deliver our postgraduate programmes. HID utilise long-standing hourly paid staff who are actively engaged in programme development, however those staff usually manage subject-specific development independently.

A condition of the Extension of Scope was "*HID must articulate and plan for the development and nurturing of a postgraduate ethos within the institution (e.g. through reflection on the use of guest speakers, seminars, conferences, CPD, physical space for learners to engage as a group etc.*)".

This plan set out a framework for the development of the postgraduate ethos and is in process, see Folder 5 – document 6.2.

The postgraduate ethos starts in the classroom, with the emphasis on seminar-style tutorials. A collaborative, interactive discussion-based approach where the lecturer facilitates, rather than directs learning, is employed. Directed-learning materials on Blackboard are intended to inform the discussion, and the level 9 learner is expected to engage with the material in advance of class.

There have been three guest speakers to date, all aligned with the MSc syllabus, in the areas of:

- Project Management - Director of Academic Outreach Ireland Chapter of the Project Management Institute
- Business Analysis - EY Business Analyst
- Information Systems - Version One Enterprise Architect

The first speaker was a HID graduate charged with setting up the PMI Ireland Student Project Management Club and after an internal selection process one of the MSc students is the HID representative on that board.

The latter two speakers had been industry advisors on the development of the programme and were very familiar with what is expected of the graduates. Future talks planned are focussed on preparation for work.

As members of the SAP University Alliance, HID have access to significant learning resources and expertise in Enterprise Systems, ensuring exposure to real-world enterprise technologies in the classroom. Student and staff take-up of this resource has been scant.

CPD for staff is focussed, in the first instance, on supporting dissertation and project supervision as described above in Section 6.3. In addition, a scholarship register is in progress, documenting CPD, scholarship and other relevant academic engagement by staff.

Physical space to support the postgraduate ethos has been identified: one resource room dedicated to PG learners and two bookable meeting rooms. The resource room has not been needed to date as the students have been using a dedicated classroom. The resource room is expected to be set up in Autumn 2026.

6.7 Findings

- 24. To date, considering the numbers and duration of the programme, we believe we are establishing a supportive yet academically challenging postgraduate learning environment. HID makes good use of the space available.
- 25. As we have recently appointed full-time academic staff the focus on CPD will be more structured.
- 26. As the programme progresses and learners engage with the dissertation for the first time further focus groups will be undertaken to establish the effectiveness of the assessment strategy, QA arrangements and information provided to learners.
- 27. HID has established a need for more focussed career preparation outside of the classroom. This will include successful HID graduates see Section 2.1.6. We expect to be informed by the proposed 'semester 6' exit survey in this regard.
- 28. As a member of the SAP university alliance HID have not fully leveraged the advantages that confers. This needs to be exploited more effectively.

7 Summary of Findings and Next Steps

7.1 Summary Action Plan

The self-evaluation identified 28 areas for continued development and enhancement ('findings'). These range from relatively discrete improvements to areas requiring systematic institutional development as HID grows. The draft action plan below translates these findings into specific actions. Following any feedback from the panel, the plan below will form the basis of our Quality Enhancement Plan. The full plan will include priority levels, lead and supporting responsibilities, timescales, success measures and evidence. The Plan will be monitored through the appropriate governance structures, with progress reported to Academic Board. Actions will not be regarded as complete solely because the proposed activity has taken place; where appropriate, HID will evaluate the impact of the action using defined success measures and evidence.

Finding	Self-evaluation finding	Enhancement action
1	HID's mission, vision and values are not yet sufficiently prominent throughout the student journey.	Embed the mission, vision and values at key points in the learner journey, including induction, Extended Induction, programme handbooks, learner communications, governance engagement and graduation/exit activity.
2	HID needs to continue measuring awareness of its mission, vision and values before progressing to measures of whether they are reflected in the learner experience.	Introduce an annual staff and learner survey measure of awareness. Once awareness reaches the agreed threshold, introduce questions testing whether staff and learners consider HID's activities and experience to reflect its mission and values.
3	HID requires a more systematic approach to tracking graduate outcomes and destinations as its graduate population grows.	Establish a Graduate Outcomes Framework covering employment, further study, sector/role, geographic destination, career progression and graduate engagement with HID. Develop appropriate data-collection points before and after graduation.
4	HID's governance arrangements should be reviewed as the institution grows and a second programme becomes established.	Undertake a formal governance review approximately one year after delivery of the second programme has commenced. Review committee structure, membership, delegated authority, reporting lines, workload and the advice received from Professors Hawking and Hazelkorn and Dr. Buckley-Dhoot.

5	HID should review whether committees currently embedded within the Programme Board remain appropriately located there as the institution grows.	Review the purpose, membership, frequency and reporting arrangements of committees currently operating through the Programme Board and determine whether each should remain embedded or become a stand-alone committee.
6	Learner participation in HID governance structures remains variable.	Develop a formal learner-representation and engagement approach, including representative induction, clear role descriptions, pre-meeting briefings, agenda preparation, attendance monitoring and feedback to the wider learner body.
7	Learner awareness of key QAM policies needs to improve.	Introduce regular, targeted communication on key learner-facing QAM policies through induction, Extended Induction, programme handbooks, LMS announcements and periodic reminders.
8	CPD arrangements need to become more formalised as faculty and learner numbers increase.	Establish a structured annual academic CPD programme, including seminars and workshops drawing on HEG resources and internal/external expertise. Maintain a formal CPD record for academic staff.
9	Manual reconciliation between systems creates an avoidable administrative and data-quality risk.	Develop a systems/data improvement plan covering integration, defined data-completeness checks, reconciliation responsibilities and procedures for resolving discrepancies. Evaluate greater use of LUNA for attendance, timetabling, fees and learner self-service.
10	Public information requires a more systematic review and version-control process.	Establish a formal public-information review schedule covering website content, programme information, fees, policies, handbooks and agent materials. Assign ownership and introduce version-control/archiving arrangements.
11	HID can make greater use of feedback and usage data to improve public information and the applicant/learner experience.	Develop a feedback and analytics cycle incorporating applicant queries, learner feedback, website analytics and partner/agent feedback to identify improvements to navigation, FAQs, calls to action, accessibility and pre-arrival information.
12	HID is developing its approach to final-year transfers and the use of digital currency assessment for applicants returning after a period away from formal education.	Formalise criteria and procedures for final-year transfer decisions, supported by Programme Leader benchmarking. Restrict digital currency assessment to applicants for whom the assessment is educationally appropriate, particularly those returning after a significant period outside formal education.

13	HID needs to strengthen alumni engagement and maintain a reliable alumni register to support graduate outcomes and institutional engagement.	Develop an alumni engagement plan, including maintenance of the alumni register, annual contact/update activity, graduate outcomes collection and opportunities for alumni to contribute to teaching, careers, mentoring and institutional activity.
14	The QAM requires further development in relation to staff development and the postgraduate learning environment.	Review and update QAM Section 15 to strengthen staff-development arrangements. As postgraduate provision develops, expand Section 23 to address the postgraduate ethos and learning environment.
15	Graduate Attributes are being updated by Holmes Institute and require formal adoption and communication at HID.	Complete consultation with staff and learners, formally adopt the Graduate Attributes for HID, map them to relevant programme/learner activities and publish them on the HID website.
16	HID should consider additional transition support at the point learners leave their programme.	Develop an "Exit Support" framework for final-stage learners, including career preparation, progression/further-study advice, alumni engagement, graduate outcomes and practical transition information. Pilot initially with BA final-year learners and MSc dissertation learners.
17	Assessment strategy would benefit from a clearer institutional-level framework to inform Programme Assessment Strategies.	Incorporate an institutional assessment strategy within the Teaching and Learning Strategy, covering assessment principles, balance, authenticity, academic integrity, feedback, moderation, reasonable workload and alignment with learning outcomes.
18	Moderation has been undertaken but moderation forms have not consistently been completed, and the required moderation percentage is not sufficiently clear in the Handbook.	Define the required moderation sample and process in the QAM/Handbook; introduce a standard moderation report/form; require Programme Directors to confirm completion of moderation before results are finalised.
19	The Teaching and Learning Committee should become a stand-alone committee to provide a formal mechanism for capturing and disseminating good practice and overseeing CPD.	Establish the Teaching and Learning Committee as a stand-alone committee reporting to the Programme Boards. Give it responsibility for teaching and learning enhancement, dissemination of good practice and oversight of the academic CPD register.
20	Programme Delivery should be more explicitly represented in learner representative discussions.	Make Programme Delivery a standing item on the Class Representative agenda, with a structured mechanism for representatives to raise issues and receive feedback on actions taken.
21	HID should continue to use focus groups more strategically, particularly in teaching, learning and assessment.	Establish an annual focus-group plan identifying priority topics, participant groups, timing and intended use of findings. Ensure outcomes and actions are reported back to participants where appropriate.

22	HID needs to continue developing meaningful external and internal benchmarking.	Develop a documented benchmarking framework identifying appropriate comparators, definitions, data sources, limitations and review frequency for key institutional and programme KPIs.
23	HID needs to formalise its retention strategy and use lessons learned to support learners at risk of non-retention.	Develop and approve a formal Retention and Progression Strategy covering early-warning indicators, risk identification, intervention pathways, responsibilities, escalation, reporting and evaluation of intervention outcomes.
24	HID considers that it is establishing a supportive yet academically challenging postgraduate environment, while recognising the limitations of current dedicated space.	Define and monitor postgraduate learning-environment requirements as the MSc population grows, including teaching space, independent study, collaboration, dissertation supervision and access to academic support. Develop a phased space/resource plan based on actual learner demand.
25	The appointment of full-time academic staff provides an opportunity to establish a more structured approach to CPD.	Implement individual academic development plans linked to role, programme needs, teaching/assessment responsibilities and institutional priorities.
26	The effectiveness of the postgraduate assessment strategy and QA arrangements cannot yet be fully evaluated because learners have not completed the full dissertation cycle.	Conduct targeted focus groups and other evaluation activity following the first MSc dissertation cycle, focusing on assessment expectations, supervision, dissertation information, QA processes and learner preparedness.
27	HID has identified a need for more focused career preparation outside the classroom.	Establish a structured career-readiness programme covering CV/application preparation, interviews, professional networking, sector engagement, alumni input and progression/further-study opportunities. Use the proposed Semester 6/exit survey and graduate outcomes data to evaluate effectiveness.
28	HID has not yet fully leveraged the opportunities available through the SAP university alliance.	Undertake a structured review of SAP Alliance opportunities and develop an annual engagement plan covering curriculum enhancement, industry engagement, guest speakers, student projects, placements, research, staff development and graduate employment opportunities.

8 Appendices

Appendices are numbered according to the section of the report in which they are first referenced.

Appendix 2.1

HID's Strategic Direction

First, HID seeks to consolidate and enhance the quality of its existing provision. The BA (Hons) in Business forms the foundation of its academic portfolio, while the recent development of Level 9 provision reflects an intention to expand the scope of its provision in a measured and sustainable manner. An enhanced BA (Hons) in Business programme was recently approved by QQI for a further 5-years in April 2026.

Second, HID maintains a strong focus on professional relevance, employability and structured progression. HID's programmes reflect recent developments in business, information systems, technology and the wider economy while retaining the academic depth expected of awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. Employer engagement, applied assessment, and the development of practical and transferable skills were central to programme development since HID's inception.

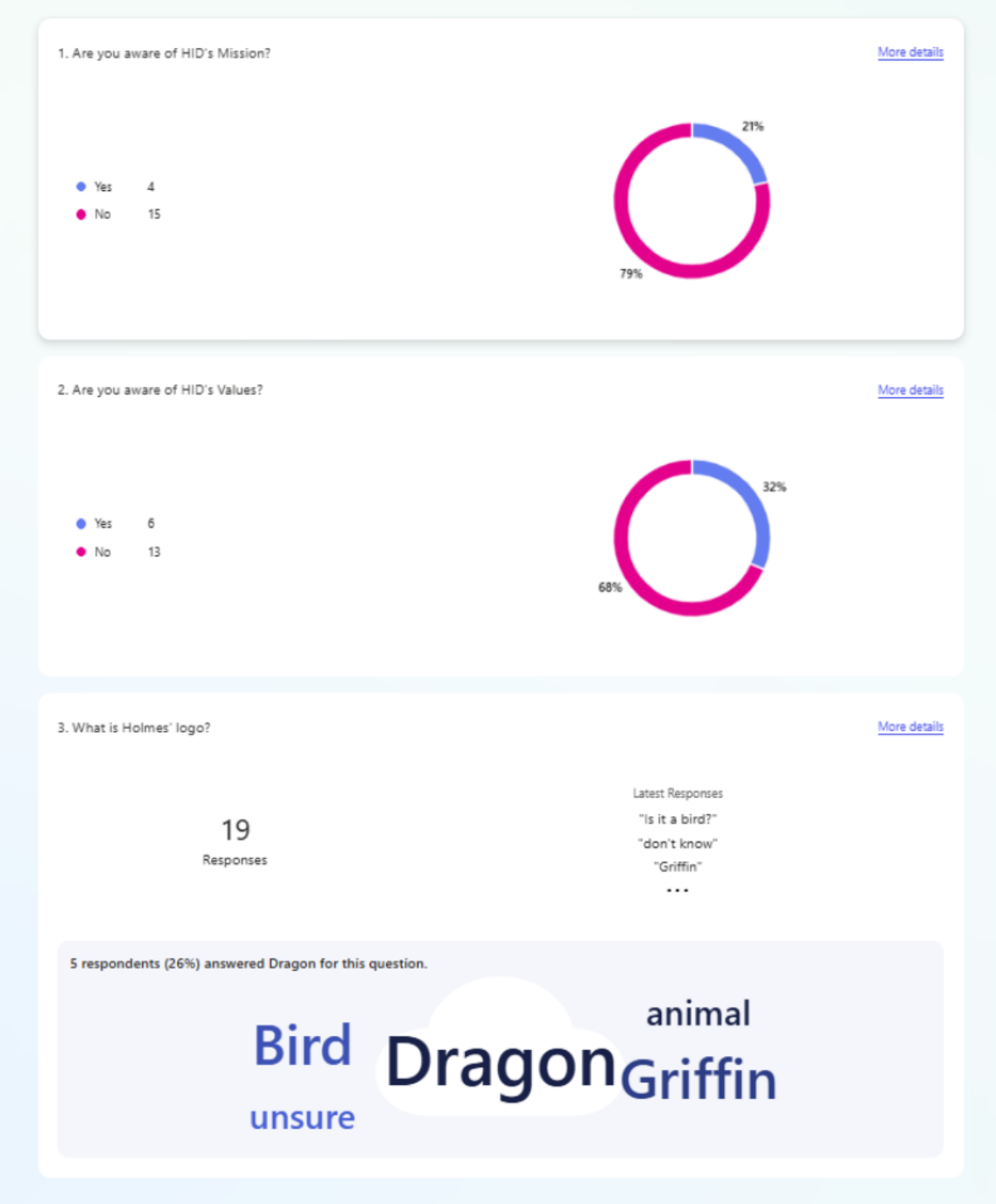
Third, HID seeks to strengthen its identity as an international learning community. HID's diverse learner body and position within the global Holmes Education Group framework provide access to international perspectives and educational experience across several jurisdictions. Increased faculty exchange and student mobility across Holmes campuses are a strategic interest for HID over the next five years.

Fourth, HID is committed to an inclusive and supportive learner experience. Academic support, lecturer office hours, small class sizes, an emphasis on digital and information literacy and reasonable accommodations for individual learners are integral to its educational model. HID is boutique enough whereby lecturers remain on a first-name basis with students, and this is a Holmes ethos around the world where students and teachers connect individually to create a personalised experience for the learner.

Fifth, HID is committed to continuous quality enhancement. Its quality assurance system supports evidence-based decision-making, programme monitoring, learner feedback, external input and accurate public information.

Appendix 2.2

Survey of HID 3rd Year Students. Are you aware of HID's Mission, HID's Values, and What is HID's logo?



Appendix 2.3

Summary of feedback of Professor Paul Hawking and Professor Ellen Hazelkorn on the effectiveness of the Academic Board

Professor Hawking considered the Academic Board to be operating mostly effectively and proportionately to HID's current size and stage of development. Professor Hawking particularly noted as follows:

- Reporting to the Board is structured and supports effective oversight of academic standards, quality assurance and the learner experience.
- The relationship between the Programme Board and Academic Board works well, allowing matters to be considered and refined before formal Academic Board consideration.
- Links with Holmes Institute Australia provide useful access to broader academic expertise and established practice.
- The Board has supported developments in areas including teaching and learning, academic integrity, assessment and staff development.
- As HID expands its provision, it would be timely to review governance arrangements to ensure they remain clear, scalable and appropriately externally represented.
- The Board's paperwork should be improved by way of signposting (i.e. what decision is being asked for of the Academic Board to approve).

Professor Hazelkorn, an external member of the Academic Board, was also asked for her feedback. Whilst Professor Hazelkorn's feedback was mostly positive, it did identify areas of improvement. Her comments are summarised below:

- The Academic Board is well-chaired and the reports presented are useful in supporting oversight.
- The current governance arrangements are functioning, but the distinction between academic and corporate governance could be clearer.
- The governance structure would benefit from a clearer visual representation of decision-making and approval responsibilities, particularly across QA and admissions.
- Externality could be strengthened. As HID grows, adding external representation could help broaden perspectives.

Overall, Professor Hazelkorn's perspective indicates that the Academic Board is functioning well, but that greater clarity of structures and adding further external representation would enhance its effectiveness further.

Appendix 2.4

Summary of feedback of Dr. Eileen Buckley-Dhoot on the Academic and Programme Boards

The Academic Board has worked well and is appropriate for the current size of the organisation. It receives and considers all reports required for both internal and external evaluation.

The Board provides oversight of all academic operations and more recently has been requesting further information on how HID establishes actions and enhancements resulting from the various reports and stakeholder feedback, this supports quality enhancement.

Academic Board discussions have supported development in grade criteria, groupwork guidelines, digital skills support, the institutional approach to generative AI and enhanced academic integrity arrangements. The overlap with the HIA Academic Board means HID can benefit from HIA initiatives and vice versa.

As the Academic Board receives reports from the Programme Board and because to date there has been only one programme board, these reports are more granular than would normally be expected for an Academic Board. For example, the board see all External Examiner Reports where in a larger organisation it would see a distillation of those reports. Despite this the Academic Board has focussed on the bigger picture and not become bogged down in detail.

To date, and because there was only one Programme Board the Teaching and Learning Committee was subsumed into the Programme Board. Now with the MSc and a second Programme Board, this Autumn (2026) sees the Teaching and Learning Committee is being established as a committee in its own right.

The Academic Board could be improved with the introduction of a risk register and as the initial programme development strategy is being realised, could focus on establishing a revised strategy for the next 5 years.

Appendix 2.5

Survey of HID 3rd Year Students

Are you aware of where HID's policies are? Have you read the QAM? Do you think that HID's policies are transparent?

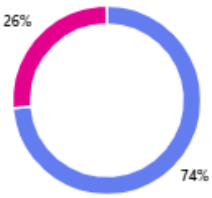
1. Are you aware of HID's Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) More details

Yes 17
No 2



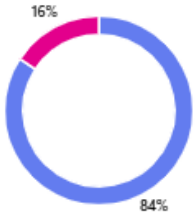
2. Have you read the QAM? More details

Yes 14
No 5



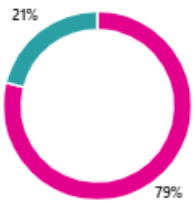
3. If you wanted to access HID's policies, would you know where to find them? More details

Yes 16
No 3



4. Have you had any reason to be concerned about a lack of transparency with HID's policies? More details

Yes 0
No 15
Maybe 4



Appendix 2.6

Examples of proposed changes to the QAM Edition 4 (2026/2027)

9.4	The use of the term 'cognate programme' in admissions and an explanation.
9.4.3	The reason for having an admissions interview vs. RPL interviews clarified as credibility interviews.
9.8.5	Where formerly it said an RPL was 'noted', in the new version the word for the note is clarified as 'Exemption Granted'.
9.11.1	Further clarity on where a learner is granted an exemption they will not be awarded credit or a grade.
9.12.5	Where learners can change from FT to PT the term 'if eligible' was added to make it clear there are criteria applied by registry e.g. visa requirements etc.
10.7.3.4	Review of trailing credit deficit the term 'normally' was added to better align with QQI Assessment and Standards.
10.7.4	The rule clarified in section 9.11.1 is reinforced.
10.7.5	In response to a panel review, and to reinforce existing rules, once a learner accepts the exit award they must acknowledge they have completed the programme.
10.9	Registered but non-enrolled learners may sit in class. This is now included in the QAM.
15.2.2	Redrafted to make the section simpler to read and more explicit.
22.3.4	A subsection has been added based on staff and student feedback *via* the Group work guidelines to ensure learners who attempt to share credit for work they do not contribute to are clearly identified as academic misconduct.
Section 26	Conferring ceremony is waiting on update from QQI
Section 26.2	Reference to the Diploma supplement has been added.

Appendix 2.7

HID Peer Review Process

The following explanation is provided to staff taking part in the peer review process:

Peer observation is voluntary and will be arranged between peers by agreement. New lecturers are subject to a management review which is mandatory and part of their induction.

The process is overseen by the Programme Board in that a record of observations is presented to the board periodically. The board will also evaluate the value of the process.

At HID peer observation falls into the category: Observation, review and feedback.

Less experienced staff should pair with more experienced staff so the act of observation also serves as a mentoring process, i.e., staff can get ideas, inspiration etc.

The observer should come in at the start of class and observe only, they will not participate even if they know the answer.

Notes can be taken and aspects of good practice as well as room for improvement should be noted. Templates will not be used at this juncture.

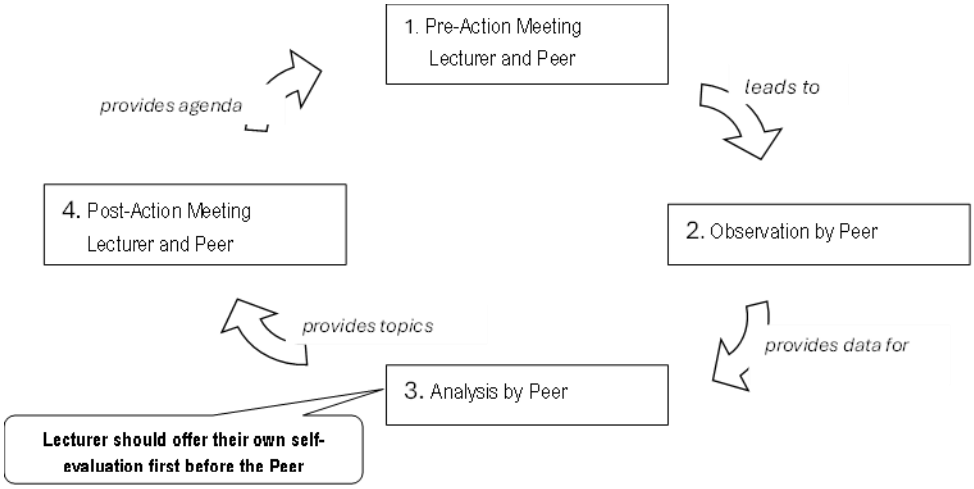
Notes are not shared with management but are between the observer and observed, these are shared *via* a conversation after the observation.

Observations are meant to be informative and not disruptive, views on the process will be garnered periodically, reported to Programme Board and noted at Revalidation meetings.

Whilst there will inevitably be some elements of evaluation, this process should lean more to developmental and collaborative. The process is intended to encourage “reflection on quality teaching and learning, enhanced dialogue and discourse, sharing of perspectives, and ultimately professional and personal growth”.

HID's approach to peer review of teaching is informed by:

1. HI Australia



2. Peer review of teaching (PRT) a quality enhancement and review process. Driven by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) expectations:

i) to assure the institution and others of the provision of quality teaching and assessment and

ii) to improve teaching and assessment through the sharing of good practice, staff support and enhancement of teaching practice.

Update 2026

The following codes have been added to the Peer Review log denoting the purpose of each review:

MGT	Management - New Lecturer Review
RT	Routine monitoring - Change of venue, new/revalidated programme, innovation
CPD	CPD - Less experienced lecturer observing more experienced lecturer, also succession planning
MNT	Mentoring - More experienced lecturer observing less experienced lecturer.
PR	Peer Review - experienced lecturer review, often reciprocal

Appendix 2.8

Example of Standard Weekly Operations Agenda

Meeting Agenda – HID Weekly Operation Meeting XX/XX/XXXX

1. **Actions from Previous Meetings**
2. **Admissions and Student Forecast**
3. **Technology**
4. **Academic**
5. **GNIB / Attendance**
6. **Communications to Students**
7. **Student Support**
8. **Any Other Business (AOB)**

Appendix 2.9

Learner information flow

Stage	Primary system	Principal purpose	Control point
Enquiry and application	HubSpot	Applicant information, documents, communications, status and offer management	Role-based access; privacy notice; admissions checks
Handover to the Institute	Registration sheet and LUNA (student record system)	Transfer of responsibility and relevant records	Documented handover and data reconciliation
Student lifecycle	Registration sheet and LUNA (for student records)	Registration, progression, student notes, results and transcript information	Restricted access; 2FA; accuracy checks
Results approval	Exam Board broadsheets / LUNA	Recording formally approved grades	Reconciliation against approved broadsheets
Historic admissions records	MARS / archive	Pre-September 2025 admissions records	Migration evidence or controlled legacy status

Appendix 2.10

Feedback from HID Registry and Student Services staff on how data and information systems are used to maintain accurate student records, monitor learner engagement and support evidence-based decision-making and quality assurance.

Riya Saha (Registry)

Riya described how she:

- Maintains LUNA as the definitive record of enrolment status, progression, award classification and grades, working from established sources in the HELLO inbox and approved Exam Board broadsheets.
- Regards LUNA as effective and well controlled, providing a comprehensive and reliable view of each learner's academic record.
- Confirms clear separation of duties: her role is confined to LUNA, with her access to the Registration sheet limited to view only.
- Describes an established routine of prompt case-by-case review, supported by shared documentation and diary-note practices, which keeps records current between intakes
- Reports that student queries relating to records are limited and routine, indicating that learners find their information accurate and accessible.
- Identifies scope for enhancement in extending LUNA to attendance, timetabling and fee administration, and notes that record completeness currently depends on consistent individual monitoring rather than a systematic completeness check.

Ronita Mukherjee (Student Services)

- Regards HubSpot as a clear improvement, noted how it was strong on data privacy, with a measurable reduction in discrepancies and a significant decrease in manual work since implementation.
- Rates LUNA as highly effective and the system she trusts most day to day for continuing student information, using it for payment receipts, academic transcripts and visa letters.
- Begins each week with a structured HubSpot centre check to confirm application statuses reflect the true position, an established and reliable routine.
- Maintains Blackboard actively, assisting academic staff to add new cohorts and removing graduated learners so the platform reflects only current students, which supports accuracy across systems. Can see student engagement in Blackboard and intervene and report to registry / Dean and others where engagement is poor.
- Applies a consistent verification approach to any discrepancy, tracing records to source across SharePoint, LUNA notes, the accounts sheet and correspondence, and involving the Programme Director where additional context is required.
- Manages LUNA and Blackboard access for students and colleagues on a joiners-and-leavers basis, with HubSpot employee access held centrally and student access automated.
- Identifies enhancement opportunities in resolving progression-status mismatches between the Registration Sheet and LUNA through a defined process, and in enabling students to access their own letters and records directly rather than through manual issue.

Appendix 2.11

Feedback from Group Marketing Manager, Hazel Nguyen on HID's information in the public domain and possible improvements

Hazel Nguyen (Group Marketing Manager)

- Describes a clear and consistently applied publication route and confirms that changes generally originate with the Director of Global Engagement and are updated and checked for formatting and links, and go live only once approved
- Confirms that course information is verified against current QQI approvals before publication and that current QQI brand guidelines are applied throughout
- Regards course content, institutional information and enquiry routes as the strongest elements of HID's public information
- Reports that applicant enquiries are concentrated on a predictable and well-defined set of topics, such as course details, entry requirements, fees and start dates which are addressed through published information and direct contact
- Notes that authorised representatives operate from institutionally supplied materials, with an updated partner toolkit identified as a means of strengthening consistency further
- Identifies enhancement opportunities in introducing a formal periodic review cycle for published content, developing clearer calls to action and FAQs, and strengthening pre-arrival guidance on course expectations, timetables, fees and accommodation

Appendix 3.1

Extract from the HID TrustEd Report Principle 5.2 page 6.

TrustEd Report

Holmes Institute, Dublin operates fair, transparent and consistent admission policies that support the successful participation of international learners in their chosen programmes. The admission requirements and process are robust assured [sic]*, and its Admissions Committee ensures compliance; learner information clearly specifies the requirements regarding the required level of English.*

HID has adopted the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and has also taken due account of the Global Convention on Higher Education of 2019: this is reflected in the Quality Manual. The Panel noted with interest that the verification process was evaluated positively in collaboration with the QQI "Spotlight on Recognition" tool.

Appendix 3.2

HID has assessed international qualifications from more than 80 countries for the purposes of recognition for access to, in the first instance, the BA (Hons) in Business. These examinations have been assessed against the Irish Leaving Cert at, at least, 2 H5s and 4 O6s, including vocational awards where appropriate.

Qualifications from EU and EFTA countries are informed by "Entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA/UK Applicants" for 2026 entry.

Non-EU Qualifications are assessed by the Dean and recorded in "Equivalent Academic Entry Criteria – HID 2026" using the process described below.

Policy:
International qualifications are recognised at the equivalent level and then performance at that level is evaluated to determine if it equates to the specified entry criteria. The qualification is recognised as equivalent unless a substantial difference is evidenced.

Process:
The process involves:

- Determination of level equivalence of the award with the support of NARIC Ireland and of NUFFIC.
- Credit Volume and/or duration (full time/part-time) is determined as appropriate.
- Determining if the performance at the level is equivalent to the entry criteria for the relevant programme.

This exercise is reinforced by benchmarking with other Irish HEI's, UCD Global Studies is an example of a standard benchmark used by HID.

Where a specific requirement, such as mathematics at, at least, O6 in the Irish Leaving Certificate is specified, then an additional benchmarking of the level of maths obtained is undertaken, particularly where mathematics may not be included in that country's Advanced or Senior Certificates. The evaluation of the Ugandan and Tanzanian requirements is included as an example in Folder 5 – document 3.1.

When a particular qualification is presented for admission, the additional step of verifying the accreditation of the awarding body is carried out at that stage. At this stage documents are assumed genuine unless there are indications that suggest otherwise. The verification step takes place at registration to ensure verification is balanced with efficiency. This is aligned to "Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the "Assessment of Foreign Qualifications - Verification of the Authenticity of Documents", Paragraphs 25 – 28[23].

[23] Assessment of Foreign Qualifications - Verification of the Authenticity of Documents", Paragraphs 25 – 28

Appendix 3.3

Completion Data for Kenyan Students

	Total	Grad	First	Upper Second	Lower Second	WD	In System	Deceased
22C1	5	4		2	2	1		
23C2	8	6		5	1	1	1	
23C3	13	7	1	3	3	1	4	1
Total	26	17	1	10	6	3	5	1
		% of Total	% of Grad	% of Grad	% of Grad	% of Total	% of Total	
%	100	65	6	59	35	12	19	

Appendix 3.4

English Language Tests for HID – access to Academic Programmes 2026-27

Test	Score Equivalent to CEFR B2+
Irish Leaving Certificate	OD3 or O6/H7
QQI FET ESL	Merit or Distinction in the level 5 modules "English as a Second language" or "Communications"
IELTS Academic	6.0
ETAPP - English Test for Academic and Professional Purposes (Interactive English Tests Ltd).	B2+
PTE – Pearson Academic	54
TOEFL iBT Before January 21, 2026 On or after January 21, 2026	 80 4.5
GCE O Level	Grade C
GCSE English Language GCSE English literature	Grade 4/C
Cambridge Examinations: B2 First/B2 First for Schools C1 Advanced C2 Proficiency B2 Business Vantage C1 Business Higher	 Grade B (173) or better Level B2 (173 points) or better Level C1 or better Grade B (173) or better Level B2 (173 points) or better
TOEIC	750
ARELS/Oxford UK	Higher - Good
London Tests of English (Edexcel) Pearson Language Assessment	Level 4
Trinity College (London) Integrated Skills in English	ISE Level III ISE II can be accepted where no skill is less than a merit and at least 2 skills are at distinction level.
British Council -UCLES/IDP	6
Pitman UK	Level 5 Advanced
Duolingo	100 BA (Hons) in Business 105 Level 9 programmes
Password Skills	Band 6
LanguageCert	LanguageCert International ESOL SELT B2 (4 Skills - Listening, Reading, Writing & Speaking) Score of 37 (B2+) **Or** B2 Communicator – High Pass with no less than 33 in all 4 skills.

Appendix 4.1

Benchmarking Exercise on Effective Teaching and Learner Interactions.

HID take a general satisfaction survey at least six weeks into the programme at Stage 1. Two questions were taken from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (http://studentsurvey.ie); Overall Effective Teaching Practices and Quality of interactions, see below for actual questions.

To benchmark, HID compared with two providers whose data was in the public domain, DBS and DCU. The comparison was made with the most up to date data available at the time the survey was analysed. The comparison was made with data supplied for Undergraduate year 1.

The metric used for benchmarking was the difference between the value at the highest end of the scale, i.e. 'Very Much' for Q1 and 'Excellent' for Q2 between HID and the comparator provider.

It is important to note that both HID and the benchmark institution performed well in both questions, the data presented here is for benchmarking purposes only, so a negative value does not imply dissatisfaction.

In summary HID benchmarked very well within the classroom, in fact both private providers did well compared to the public institution. Table 1 and Figure 1 compare HID with the other private provider. The extent the bar rises above the line is the extent to which HID surpasses the benchmarked institution:

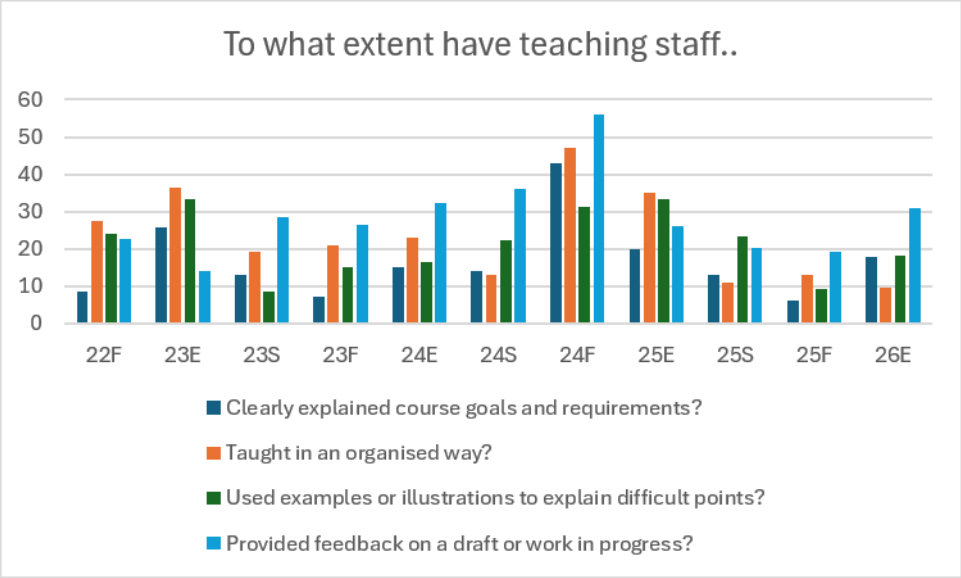
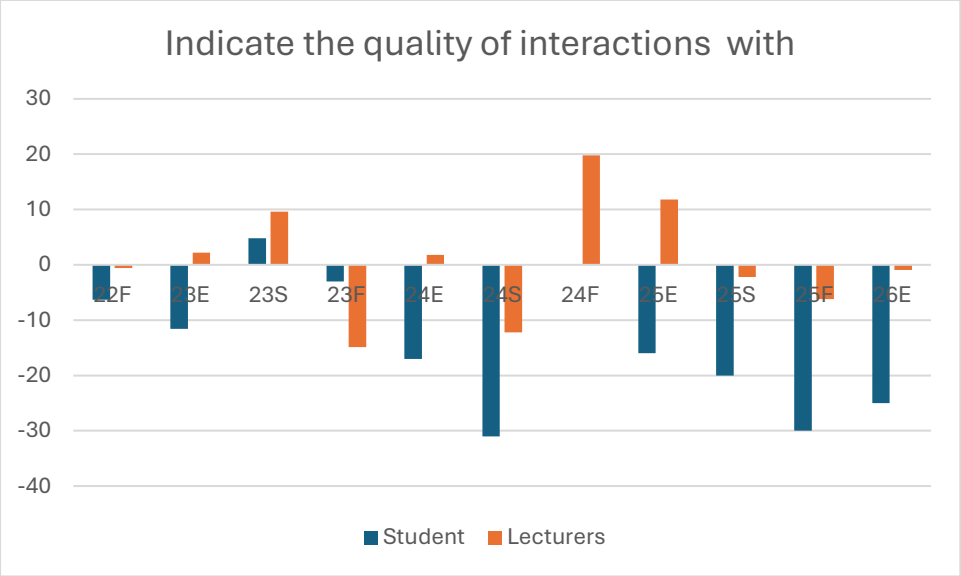


Figure 1 – Data in Table 1 below.

It can be seen that HID exceeds the benchmark provider in all categories: the focus on quality in the classroom is working and learners are more satisfied at the outset of the programme than in other institutions.

HID are aware that learner interaction does not benchmark well. Registry and support staff responses are excluded as the categories may be confused; only learner and academic staff interaction are shown.



Here it can be seen that HID does not benchmark well in terms of learner-learner interaction, (the sum of differences is -155.1), and is distributed around 0 for the academic interaction (the sum of difference is 8.2). One would expect the sum of differences close to 0 when benchmarking similar providers.

HID has explored these results with learners and attributes it to underdeveloped student societies at this stage of its development and size.

Q1 Overall effective Teaching Practices

During the current academic year, to what extent have lecturers / teaching staff…

Clearly explained course goals and requirements

Very little Some Quite a bit Very much

Taught in an organised way

Very little Some Quite a bit Very much

Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points

Very little Some Quite a bit Very much

Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress

Very little Some Quite a bit Very much

Q2 Quality of interactions

At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with…

Student Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Excellent

Lecturers Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Excellent

Support Staff Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Excellent

Registry Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Excellent

How the comparison metric was established:

http://studentsurvey.ie (DBS) Page 5 Effective Teaching Practices –

"Clearly explained course goals and requirements" Column Undergraduate Year 1

Very much = 38.7%

HID same question Autumn 2022 = 47.2%

Difference = 8.5 This is the comparator metric.

Table 1

During the current academic year, to what extent have lecturers / teaching staff...											
	22F	23E	23S	23F	24E	24S	24F	25E	25S	25F	26E
Clearly explained course goals and requirements?	8.5	25.6	13	7.3	15	14	43	20	13	6	18
Taught in an organised way?	27.6	36.3	19.3	21	23.1	13.1	47.1	35.1	11.1	13.1	9.6
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points?	24.2	33.2	8.6	15.1	16.3	22.3	31.3	33.3	23.3	9.3	18.3
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress?	22.6	14.2	28.5	26.4	32.2	36.2	56.2	26.2	20.2	19.2	31

Table 2:

At your institution, please indicate the quality of interactions with...											
	22F	23E	23S	23F	24E	24S	24F	25E	25S	25F	26E
Student	-6.3	-11.6	4.8	-3	-17	-31	0	-16	-20	-30	-25
Lecturers	-0.6	2.2	9.6	-14.9	1.8	-12.2	19.8	11.8	-2.2	-6.2	-0.9



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