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Independent College
CINNTE Institutional Review 2026
Self-Evaluation Report

Final submission version | October 2026

This report evaluates Independent College's quality assurance arrangements, the improvements made during the review period and the priorities for further development. It brings together the experience of staff and students, programme evidence and findings from internal and external review.

The Quality Enhancement Plan sets out how the College will carry forward the findings, with responsibilities, timescales and arrangements for reviewing progress and effectiveness.

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Foreword from the President

There has been a great deal of work across Independent College over the past number of years, much of it underway well before this CINNTE review. Staff and students have contributed to that development, and this report gives us an opportunity to recognise what has been achieved and examine where further improvement is needed. We have strengthened our academic team, introduced more regular programme reporting and acted on external recommendations. We are also reviewing our own practice more closely and using what we learn to improve how the College works. We now need to follow these changes through and assess the difference they make to teaching, learning and the student experience. There is more to do, but the College has made real progress. Preparing this report has helped us take stock, bring together the experience of colleagues and students, and agree our priorities. I welcome the panel's perspective and look forward to discussing both the progress we have made and the work ahead.

Dr. Paula Kenny

President, Independent College

Executive Summary

During 2025–26, Independent College strengthened its academic leadership, expanded its teaching team and established more regular programme reporting. These developments build on several years of work to improve programme quality, documentation and academic oversight, much of it underway before the CINNTE review. External Examiners have provided positive assurance on standards and marking in the assessments reviewed (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2025d; Independent College, 2026o). The College's own reviews identified matters requiring further attention. These included policies that no longer reflected practice, an overly complex reporting cycle, inconsistent communication to students about action taken on their feedback, and gaps in the information available to Examination Boards and the recording of decisions. Academic Council approved the College's response through clearer responsibilities, policy revision and reporting arrangements. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) sets out the continuing work, who is responsible and when progress and effectiveness will be reviewed (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026c). The Area for Special Consideration examines how academic quality is maintained across programme development, delivery and review. Six case studies in Appendix F support the evaluations in Sections 3 and 4, covering revalidation, progression and retention reporting, programme monitoring, Examination Board arrangements, professional-programme governance and academic integrity. They show the improvements made, what the College has learned and where further work is needed.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report evaluates Independent College's quality-assurance arrangements for the 2026 CINNTE institutional review. Section 2 provides the institutional background and profile. Sections 3 and 4 present the evaluation against the review objectives and Area for Special Consideration, and Section 5 brings together the conclusions and Quality Enhancement Plan. The appendices provide supporting detail and case studies (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2026b; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2026c).

1.2 Approach to Self-Evaluation

Preparation brought together the College's programme and institutional reviews, the work of Academic Council and its subcommittees, policy-owner checks and evidence of current practice. The Academic Council Institutional Review Working Group (IRWG), established in September 2025, examined academic governance and the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM). Its six meetings considered how the College's arrangements worked, where responsibilities were unclear and what needed to change. The wider institutional evaluation draws on this work alongside programme reports, External Examiner findings, revalidation, TrustEd and the Dean of Teaching and Learning's review of assessment practice (Independent College, 2026b, pp.4–5 and 13; Independent College, 2026c).

The process involved committee chairpersons and members, Programme Leaders, academic staff, professional staff and policy owners. It included review of the College's mission and values, self-evaluation by subcommittees and checks of whether documented policies reflected practice. Academic Council's adoption of the IRWG report authorised the recommendations arising from that work. Time for additional consultation specifically on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was limited; the evaluation therefore drew mainly on established staff and student engagement rather than a separate College-wide consultation. Appendix D explains these contributions and the limitations of participation (Independent College, 2026b, pp.5–8). The Senior Management Committee (SMC) signed off the draft within its remit, and Academic Council approved the final SER and academic enhancement priorities for submission to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), subject to incorporation of the agreed amendments (Independent College, 2026bt).

An evidence matrix was developed alongside the QAM review and preparation of the SER to bring findings, supporting records and proposed actions into one working document. It began with a review of the QAM against current practice and was extended as evidence became available from policy owners, programme teams, committees and external reviews. This allowed the College to compare what its policies required with what was happening in practice, identify gaps and record the response needed (Independent College, 2026c). The matrix contains a policy and action review, an evidence register, institutional priorities and maps linking the evidence to the SER objectives and case studies. For each review finding, it records the relevant policy or area, the supporting evidence, the action required, the owner where confirmed, the governance route and the current status. It also identifies the records needed to demonstrate completion and, separately, whether the action

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has addressed the issue. The evidence register provides document references and notes on their status and limitations. The matrix was used to select evidence for the SER and check its conclusions, including where a decision has been approved but implementation or evaluation remains outstanding (Independent College, 2026c). Evidence matrix and supporting records – QQI SharePoint submission folder

Following completion of the SER, the College will retain the matrix as a working record supporting the QEP and the continuing QAM review. Policy owners and action leads will provide updates and supporting records through the relevant reporting arrangements, with the quality assurance (QA) team coordinating the record. It will help the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QA&E) and Academic Council distinguish actions awaiting a decision, work in progress and actions ready for closure. Where a change has been implemented, the record will identify any further review needed to assess its effect. The matrix will support existing committee reporting rather than create a separate approval process. A dated copy will preserve the evidence position at submission, with subsequent updates recording the College's continuing work (Independent College, 2026c).

The report follows the four review objectives and criteria in QQI's January 2026 Terms of Reference. Each objective evaluates the College's arrangements, identifying strengths and work still required. Appendix F provides case studies, and Appendix G relates the evaluation to the agreed QAM structure (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2026c, pp.6–8).

2. Provider Context

2.1 History and Development of Independent College

Established in 2007, Independent College is a private third-level institution in Dublin, offering QQI-validated undergraduate and postgraduate programmes alongside professional programmes outside the National Framework of Qualifications, including certificate and diploma provision in professional legal studies. Its provision spans business, marketing, accounting, finance, dispute resolution and law. Since 2015, the College has grown significantly, moving premises, expanding its facilities and broadening its programme offering. Much of this growth has come through international student recruitment. The Strategic Plan identifies a corresponding priority to broaden recruitment in Ireland and other markets (Independent College, 2026w, p.4).

The development of QA has accompanied this growth. QQI re-engagement in 2020 was an earlier stage in this work (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2020); subsequent milestones include approval for blended learning in 2022, consolidation of the QAM in 2024, programme revalidation and the introduction of semester monitoring in 2025. Joining Axis Education Group in March 2025 brought the College into a wider education group. During 2025–26, additional academic appointments, Programme Leaders and Dean roles strengthened the capacity to oversee delivery and student experience. Section 2.9 follows how these developments led into the present self-evaluation (Independent College, 2026b, pp.3–5 and 11; Independent College, 2026w, p.4; Independent College, 2026a).

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2.2 Current Institutional Context

The College became part of Axis Education Group in 2025, alongside Dublin Academy of Education, International House Dublin and Public Affairs Ireland. This places it within a wider educational group spanning school, language, higher and professional education. Within that setting, Independent College retains a distinct academic remit and its responsibilities for programme quality, standards and the experience of its own learners (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, p.12; Independent College, 2026j, printed p.5).

The Group organisation and leadership chart in Appendix A places the College within the wider Axis Education Group and identifies Group leadership and support functions in finance, operations, innovation and creative services. The College's own organisational and academic governance charts set out its internal responsibilities and academic oversight (Axis Education Group, 2026).

During 2025–26, the College strengthened its executive and academic leadership and expanded its teaching and support teams. The President's role as Chief Academic Officer, supported by the Dean of Teaching and Learning and Dean of Student Affairs, provides clearer responsibility for academic standards, teaching practice and the student experience. At programme level, the development of discipline departments and the appointment of senior lecturers, department heads and programme coordinators have strengthened subject leadership and the oversight of programme delivery. These appointments have also supported the introduction of semester programme reports and more regular consideration of student performance, feedback and programme needs by Programme Boards and Academic Council (Independent College, 2026b, pp.3–5 and 11; Independent College, 2026a). Section 2.7 sets out the lecturer profile and additional appointments (Independent College, 2026a). The organisation chart records these responsibilities and reporting lines. The College will assess how the changes are working through programme monitoring, staff development and review of workload and student-support needs (Independent College, 2026n).

2.3 Mission, Strategy and Strategic Direction

The College's mission is reflected in the purpose set out in its Strategic Plan 2021–2025, Learning for a new world, extended to March 2027: to provide an inclusive education that enables learners to develop their abilities and contribute to professional and community life. Its vision combines academic quality and an entrepreneurial outlook with industry-linked programmes that prepare learners for changing demands in work and society. Its ambition to help students move beyond cultural and other barriers is particularly relevant to a College with a substantial international student population and routes into both higher education and professional learning (Independent College, 2026w, pp.4–6). The plan names five core values: Quality, Economy Driven, Learner Centred, Values and Belonging. Quality extends from academic standards to the student experience, partnerships, processes and people. Economy Driven connects the relevance of education with employability and changing professional demands. Learner Centred concerns the individual student, flexibility, respect and appropriate support. The value headed "Values" places emphasis on inclusive communities and contribution to society, while Belonging recognises students' confidence, participation and relationships with their peers. These values guide the College's work in admissions, programme design, teaching and student support (Independent College, 2026w, pp.5–6).

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The College expresses its beliefs through six graduate attributes: Innovative; Solution-Oriented; Effective Communicators; Socially and Ethically Responsible; Dynamic Leaders; and Dedicated to Continuous Learning. Academic Council adopted these as the College's academic quality objectives. The approved implementation paper links each attribute to the College's educational commitments and provides for programme-level mapping and semester reporting. Implementation will be phased, with indicators refined through programme teams' experience (Independent College, 2026b, pp.7–8; Independent College, 2026ao, pp.1–2). The Strategic Plan sets out six objectives: sustainable growth and expansion; education and student experience; industry engagement and partnerships; people and ways of working; physical and digital infrastructure; and financial sustainability. Within education and student experience, the plan prioritises teaching and assessment, programme review, technology-supported learning and the development of digital, interpersonal and project-management skills. Industry engagement is intended to inform programme development and maintain the relevance of provision through relationships with employers, professional communities and academic partners (Independent College, 2026w, pp.7–8). The people and infrastructure objectives recognise that these ambitions depend on the College's capacity to deliver them. Priorities include clearer academic and administrative reporting lines, improved staff induction, continuing professional development, career progression and workload planning. The infrastructure objectives cover teaching facilities, digital platforms and access to appropriate software and learning resources. They also identify the need to improve integration between student-record and learning-management systems and make better use of institutional information in planning and review. Financial sustainability supports these objectives through long-term planning, realistic recruitment projections and the development of relevant academic, professional and continuing-education provision (Independent College, 2026w, pp.9–11). Academic Council has approved a stakeholder information sheet explaining how the graduate attributes relate to the College's values and serve as academic quality objectives. The information sheet will support communication with students, staff and other stakeholders (Independent College, 2026bl; Independent College, 2026bt).

Developments during 2025–26 are consistent with this direction. Additional academic appointments and programme leadership roles have strengthened staffing capacity. Revalidation has informed programme content and learning outcomes, while semester reporting provides a more regular basis for reviewing delivery and student experience. The External Advisory Panel offers a further means of bringing employer and professional perspectives into academic development. These are practical examples of progress against the strategy; the evaluation in Section 3 and the case studies in Appendix F consider their contribution and the work still required (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b). The Strategic Plan assigns responsibility for implementation to senior management, Academic Council and the President, with actions delegated to relevant staff and annual review of progress and performance indicators (Independent College, 2026w, p.11). The IRWG recommended a more regular place for strategy in Academic Council's work, through briefings and an annual review of how its activities support the College's mission and strategic objectives. Academic Council has adopted this recommendation, providing for programme review findings and priorities in the QEP to inform that discussion (Independent College, 2026b, pp.6–8). The next strategy will draw on institutional review and the College's experience of implementing its current priorities. This gives the College an opportunity to retain what is working, address the areas

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identified through self-evaluation and set measures that reflect its student population, programme provision and capacity (Independent College, 2026b, p.6; Independent College, 2026w).

2.4 Organisational and Governance Structure

Academic Council is the senior academic authority and is supported by Programme Boards, Examination Boards and specialist subcommittees. The President chairs the Senior Management Committee (SMC), the College executive and operational management body, and reports to the Board on its work. The External Chairperson of Academic Council provides an independent academic-quality assurance route to the Board (Independent College, 2026j, Section 2; Independent College, 2024a). Commercial and Student Admissions are separate functions reporting directly to the President, alongside Academic Operations, Academic Leadership and Subject Areas, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and Student Affairs and Research Centres. These relationships connect the College's academic and student-facing work with executive responsibility while preserving Academic Council's academic authority (Independent College, 2026n; Independent College, 2026j, Section 2).

2.5 Academic Provision and Programme Portfolio

The College's academic portfolio is centred on business and law, with undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (Honours) programmes in Business Studies (BABS), Marketing (BAM), Accounting and Finance (BAAF) and International Business (BAIB), alongside the Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution (MADR). These areas connect academic study with professional practice and provide opportunities for students to develop subject knowledge, analytical skills and their capacity to apply learning in employment. The 2025 TrustEd assessment records QQI-validated provision at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Levels 6, 8 and 9 (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, p.12; Independent College, 2026b, pp.3–5). The undergraduate business provision includes a Common Foundation Year, followed by more specialised study within the named programmes. This gives students a grounding in business disciplines before developing their knowledge in their chosen area. Advanced-entry arrangements also provide routes into later programme stages, subject to assessment of prior learning and the relevant entry requirements. The June 2026 advanced-entry review illustrates how Admissions and academic teams are examining students' experience after entry and identifying where additional preparation or support may be needed (Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026r). Programme review and revalidation have supported the development of this portfolio. The 2024 postgraduate and 2025 undergraduate revalidation work led to recommendations on learning outcomes, assessment, industry engagement, staffing and student support. Subsequent work has included revision of learning outcomes and programme documentation, strengthening of academic staffing and the introduction of semester programme reporting. The provider review reports also set out proposed curriculum developments in areas such as contemporary marketing practice and financial modelling. Appendix F, Case Study 1 examines the College's response to revalidation (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2025h).

Professional provision complements the QQI-validated portfolio. It includes the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies, preparation for the Law Society's Final Examination – First

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Part (FE1) and the Today FM radio and podcast production course. These programmes serve learners seeking professional knowledge, examination preparation or practical skills development. The Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies are subject to external review and approval arrangements through the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives in the United Kingdom (CILEX UK). The approved professional-programme governance approach clarifies how this provision is documented, monitored and reported through the College's academic structures; Appendix F, Case Study 5 considers this work in more detail (Independent College, 2026g; Independent College, 2026m).

The College is developing its provision in accounting, finance and preparation for higher education. Academic Council has approved the Professional Certificate in Financial Modelling and Valuation and the development of a Master of Science (MSc) in International Accounting and Analytics, which remains subject to QQI validation. A preparatory programme combining business study and English-language development is also being explored with International House Dublin. These developments are at different stages of approval and implementation. Appendix C provides details of the programme portfolio (Independent College, 2026ag; Independent College, 2026ah; Independent College, 2026ax; Independent College, 2026av).

2.6 Learner Profile

The College's students are predominantly international, with English as their second language. Most are mature learners, and many combine study with employment and other commitments. Some are already living in Ireland when they enrol, while others arrive from overseas. They bring experience of work, previous study and different education systems, contributing to the College's academic and cultural life.

The College's student community spans QQI-validated higher-education programmes and professional provision outside the NFQ. Students' visa and immigration requirements vary, and residence in Ireland does not in itself remove the conditions attached to an individual's immigration permission. The Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) and its transition to TrustEd Ireland form part of the national context for the College's international provision. They concern programmes eligible for students who require permission to study in Ireland. The College's TrustEd Ireland authorisation sits within these arrangements, while programme eligibility for immigration purposes remains separate from QQI validation. Authorisation does not automatically make every College course eligible for student immigration permission (Immigration Service Delivery, 2026, p.1). Admissions is often students' first point of contact with the College. The Admissions team explains programme entry requirements, recognition of previous study, English language requirements and enrolment, and provides pre-departure information where needed. Support with visa and registration queries takes account of students' circumstances, whether they are already living in Ireland or preparing to travel. Students are directed to Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) for registration information, including guidance on the Irish Residence Permit (IRP) (Independent College, 2026ai; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, pp.7–8 and 12; Immigration Service Delivery, 2025).

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The College serves undergraduate students building a foundation in business and progressing into specialist study, postgraduate students developing advanced knowledge in dispute resolution, and professional learners seeking a particular skill, professional qualification or preparation for external examinations. Study patterns include full-time and part-time provision, with blended delivery where applicable and fully online delivery for professional programmes outside the NFQ (Independent College, 2026g; Independent College, 2026ae). The College's approach is to help students understand what is expected of them and know where to turn for assistance. Induction introduces students to their programme, College staff and one another. It covers assessment, academic integrity, attendance, progression and the support available, with information retained on Moodle for students to revisit. The two principal intakes, in September and February, advanced-entry admissions and students returning to study mean that this work extends beyond welcoming a single first-year cohort. Admissions, academic teams and Student Affairs contribute at different stages, supporting students as they enter and progress through their programmes (Independent College, 2026j, pp.238–239; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, pp.7–8).

Through this regular contact, the College understands the demands many students face in combining study with employment and other commitments. Students also bring experience of different education systems and may need time and support to become familiar with academic expectations in Ireland. Workshops, academic guidance, careers and counselling support, and opportunities to meet other students form part of the College's response. Independent College was among the first private higher-education providers authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark, following the first application window. The TrustEd assessment recognised this coordinated provision and found the College compliant with all fifteen applicable learner-support criteria (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, pp.8 and 12). These circumstances also affect how students participate in College life and formal governance. Students contribute through direct contact with staff, surveys, class representatives and Programme Boards, although maintaining attendance at meetings has proved more difficult. Building on these relationships and making representative roles workable alongside students' other commitments are priorities for wider participation. The QEP takes this forward through support for representatives, more consistent consideration of feedback and clearer communication to students about the action taken (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026aa; Independent College, 2026c).

The College is strengthening how it evaluates the student experience and the support it provides. The Student Progression, Retention and Success Reporting Framework will bring together information on enrolment, attendance, assessment, withdrawal and deferral through semester reporting. Analysis by programme, intake and entry route will help the College identify where students encounter difficulties and review whether its response is effective. This builds on existing monitoring and programme reports, with further work needed to ensure consistent definitions and reliable comparisons. Appendix F, Case Study 2 examines this development alongside the advanced-entry review (Independent College, 2026l; Independent College, 2026ac).

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2.7 Staffing and Academic Workforce

The College's academic community has expanded in response to programme needs and external-review recommendations. The teaching team includes full-time and part-time faculty. It includes Senior Lecturers, College Lecturers, Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers and Teaching Assistants. Doctoral qualifications and continuing doctoral study contribute to expertise across teaching and academic leadership. The team brings academic, professional and industry experience across the College's subject areas (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026c). Department heads provide leadership in Business and Innovation, Accounting and Finance, Marketing and Dispute Resolution Studies. Programme and year coordinators support the undergraduate programmes, Common Foundation Year and Master of Arts (MA) in Dispute Resolution, alongside Legal Studies and Teaching and Learning coordination. Research leadership includes the Head of Research, the Centre for Dispute Resolution Studies and the developing Institute for Innovation, Strategic Research and Entrepreneurship (I^2sRE). These responsibilities strengthen subject leadership and continuity in programme delivery (Independent College, 2026bo).

The senior leadership team brings together the Dean of Teaching and Learning, Dean of Student Affairs, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Commercial Director and Director of Student Admissions. Commercial and Student Admissions are separate functions, both reporting directly to the President. Additional appointments in QA, Student Affairs, marketing and finance have strengthened support across the College. A dedicated College Librarian leads the development of library provision (Independent College, 2026bo). The Academic Operations Manager role brings together operational support for programme delivery, examinations, attendance, retention, academic systems and facilities. Its responsibilities complement those of the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for the QA framework, compliance, and Examination Board coordination and reporting. The role descriptions distinguish operational responsibilities from quality assurance and oversight (Independent College, 2026bq; Independent College, 2026c). The Dean of Student Affairs leads implementation of the student-success framework and coordinates student support and interventions. The role ensures that student feedback informs institutional planning and review, and that students are informed of the action taken. It also oversees workshops in wellbeing, personal development, life skills and career development, reflecting the range of support students need during their time at the College (Independent College, 2026aw, p.7). Alongside these appointments, the College is developing its approach to staff recognition and career development. Building on the academic ranks and staffing arrangements introduced in 2025, work on an Academic Career Framework and a separate Academic Rank Policy continues through the relevant academic and corporate approval routes. Section 3.3.2.1 considers teaching capacity and scholarship, while Appendix F, Case Study 1 examines the staffing improvements made in response to revalidation (Independent College, 2026c, Evidence Register, POE-022–023; Independent College, 2026i). The College's ongoing staffing review also considers workload, programme coordination, assessment and moderation, continuity of teaching and staff-development needs. Academic oversight informs decisions on staffing and resources (Independent College, 2026c, GOV-10).

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2.8 Partnerships, Professional Recognition and External Engagement

The College draws on employer, professional and industry input to inform programme development and connect students with practice. Academic Council established the External Advisory Panel in response to revalidation recommendations for more systematic stakeholder engagement. The Panel has advised on proposed programme content, including change management, critical thinking, regulation and applied learning. The revalidation response records programme-descriptor revisions arising from Panel advice and the intended return of revised documents to the Panel for review. Programme reporting will support continuing review of the changes arising from Panel advice. Programme reports allow teams to record the changes made and review their contribution to teaching and learning (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2025f, pp.2–5).

The College's wider connections include membership of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Business Education Alliance and the Brazil–Ireland Chamber of Commerce (BICC), alongside participation in Education in Ireland, managed by Enterprise Ireland. AACSB membership is recorded in its member directory (AACSB International, 2026). Professional relationships also inform specialist provision. These include CILEX UK's external review of the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies, accreditation of the MA in Dispute Resolution by the Irish Professional Mediators' Organisation, and the relationship with Today FM in professional media education. Students engage with industry through guest sessions, careers workshops and applied projects. Examples include contributions from Diageo and Proudly Made in Africa, an Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) careers workshop, alumni guest speakers and a live marketing project with WilderBliss. The Marketing in Practice module has used live client briefs, campaign pitches, presentation workshops and a site visit across successive semesters. The programme's activity summary covers Autumn 2025, Spring 2026 and work underway in Autumn 2026, including alumni contributions to live projects. Forthcoming pitches and visits remain planned activity (Independent College, 2026bv). The Centre for Dispute Resolution Studies provides a further focus for practitioner and academic collaboration in mediation, arbitration, negotiation and related fields (Independent College, 2026bd; Independent College, 2026be). Guest contributions have also introduced Project Management and Employability students to professional networking, career resources and mentoring opportunities through the Irish Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI). In the BABS Innovation and Analytics & Information Technology (IT) tracks, three guest sessions have addressed artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, applied AI and cybersecurity, including a contribution from University College Dublin (UCD). A further careers session is scheduled. The Brazil–Ireland Chamber of Commerce Business Innovation Pilot has begun, with two student groups examining digital and AI challenges set by two companies operating in Ireland. Activity records link the work to module learning outcomes and graduate attributes; company feedback and student reflections will inform its review (Independent College, 2026bu).

The Centre for Dispute Resolution Studies has arranged a seminar series on professional development in mediation. Sessions will explore routes into professional practice in Ireland, including mentorship, supervision and case experience, alongside international mediation and consultancy opportunities. Contributions from practitioners and College lecturers will give students

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opportunities to discuss professional practice and career pathways in dispute resolution (Independent College, 2026bm; Independent College, 2026bn).

Alumni have been invited to contribute to two guest-speaker sessions this semester, sharing their career paths, skills development and experience of preparing for employment in Ireland. The second session is scheduled for October. A Career Ireland information session was scheduled to offer curriculum vitae (CV) advice, personalised feedback, interview preparation and a live question-and-answer session, with access on campus and online. The External Advisory Panel has also recommended student mentoring and a register of internship and voluntary workplace opportunities, which require further development with College management. Participation and student feedback will help the College review these activities and identify what students find useful (Independent College, 2026az; Independent College, 2026bc; Independent College, 2026ax, item 5(b)).

Institutional relationships with ZCAS University, Fundação Escola de Comércio Álvares Penteado (FECAP), the Office of International Scholarly Exchange Curriculum (ISEC) and Punjab Group of Colleges provide further opportunities for collaboration. These range from cooperation and exchange agreements to proposals for progression and programme delivery, with academic and operational arrangements appropriate to each. The College reviews progress, approvals and responsibilities as these relationships develop (Independent College, 2026av, p.6). The College is also developing the Institute for Innovation, Strategic Research and Entrepreneurship (I^2sRE), a research and innovation initiative connecting teaching, student projects and applied research with industry. It is intended to create opportunities for staff and students to work with external partners on practical questions relevant to their disciplines. Its scope, resourcing and academic approval arrangements remain to be completed. Academic Council will consider the academic-centre proposals in November 2026 (Independent College, 2026bt).

2.9 Developments Since Re-engagement (2020)

The College has developed its QA arrangements over several years through programme review, external engagement and examination of its own practice. The 2024–25 revalidation cycle contributed to this work. Academic Council approved the Programme Revalidation Policy in May 2024, and recommendations relating to the MA in Dispute Resolution and the undergraduate Business Studies, Marketing and Accounting and Finance programmes were brought into an institutional workplan in May 2025. Academic Council assigned responsibilities and reviewed progress in May 2026 (Independent College, 2026b, p.11; Independent College, 2026a). The recommendations extended beyond individual programmes. They addressed staffing, library development, Universal Design for Learning, employer input, learning outcomes, assessment design and feedback, student support and the tracking of actions raised by students. By May 2026, the College had made several improvements. The External Advisory Panel had been established and met twice, the postgraduate Programme Board had reviewed student data, additional academic appointments had strengthened programme teams, and entry-requirement wording and learning outcomes had been revised where required. Work continued on library strategy, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), cross-modular assessment, assessment feedback and support for part-time and

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blended study. Appendix F, Case Study 1 follows these recommendations through to Academic Council's review of progress (Independent College, 2026a).

Programme monitoring also changed during this period. The previous annual process had proved difficult to operate and did not adequately reflect the College's two intakes each year. A semester monitoring template was developed in early 2025, and newly appointed Programme Leaders completed reports for Spring and Autumn 2025. These were reviewed by Programme Boards and considered by Academic Council, establishing a more regular and practical account of programme delivery, student feedback and areas requiring attention. The subsequent IRWG review recognised this improvement and identified the need to bring the written policy into line with practice, strengthen action tracking and develop analysis across reporting periods (Independent College, 2026b, p.11; Independent College, 2026a, p.4). Alongside these developments, the College reviewed and updated policies through QA&E and Academic Council covering admissions, transfer and progression, attendance, graduation, teaching and learning, academic misconduct, AI, groupwork and assessment. A standalone English Language Policy and the Collaborative Provision and Academic Partnerships Policy were approved in March 2026. Work on TrustEd Ireland authorisation, risk management and the blended-learning extension-of-scope submission also informed the review of the College's QA arrangements. This activity formed part of the College's continuing academic and regulatory work and was already underway before preparation of the institutional SER (Independent College, 2026b, pp.4–6; Independent College, 2026j).

External review also identified matters requiring a broader institutional response. The unsuccessful August 2025 validation of the Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurial Excellence and Decision-Making raised concerns about QA structure and capacity. The IRWG considered these concerns alongside the College's wider experience, examining how Academic Council, its subcommittees and the QAM supported academic quality across the institution (Independent College, 2026b, p.4). The IRWG identified aspects of the QAM that were difficult to implement, unclear policy ownership and an overly complex Section 11 reporting process. It recommended clarification of subcommittee responsibilities, continuing monitoring of professional programmes and stronger student participation and reporting back on feedback. These findings informed the governance and QAM changes and the actions in the QEP (Independent College, 2026b).

3. Evaluation against the Terms of Reference

3.1 Objective 1 – Governance and Management of Quality

3.1.1 Description

Academic governance operates through Academic Council, its subcommittees and boards, executive management and the External Chairperson's assurance route. The evaluation below examines how these arrangements work against six criteria; institutional structure is described in Section 2.4 (Independent College, 2026j, Section 2; Independent College, 2026b).

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3.1.2 Evaluation against the criteria

3.1.2.1 A clear and strategic commitment to QA and enhancement

Academic Council's adoption of the graduate attributes as academic quality objectives links the College's educational purpose to how it evaluates quality. Academic Council has approved the implementation paper as a working document. Programme teams will map existing validated programme learning outcomes to the attributes without rewriting them, using assessment and programme evidence to review progress. Major awards will address the full range of attributes, while professional courses will identify relevant contributions proportionate to their volume and purpose. Mapping and measurement will develop through use, with progress due to Academic Council in March 2027 (Independent College, 2026b, pp.7–8; Independent College, 2026ao; Independent College, 2026bt). Semester Programme Board Reports will include a section on the attributes, allowing Programme Boards to review the mapping and evidence each semester. The Professional Programme Document template will also include mapping appropriate to the scope and duration of each course. This work will be introduced in stages as the mapping and templates are developed (Independent College, 2026ao, pp.2–4).

Academic Council has revised the student feedback cycle to provide for collection once each semester in Week 8, with student-experience and academic feedback gathered and collated separately. Student Affairs will lead student-experience feedback, while the Dean of Teaching and Learning will lead academic feedback. Induction feedback is planned from Spring 2027 under the Dean of Teaching and Learning. Academic Council has approved revisions to the admissions policy and an action plan addressing the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Follow-up will review implementation, while formal closure of the relevant TrustEd recommendation remains subject to QQI confirmation (Independent College, 2026ax, items 8–9).

3.1.2.2 Defined roles and responsibilities for QA at all organisational levels

The QAM review identified inconsistencies in the governance records. The revised arrangements reflect the External Chairperson of Academic Council's appointment by, and direct reporting and advisory role to, the Board. The current policy-ownership schedule assigns the policy to the President (Independent College, 2024a; Independent College, 2026c, Master Review & Actions, Section 2).

Academic Council has approved the IRWG recommendations on subcommittee responsibilities, including the establishment of a Teaching and Learning subcommittee incorporating the work of Learner Support Services. Academic Council has also approved revised membership and amendments to its Standing Orders and Style Guide. The implementation action plan assigns the Dean of Teaching and Learning, Chairperson and Secretary responsibility for developing the new subcommittee's terms of reference and agreeing when it will begin its work, with a proposed milestone of 20 November 2026. The wider review of Academic Council and subcommittee terms of reference includes provision for balanced and inclusive student representation. These changes build on the existing subcommittee structure, with the detailed arrangements and transition still to be

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completed (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026ax, items 5(b) and 11; Independent College, 2026bj).

3.1.2.3 Transparent decision-making processes that maintain separation between corporate and academic priorities

The College's governance arrangements distinguish academic oversight from executive and corporate responsibilities. Academic Council considers programme quality, assessment and academic policy; resource and operational decisions follow the Senior Management Committee and Board arrangements. The approved External Chairperson policy provides for appointment by the Board and direct reporting and advice to it, giving the Board an independent account of academic matters (Independent College, 2024a; Independent College, 2026j, Section 2). Academic Council's consideration of programme reports and revalidation actions provides evidence that academic matters receive formal scrutiny. The External Chairperson's reports maintain the connection with the Board. The approved review recommendations clarify committee responsibilities and reporting, including where academic recommendations require separate resource or corporate decisions (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b, pp.10–12). The remaining work is to ensure that terms of reference, policy records and decisions consistently reflect these responsibilities. Approval of academic priorities in the QEP does not itself authorise resource commitments or changes to corporate delegations. Those matters remain subject to the College's separate approval arrangements (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c).

3.1.2.4 Documented policies and procedures aligned with statutory and regulatory requirements

The QAM review identified inconsistencies across appeals procedures, including differences in grounds, timeframes and decision routes, and references to a separate Appeals Process document that had not been developed. These findings informed policy amendments and identified further work to make the arrangements clearer for students and staff (Independent College, 2026d, Part A5). Academic Council has approved QAM V5.2 as a working document, reorganising the manual into the agreed 11-section structure and incorporating approved policy amendments, revised ownership and professional-programme provisions, including the new Appeals Policy. Alignment of the assessment-specific appeals provisions with that policy remains part of the continuing review. The wider policy-owner review, including Sections 9 and 11, continues through the QEP, with V6 targeted for September 2027 to allow consideration of the institutional review findings. Necessary interim amendments will follow the normal approval routes (Independent College, 2026i; Independent College, 2026bt; Independent College, 2026bw). The issued V5.2 and approved interim amendments provide the current policy basis while the full review continues. The continuing policy-owner review includes alignment of supporting forms, procedures and guidance with the approved policies. Matters affecting current assessment, appeals or delivery will be addressed as interim amendments rather than await V6 (Independent College, 2026bt; Independent College, 2026c).

3.1.2.5 Effective arrangements for programme design, approval, monitoring and review

The Programme Revalidation Policy and the follow-up to revalidation have strengthened programme review, informing changes to staffing, programme documentation and monitoring, as described in Section 2.9. The self-evaluation identified a need to bring the same consistency to internal review

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before programmes are submitted to QQI. Improvements to the existing development and approval process will clarify responsibility for checking learning outcomes, assessment, staffing and resources, and record how matters raised during internal review are resolved before submission (Independent College, 2026b, pp.6–7 and 11; Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026c). The QEP also provides for the College to consider panel findings across programmes, so that learning from one validation informs subsequent developments. Academic Council will review the operation of these changes through the next programme-development cycle, including whether previously identified issues have been addressed (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026c).

For professional programmes outside the NFQ, the approved governance arrangements build on the existing requirement for Academic Council approval before marketing and recruitment. They clarify programme documentation, learner information and assessment responsibilities, and establish continuing monitoring through Programme Boards and reporting to Academic Council. The arrangements are intended to reflect the scale and nature of the provision while providing consistent College oversight (Independent College, 2026j, printed pp.45–47; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026m). This work builds on established external scrutiny of the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies through CILEX UK's review and approval arrangements and External Examiner reporting. Programme documentation will clarify the respective responsibilities of the College and the external body, including approval of results. Programme Boards will review how these arrangements operate and follow up recommendations. Appendix F, Case Study 5 examines this development and the implementation work remaining (Independent College, 2026g; Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2025d; Independent College, 2026o).

3.1.2.6 Mechanisms for continuous improvement informed by internal monitoring and review

Academic Council's review of revalidation actions and semester reports supports more systematic follow-up. Its own operation has also improved: Moodle meeting packs have been used since 2021, Standing Orders since 2022 and a Style Guide with planned agendas since 2023. Minute-taking is supported by training, and membership and subcommittee activity are reviewed annually, and the External Chairperson reports regularly to the Board. These practices support continuity between meetings and clearer records of decisions and responsibilities (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b, pp.10–12). The annual Academic Council report records regular meetings and member participation during 2025–26, with reporting by the Chairperson to the Board through the Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from January 2026. Minutes of subcommittee meetings are noted by Academic Council. Annual subcommittee reports provide a further record of activity and recommendations, rather than relying only on attendance and terms of reference (Independent College, 2026z, pp.1–2; Independent College, 2026aa). The approved Standing Orders and Style Guide provide for a briefing on strategy, mission and values in November 2026, a review in May 2027 of Academic Council's contribution to the College's strategic direction and a corresponding section in its annual report. This places strategic review within Academic Council's established cycle. Subsequent agendas, minutes and reports will show how it informs academic decisions (Independent College, 2026bk; Independent College, 2026bt). The IRWG examined Academic Council and its subcommittees, including their responsibilities, participation and reporting.

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Its recommendations informed the approved academic response. More consistent records of completed actions, communication of outcomes and review of results remain necessary (Independent College, 2026b). The formal reporting and advisory role to the Board is distinct from the administrative route used to transmit reports through the Group CEO. The continuing governance review includes reporting to the Board and communication of its response to Academic Council (Independent College, 2024a; Independent College, 2026z; Independent College, 2026c, GOV-14).

The External Advisory Panel met in December 2025 and May 2026 and considered programme development, revalidation and industry-related academic activity. Its annual report recommends a register of internship and voluntary workplace opportunities and exploration of student mentoring. At programme level, the BAIB Spring report records how student consultation on 30 April has been incorporated into the revised programme for validation, including a clearer international focus, less repetition and a more applied capstone. This is a specific example of feedback influencing development; the redesigned programme and its results remain to be evaluated (Independent College, 2026aa, External Advisory Panel, p.1; Independent College, 2026ac, BAIB, pp.4–5).

The Senior Management Committee oversees operational matters affecting teaching and the student experience, including facilities, examination technology, workshop feedback and withdrawal reporting. Its work also brings together governance, staffing capacity, partnerships, student outcomes and risk. Meeting records and the risk register identify actions, responsibilities and target dates. Follow-up reporting supports review of progress and the effectiveness of actions taken (Independent College, 2026at, p.4; Independent College, 2026au, p.5). SMC approved principles for AI-assisted transcription and minute preparation. Academic Council agreed to trial recording to support its minutes, with human checking and approval through the usual process. Further work will settle record handling, privacy information, retention and staff guidance before wider implementation. A further Academic Council trial is planned for November 2026. Approved minutes remain the formal record (Independent College, 2026br; Independent College, 2026bs; Independent College, 2026bt).

3.1.3 Conclusion

Academic governance has strengthened during the review period. Academic Council has followed up revalidation actions, considered regular programme reports and improved the organisation of its own work. The External Chairperson’s reporting to the Board maintains a direct route for academic assurance, while the Senior Management Committee addresses operational matters affecting teaching and the student experience. These arrangements help the College identify concerns, assign responsibility and review progress (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b, pp.10–12; Independent College, 2026at). The self-evaluation has informed approved changes to subcommittee responsibilities, professional-programme oversight and the QAM. The next stage is to complete their implementation and strengthen reporting on the results of actions taken. The QEP, supported by the evidence matrix, will track this work and the evidence of whether it has addressed the findings (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c).

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3.2 Objective 2 – Access, Transfer and Progression

3.2.1 Description

Admissions, transfer, progression and recognition are governed by the College's admissions arrangements, Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, English Language Policy and programme entry requirements. The TrustEd Ireland assessment examined these alongside education-agent arrangements, learner information and support services, providing external assurance on the College's provision for international students (Independent College, 2026j, Section 10; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b). Following authorisation, the College has taken forward the matters raised through policy review and supporting documentation. Academic Council has approved admissions revisions and the Lisbon Recognition Convention action plan. The action plan sets out the remaining implementation work; submission of supporting material and any formal confirmation of closure by QQI are recorded separately (Independent College, 2026ai; Independent College, 2026ax, items 8–9).

3.2.2 Evaluation against the criteria

3.2.2.1 Fair and transparent admissions processes

The TrustEd panel found the College fully compliant across all seven applicable admissions and qualifications-recognition criteria. It also recommended a structured review against the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary texts to identify any remaining gaps in policy and practice. This provides external assurance and identifies further work on recognition (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, p.5). The standalone English Language Policy was approved in March 2026 following TrustEd work. Formal external closure will be recorded only when QQI confirms it (Independent College, 2026j, English Language Policy; Independent College, 2026c, Institutional Priorities, GOV-06–07).

3.2.2.2 Pathways and articulation arrangements that support learner progression (including advanced entry)

Admissions and academic teams have reviewed the progress of advanced-entry students to inform both entry decisions and support after admission. The review considered examination performance across two intakes, identified modules requiring closer monitoring and agreed changes to applicant information and the assessment of prior learning. Appendix F, Case Study 2 examines the findings, the actions agreed and the follow-up needed to assess their effectiveness (Independent College, 2026r; Independent College, 2026x).

The Student Progression, Retention and Success Reporting Framework will provide a common approach to semester reporting, drawing on programme-level analysis. The Dean of Student Affairs will coordinate the report, SMC will consider performance and the action required, Academic Council will provide academic oversight, and the Board will receive assurance. This will bring information on student progress and support into the College's established governance arrangements (Independent College, 2026l, sections 3 and 5, Appendices B–D). The framework

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builds on existing consideration of progression by Academic Council. Further work will establish consistent measures across programmes, intakes, modes of study and entry routes, helping the College identify where students' experiences differ and review the effectiveness of interventions. Appendix F, Case Study 2 examines the available evidence and the data reconciliation still required. The College will assess how well the framework supports these decisions after the first reporting cycle (Palmer, 2026, p.1; Independent College, 2026l).

3.2.2.3 Recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning

The College's admissions and recognition arrangements have been externally reviewed through TrustEd Ireland. The assessment found the relevant arrangements compliant and recommended further review against the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The College has approved a revised Admissions, Transfer and Progression Policy and an action plan covering applicant information, appeals, staff training and procedures for younger displaced applicants. The action plan sets out the work needed to complete the response and review implementation (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, p.5; Independent College, 2026ai, pp.2–3). The College's own review identified a related need to update the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) application form and guidance. Although the policy covers a wider range of recognition, the form focuses mainly on advanced entry and module exemptions. The revisions will make provision for non-formal and informal learning clearer, including its application to professional programmes. Clearer applicant guidance and decision records will support assessment of prior learning against the relevant learning outcomes, entry requirements and academic standards (Independent College, 2026c, Evidence Register, POE-011; Independent College, 2026i, Section 4).

3.2.2.4 Provision of accurate and accessible information to learners

The TrustEd review provides positive external assurance on applicant information. The panel examined the College's website, prospectuses, student letters and fees and refunds documentation, finding all eleven fees, refunds and subsistence criteria compliant. It found the information transparent and accessible to applicants. Keeping this information accurate as policies and programmes change remains part of the College's continuing review (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, pp.6–7). Advanced-entry applications include module mapping and Programme Leader review. Review of the process has led to clearer requirements for supporting documents, including CVs, translated transcripts and module descriptors where appropriate. An academic interview may be arranged where further evidence is needed. The review also agreed improvements to applicant guidance and turnaround targets for each stage of the process (Independent College, 2026x). The next step is to review how consistently these arrangements operate and whether they improve the applicant experience. This requires reliable processing records and consideration of students' subsequent academic progress. The wider RPL review will ensure that forms and guidance also address non-formal and informal learning (Independent College, 2026x). The College has also identified a need for additional admissions capacity as applications become more complex. A staffing proposal seeks to strengthen processing and specialist support for RPL, advanced entry and transfers. It includes a review of processing times, applicant experience and workload following implementation. Approval and recruitment remain to be completed (Independent College, 2026aw, p.7).

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3.2.2.5 Collaboration that supports learner mobility across the tertiary education sector

The College's external relationships support academic development, professional education and international engagement. They include academic cooperation agreements, professional recognition, institutional memberships and programmes developed with industry partners. These relationships differ in purpose and stage of development, from established professional provision to discussions about future academic collaboration. International engagement includes a relationship with ZCAS University in Zambia and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Punjab Group of Colleges in Pakistan. The areas of cooperation identified include academic development, student exchange, staff engagement and possible future collaborative provision. The College is also progressing a framework for cooperation with the Office of International Scholarly Exchange Curriculum (ISEC), Beijing, covering potential articulation pathways, collaborative education and student and faculty exchange. Further relationships are being developed with FECAP in São Paulo, Brazil, and Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Chimalhuacán (TESCHI) in Mexico, with agreements being progressed. Initial discussions have also taken place with Karpagam Academy of Higher Education in India and Piri Reis University in Türkiye. Any resulting student mobility, articulation or collaborative delivery will require the relevant academic consideration and approvals before implementation. Professional recognition provides a connection between the College's programmes and professional practice. The Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies are endorsed by CILEX UK, and the MA in Dispute Resolution is accredited by the Irish Professional Mediators' Organisation. The Accounting and Finance provision has recognition from Chartered Accountants Ireland, ACCA, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and the Association of International Accountants, with professional examination exemptions available where applicable.

The College also participates in wider professional and institutional networks through membership of AACSB, Marketing Institute Ireland (MII) and the Brazil-Ireland Chamber of Commerce (BICC). AACSB membership is distinct from programme or institutional accreditation. Industry relationships contribute directly to professional provision. The College works with Public Affairs Ireland (PAI) on professional education and continuing professional development for the Irish public sector. Its partnership with Today FM supports the School of Radio & Podcasting and the Award in Radio Production & Podcasting. Academic Council has approved the Professional Certificate in Financial Modelling and Valuation. The Financial Modeling Institute (FMI) in Canada sponsors a graduation prize for the Accounting and Finance Financial Modelling and Valuation module and has agreed use of its resources to support the College's professional programme in this area.

The Collaborative Provision and Academic Partnerships Policy, approved in March 2026, provides the policy basis for developing and overseeing these arrangements. The continuing work is to maintain clear records of each relationship's purpose, approval status and responsibilities, and to review the academic activity arising from it. This will allow the College to assess how external engagement contributes to programme development, professional relevance and opportunities for students (Independent College, 2026j). The College records professional recognition and examination exemptions for each programme, including their scope and any applicable conditions or validity periods. These arrangements are distinguished from articulation agreements and collaborative

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delivery. The PGC decision confirms academic approval of the bridging provision. Implementation and student outcomes will be reviewed following delivery (Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026ax, item 9(a)).

3.2.3 Conclusion

The College has established admissions and recognition arrangements, supported by positive findings from the TrustEd review. The advanced-entry review shows Admissions and academic colleagues examining students' experience after admission and identifying where further support or changes to the process may be needed. Professional recognition and developing academic relationships provide further opportunities to support access, progression and students' educational and career ambitions, subject to the requirements and approvals for each arrangement.

The Student Progression, Retention and Success Reporting Framework will bring admissions and recognition decisions, progression data, learner support and student feedback into a common reporting process. Alongside improvements to RPL forms and guidance, it will help the College understand the experience of students entering through different routes, agree appropriate action and review the results.

3.3 Objective 3 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment

3.3.1 Description

Teaching, learning and assessment are supported by programme review, academic staffing, learner services, internal moderation and external examining. The evaluation considers the strengths of these arrangements and the findings of revalidation and the College's internal assessment review (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026a).

3.3.2 Evaluation against the criteria

3.3.2.1 Monitoring and enhancement of the learning environment and delivery methods

Revalidation led to revised module learning outcomes, including removal of software-specific references and closer alignment with programme outcomes. The postgraduate Programme Board reviewed student data in October 2025 and April 2026, and the External Advisory Panel added employer input. These changes strengthen academic review alongside the appointments described in Section 2.7. Library strategy, UDL, cross-modular assessment, feedback and aspects of part-time support remained in progress at the May 2026 review. Appendix F, Case Study 1 examines the response and subsequent checks (Independent College, 2026a, pp.1–5).

Academic Council approved the establishment of a Teaching and Learning subcommittee incorporating the Learner Support Services subcommittee. The implementation action plan proposes completion of the terms of reference and agreement of the transition by 20 November 2026. Existing arrangements continue until the new body commences; its operation will be reviewed after the first cycle (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026bj).

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The Research and Ethics annual report records work on research ethics forms, supervision capacity, research preparation and academic integrity. It identifies a need to improve the connection between Research Skills and the Applied Project in the undergraduate business programmes, alongside plans for research dissemination and staff development. These findings inform programme review and workforce planning. The wider review of subcommittee terms of reference will clarify responsibilities, with support and resource decisions recorded through the relevant approval routes (Independent College, 2026aa, Research and Ethics, pp.2–7; Independent College, 2026b).

Additional Level 10-qualified lecturers, full-time appointments and senior academic roles have increased the expertise available for curriculum development and scholarship. The proposed Academic Career Framework will set out how scholarly activity will be supported and reviewed. Its contribution to teaching and student outcomes will require evaluation over time (Independent College, 2026a). Evidence on teaching currently comes mainly from student feedback, programme-team reflection, Programme Board reports and External Examiner commentary on assessment. A dedicated Module Evaluation Survey is being developed under the Dean of Teaching and Learning, separately from the Student Experience Survey led by Student Affairs. The QEP also provides for agreed peer observation and teaching development, building on existing collegiate practice. Detailed arrangements and dates require confirmation; the proposed Teaching and Learning Centre has SMC approval but has not yet been approved by Academic Council (Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026bt). Lecturer contributions to this review also describe informal follow-up after programme meetings: discussion of technology-supported teaching, invitations to observe colleagues' classes and changes to preparation for group work and presentations. The proposed peer-observation arrangements will build on this sharing of practice. In Marketing, the Head of Department reports that developmental classroom observation has begun to support discussion of teaching approaches and the sharing of practice. This is programme-level activity; a College-wide peer-observation scheme remains to be agreed (Independent College, 2026c, MARKETING-2026-02).

3.3.2.2 Secure, fair and transparent assessment practices that uphold validity and integrity

Assessment is a significant part of the College's academic model, with modules assessed in a variety of ways. Terminal examinations form part of assessment across the undergraduate programmes. Assessment is governed through the assessment policies in the QAM reviewed for this evaluation, internal moderation, External Examiners and a two-stage Examination Board process comprising a preliminary internal board and a formal board attended by External Examiners (Independent College, 2026d, Part B1; Independent College, 2026j, Section 7). External Examiners give positive assurance on standards and marking in the work they reviewed. The internal Examination Board review identified weaknesses in grade adjustments and records, and a need to bring examination conduct and invigilation arrangements into a clearer framework, including the appointment, training and authority of invigilators. This builds on existing controls, such as candidate identification and rules governing dictionary use. The QAM review will bring these provisions together and clarify the further arrangements needed for consistent examination practice, including computer-based assessment (Independent College, 2025e, p.3; Independent College, 2026d, Part B1). At module level, the College is considering proposals to apply Module Coordinator and Internal Moderator responsibilities consistently across provision. The proposed changes would clarify how concerns are

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referred for action under the Moderation of Assessments Policy and strengthen the recording and follow-up of module-level checks (Independent College, 2026d, Parts A2–A3). The Business Ethics examination arrangements include online assessment with a paper alternative. The QEP provides for examination device requirements, access arrangements and consistent assessment conditions, separately from the online-learning requirements under QQI evaluation. Any proposed pilot and future sitting will be reviewed after delivery.

The 2025 revalidation recommendations on formative and summative feedback and cross-modular assessment remain relevant. The Spring 2026 reports now give examples of follow-through. MADR has introduced feedback on practical examinations through Moodle, replacing the previous request-based arrangement, and issued updated guidance to dissertation supervisors. The BAAF semester programme report records clearer briefs and grading criteria while recording students' requests for more formative practice and timely feedback. These changes and remaining concerns can be reviewed through the next programme cycle (Independent College, 2026ac, MADR, pp.1–2; BAAF, pp.6–7). 2026 External Examiner reports provide further positive assurance on the assessments reviewed. The MADR reports commend the design, conduct and marking of practical roleplays; the undergraduate law module reports find marking fair and consistent; and the undergraduate Management and Marketing module reports find standards comparable with other Irish higher education institutions. Accounting and Finance External Examiner reports also comment positively on standards and the organisation of review. The Public Service Pensions Management report highlights feedback and well-organised assessment. These findings support the College's judgement on assessment quality within the work sampled (Independent College, 2026ak, individual reports, pp.3–5). The information supplied to External Examiners is also improving. QA&E's annual report records that the request for internal moderation reports was actioned. A sample of later examination packs will confirm whether the forms are being provided consistently. Time for review remains an issue. The undergraduate Information Technology External Examiner reports having only two days to return feedback in recent rounds, and the BABS and BAIB monitoring reports recognise the need for more time. The completeness and timing of materials supplied will form part of review of the next examination cycle (Independent College, 2026aa, QA&E, p.1; Independent College, 2026ak, Information Technology, p.5; Independent College, 2026ac, BABS, p.7; BAIB, p.5).

The Dean of Teaching and Learning's review led to closer examination of Examination Board procedures. Follow-up through QA&E confirmed that the preliminary meeting had identified the grade patterns raised in the review. It also identified a need to clarify the boundary between preliminary checks and decisions reserved for the formal Examination Board. The agreed response includes checking minor borderline adjustments, obtaining internal-examiner review and reporting the findings to External Examiners, with results corrected where necessary. This is a targeted review of identified adjustments, rather than a recheck of the full student dataset (Independent College, 2026al, pp.1–2). Follow-up to the examination review is progressing through the College's assessment and academic governance arrangements, with the outcomes of the targeted review scheduled for consideration by Academic Council in November 2026 (Independent College, 2026al; Independent College, 2026c, E55).

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The review of module documentation identified inconsistencies between standalone working documents and validated programme records. Corrections have been made, with the remaining documentary queries retained for reconciliation and closure. Appendix F, Case Study 1 explains this work within the wider revalidation response (Independent College, 2026d, Parts A2–A3). Academic integrity is another area of substantial change. The policy review identified weaknesses in notification, independence of review and appeal, offence classifications, decision timelines and group responsibility. It also identified a need to bring AI-related allegations within the academic-misconduct procedure. Appendix F, Case Study 6 follows the review through policy approval and continuing implementation (Independent College, 2026d, Parts A2 and B2).

The Charter of Learner Rights and Responsibilities is included in the Learner Handbook. Academic Council approved the material presented and requested circulation of the full Charter, including learner responsibilities. It sets out College and learner responsibilities and supports the revised Moodle integrity declarations and assessment cover sheets. Under the approved AI Policy, an AI Process Appendix is required for unsupervised continuous assessment, with a graded component scheduled from Spring 2027. Revised Turnitin guidance remains under review (Independent College, 2026d, Parts A2 and B2; Independent College, 2026aj; Independent College, 2026bt).

The Groupwork Policy illustrates why the QAM review is looking across policies rather than treating each policy in isolation. Following the May 2026 update, a further review identified remaining inconsistencies between groupwork, academic misconduct, AI, moderation and word-count provisions. This alignment work remains open (Independent College, 2026d, Part A1; Palmer, 2026, p.1).

The approved Academic Misconduct and Artificial Intelligence policies provide clearer arrangements for considering allegations, reviewing decisions and handling appeals. AI-related allegations are addressed through the Academic Misconduct procedure, while the AI Policy defines permitted use and the evidence students are expected to retain. Transitional provisions support the handling of existing cases. Staff briefing and student guidance will support implementation, and case reviews will assess consistency and identify any further changes needed. Related proposals on administrative support, case recording and learner advocacy remain under consideration (Independent College, 2026aj, Academic Misconduct, pp.7–18; Artificial Intelligence, pp.4–7; Independent College, 2026am, pp.1–3). The approved policy provides the framework for considering academic misconduct cases. Further clarification of process ownership will be considered by Academic Council as part of implementation (Independent College, 2026ax, item 11; Independent College, 2026c, E56 and E68).

3.3.2.3 Effective management of learner records through reliable digital systems

The review has clarified the flow of assessment information between Moodle, Quercus and the Examination Boards. Quercus calculates and rounds overall module results and records changes. Further work focuses on ensuring that information presented to boards is clear and that adjustments are authorised and traceable. Programme reports also record a period of Moodle disruption

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followed by improved stability. The continuing Section 9 review covers access controls, reconciliation between systems, change records, backup and recovery, and incident escalation. This work will support evaluation of digital-records assurance alongside improvements to results processing (Independent College, 2026al, p.1; Independent College, 2026aa, undergraduate reports, pp.1–2).

Academic Council has approved the follow-up approach agreed through QA&E. This includes enhanced module-results information with examiner commentary and sign-off on borderline checks, and a clearer distinction between preliminary module-level review and individual student decisions at the formal Examination Board. Implementation will be reviewed through the agreed case checks and the next board cycle. Appendix F, Case Study 4 examines the findings, subsequent clarifications and the College's response (Independent College, 2026al, pp.1–2).

3.3.2.4 Availability and consistency of learner support services across all settings

Further work is needed on support across different modes of study, inclusive learning, facilities and communication of the action taken in response to student feedback. The TrustEd panel found all fifteen applicable learner-support criteria compliant. It reviewed Student Support Services, learner representation and feedback, academic-integrity data and induction delivered online and face-to-face. The internal QAM audit subsequently identified procedures that no longer reflect current practice. These require updating, alongside more consistent evaluation of how well support meets learners' needs (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, p.8; Independent College, 2026c, Evidence Register, POE-001–009).

Student feedback informs the College's review of support provision through surveys, representatives, Programme Boards, Student Affairs and informal contact. Academic Council receives findings through committee reporting and includes student feedback on its agenda. Participation is not yet consistent: programme reports record meetings without student representatives, while the Learner Support Services review identifies a need to improve survey participation. Priorities are to support representatives, encourage wider participation and communicate more consistently what has changed in response to feedback (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026aa). Student feedback has informed improvements to assessment feedback and programme design. On the MADR, practical-examination feedback is now available through Moodle, replacing the previous request-based arrangement. BAIB consultation feedback has been incorporated into the revised programme for validation, while workshop feedback is informing further enhancements (Independent College, 2026ac; Independent College, 2026ar; Independent College, 2026c, GOV-08).

Common Foundation Year (CFY) workshops were introduced following revalidation recommendations to help students understand academic procedures and access support. They cover academic skills, careers and wellbeing. Topics include assessment, referencing, academic integrity, time management, CV preparation and examination preparation (Independent College, 2026a, pp.4–5; Independent College, n.d.). Workshops are scheduled for both CFY Semester 1 and Semester 2, providing support at different stages of the foundation year. Formal workshop feedback has provided practical direction for improvement. Students valued explanations of assessment, grading and College procedures, but responses were mixed. They asked for more practical participation, career-related content and material suited to their stage of study. Suggestions included separating

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introductory content from sessions for continuing students, sharing materials afterwards and reviewing the timing of online workshops alongside campus classes. The small response group and absence of a recorded response rate limit wider conclusions (Independent College, 2026ar, p.2; Independent College, 2026au, p.5). These findings will inform the next workshop cycle. Planned careers and alumni sessions address some of the interests raised. Requests for time-management and wellbeing support also highlight the demands of combining study with paid work. Communication with students and subsequent feedback will support review of the changes. Appendix F, Case Studies 2 and 3 consider this work alongside student outcomes and programme monitoring (Independent College, 2026ar, p.2; Independent College, 2026az; Independent College, 2026bc).

Policy review has also clarified routes through which students seek support or challenge decisions. Approved amendments address appeals relating to deferral and extenuating circumstances, withdrawal decisions under the attendance procedure, induction feedback and semester surveys. Implementation requires the corresponding forms and student information to be updated and their use reviewed. The wider QAM revision will address remaining inconsistencies in appeals procedures (Independent College, 2026aj; Independent College, 2026d, Part A5). The Emergency Hardship Fund Policy now sets out eligibility, application procedures and responsibility for emergency assistance. Its scope includes registered learners on both full-time and part-time programmes, subject to the policy's eligibility requirements and available funds. This clarifies how support is administered and how the fund will be reviewed (Independent College, 2026aj, Emergency Hardship Fund, pp.1–3). Health-and-safety assessments support the College's oversight of the physical and working environment, including premises safety, equipment, contractors, visitors and wellbeing. Follow-up includes the review and implementation of the identified controls (Independent College, 2026at, p.4). Library development and Universal Design for Learning remain continuing priorities from revalidation. Further work will examine whether resources meet programme needs, how students use the services and how staff development informs accessible teaching and assessment. The review includes the experience of part-time and blended learners, drawing on participation, feedback and student outcomes (Independent College, 2026a). Student support includes online and face-to-face induction, programme support, workshops and the services of the College Librarian. Further development focuses on access for part-time, blended and fully online learners, informed by their feedback. Library development, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and device access remain priorities within the Quality Enhancement Plan (Independent College, 2026c, GOV-04–05; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, p.8). Facilities and IT provision have changed since revalidation, including a change of IT partner and reconfigured teaching rooms. The College provides personal computers, with wider device access remaining a development priority. Entry requirements specify access to a device, and a purchase or rental scheme is being developed to support students (Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026c).

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3.3.3 Conclusion

The College has strengthened its academic team, programme monitoring and student-support arrangements. External Examiner reports provide positive assurance on the assessments reviewed, while internal review and student feedback have identified where practice needs to improve. The QEP brings together the remaining work on assessment procedures, feedback, academic integrity, learning resources and accessible teaching. Continuing review will consider how consistently these arrangements operate and whether the changes improve students' experience and learning (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c).

3.4 Objective 4 – Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

3.4.1 Description

The College's review arrangements included the Academic Council IRWG, policy-owner review, Programme Boards, Examination Boards, External Examiners and Academic Council follow-through. The evaluation considers how these arrangements work and how their findings inform institutional planning and improvement (Independent College, 2026b).

3.4.2 Evaluation against the criteria

3.4.2.1 Evidence-based processes for planning, monitoring and reporting on QA

Programme reports, external findings and internal review increasingly inform the College's QA priorities. Semester reporting has provided a more regular basis for programme review, while the self-evaluation identified a need for simpler and more consistent institutional reporting. The review of QAM Section 11 found that some reports had not been presented, templates were unused or difficult to operate, and responsibilities no longer reflected the College's structure. The earlier review identified established Examination Board and External Examiner reporting routes. Subsequent scrutiny identified gaps in the completion and approval of Examination Board records, which require follow-up alongside the procedural changes in Section 3.3.2.2. The revision retains the reporting routes while strengthening their consistent operation (Independent College, 2025a; Independent College, 2026b, p.11). The revalidation workplan provides an example of coordinated follow-up. Recommendations were assigned to committees and programme teams, and Academic Council returned to review completed and continuing actions. Academic Council's consideration of programme performance and positive External Examiner findings also identified professional-programme oversight as an area requiring clarification. Academic Council therefore considered both positive findings and matters requiring action (Independent College, 2026a; Palmer, 2026, p.1).

Advanced-entry review provides a further example of Admissions and academic teams using student performance to examine existing arrangements. The review led to clearer applicant guidance, provision for academic interviews where further evidence is needed, processing targets and closer module monitoring. A supporting SharePoint site was also presented for testing and staff training. Subsequent review will examine implementation and the experience of later cohorts (Independent College, 2026r; Independent College, 2026x).

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The approved monitoring-policy amendment establishes one student survey each semester in Week 8. This forms part of the wider Section 11 revision, which will clarify how findings are brought together, actions assigned and progress reported. Appendix F, Case Study 3 examines the improvements already made through semester programme monitoring and the follow-up still required (Independent College, 2026aj, Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review, pp.2–5; Independent College, 2026b).

The QEP in Section 5.4 brings together the significant institutional priorities requiring coordinated action and subsequent evaluation. The evidence matrix supports this work and retains the more detailed policy corrections and actions. Each QEP priority identifies responsibility, an implementation milestone and a review of results, allowing Academic Council to distinguish completion of the work from evidence that it has addressed the issue (Independent College, 2026c).

For student outcomes, the immediate priority is to establish agreed definitions and reliable baseline data through the first institutional semester report. This will allow reliable comparisons and help the College set improvement targets. Appendix F, Case Study 2 explains the data checks and reconciliation needed for that analysis (Independent College, 2026l; Independent College, 2026c).

3.4.2.2 Comprehensive and inclusive self-evaluation and follow-up mechanisms

The review identified uneven student participation and reporting back on feedback, despite established channels for gathering students' views. May 2024 Programme Board minutes brought concerns about facilities and their effect on learning to Academic Council. The final September 2026 Academic Council IRWG report confirms that survey feedback also reached Academic Council through Learner Support Subcommittee minutes. Academic Council added learner/student feedback as a standing agenda item in May 2026. The remaining priorities are stronger student attendance and clearer reporting of action taken and outcomes communicated to students (Independent College, 2026b, p.7).

Completed semester reports, revised programme documents and recorded Academic Council follow-up demonstrate improvements in the operation of QA. The longer-term effect of these changes on student experience and outcomes still needs to be assessed. Newer arrangements also need time to operate before conclusions can be drawn (Independent College, 2026c).

3.4.2.3 Arrangements for programme review and revalidation to ensure they are fit for purpose

Semester monitoring now extends through Spring 2026, with reports for all five higher-education programmes in the September Academic Council papers. They bring together first-sitting grade distributions, award results where applicable, student feedback, External Examiner findings and priorities for the next semester. The reports identify both strong outcomes and areas needing attention, including first-year quantitative and financial modules and BAIB completion. They provide a more useful basis for decisions than results alone. Appendix F, Case Study 3 considers the changes already made and the continuing need to track actions and report outcomes to students (Independent College, 2026ac).

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The revalidation panels asked for better records of industry and stakeholder consultation and more consistent tracking of student and stakeholder actions by Programme Boards. The External Advisory Panel and semester reports address these recommendations. Continuing follow-up includes review of completed actions and communication with students and stakeholders (Independent College, 2026a). Appendix F, Case Study 1 and Appendix F, Case Study 3 provide the supporting examples. The MADR revalidation recommended linking entry qualifications with examination outcomes and using survey trends to inform change. Programme Boards have begun reviewing data. The Section 11 revision will set common expectations for the measures used, the action taken and the review of results (Independent College, 2026a). Revised learning outcomes and completed semester reports demonstrate improvements in documentation and operation. Their longer-term contribution to student outcomes requires further evaluation. The internal Examination Board review provides a separate example of the College identifying weaknesses, with corrective work still to be confirmed (Independent College, 2026a, pp.1–7; Independent College, 2026b, p.11; Independent College, 2026d, Part B1).

3.4.2.4 Oversight of collaborative partnerships to ensure quality and accountability

Academic Council approved the Punjab Group of Colleges (PGC) 2+2 articulation proposal on assurance of a minimum admission grade of 50% and College bridging provision covering the legal content absent from the mapping. The minutes record that applications may now be accepted. This is a specific academic decision supported by programme mapping; implementation and student outcomes will be reviewed following delivery (Independent College, 2026ax, item 9(a); Independent College, 2026af).

3.4.3 Conclusion

Semester reporting has established a more practical basis for programme monitoring and is retained in QAM V5.2. The revised manual provides for an annual reporting template to draw together programme performance, progress on actions and priorities for enhancement. Development and introduction of this template remain part of the continuing work. The Section 11 revision connects programme findings with institutional reporting and review. The next reporting cycle will allow the College to assess whether these arrangements support more consistent oversight and timely action (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026bw, Sections 2, 3 and 11).

4. Area for Special Consideration

4.1 Context

QQI identified the Area for Special Consideration following recurring issues across engagements between 2021 and 2025. The evidence matrix includes unsuccessful programme validations in 2022 and 2025, which identified weaknesses in the effectiveness and consistent application of the College's programme-development QA. These outcomes are an important part of the evaluation: established internal approval procedures did not consistently provide sufficient assurance of readiness for external validation. The College has used the self-evaluation to examine whether internal checks identify problems early enough, whether review findings lead to action and whether

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the same weaknesses recur (Independent College, 2026c, Institutional Priorities, GOV-02; SER Evidence Map, Area for Special Consideration).

4.2 What the Self-Evaluation Identified

The self-evaluation found established programme approval and review processes, with improvements in staffing, documentation and monitoring. It also identified uneven scrutiny before validation. The IRWG questioned how consistently programme documents, learning outcomes, assessment, staffing and resources were checked before Academic Council approved submission. Clearer responsibilities and resolution of outstanding issues are needed, together with review of panel findings across subsequent developments (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b, pp.6–7; Independent College, 2026c). The MSc development and professional-certificate proposals provide opportunities to review how these checks operate across curriculum, assessment, staffing, resources and approval conditions (Independent College, 2026ah; Independent College, 2026ag). Revalidation follow-up and semester reporting have strengthened programme monitoring. Building on this work, the College proposes to introduce readiness checks and a structured review of panel feedback to inform future validation submissions (Independent College, 2026c, GOV-02–03).

Internal review identified inconsistencies between programme and module documents and approved records, together with areas for improvement in assessment information and Examination Board records. Corrections have been made, with remaining updates being addressed through programme review and the phased QAM revision. Semester monitoring provides a regular basis for reviewing delivery and following up actions. These findings have informed the College's priorities for programme scrutiny, document control and assessment procedures (Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c).

4.3 The Programme Lifecycle

The evaluation follows programme development and approval, delivery, assessment, monitoring and periodic review. Appendix F, Case Study 1 addresses revalidation follow-through; Appendix F, Case Study 2 examines student progression, retention and success; Appendix F, Case Study 3 examines semester monitoring; Appendix F, Case Study 4 addresses Examination Board review; Appendix F, Case Study 5 considers professional-programme governance; and Appendix F, Case Study 6 examines the response to academic-integrity and generative AI policy review. Together they show the different stages at which the College has identified and acted on weaknesses. Appendix G maps the QAM structure supporting this work.

4.4 How the College Has Responded

The revalidation response described in Section 2.9 led to additional staffing, revised learning outcomes and semester monitoring. Later checks confirmed corrections to a number of module documents and identified further reconciliation work. Programme Leads and the Dean of Teaching and Learning will check the remaining points, supported by QA, distinguishing documentary updates from changes requiring formal programme approval. Appendix F, Case Study 1 considers the

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progress made and the work still required (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026d, Part A3; Independent College, 2026c).

A gap analysis against QQI's 2023 blended-learning guidelines informed policy revisions and the March 2026 submission. The College has completed its response; QQI's decision remains separate. Semester monitoring is operating, with policy alignment and stronger follow-up continuing. Appendix F, Case Study 3 examines examples of Programme Board action (Independent College, 2026b, pp.4 and 11; Independent College, 2026c, Institutional Priorities, GOV-05; Evidence Register, POE-032; Independent College, 2026a, p.4).

The Dean of Teaching and Learning's Examination Board review brought established practice under internal scrutiny. QA&E clarified the operation of existing checks and identified where the preliminary meeting had gone beyond its role. The September briefing sets out case review, reporting and safeguards, with finalisation of results for November Academic Council. Appendix F, Case Study 4 shows how the initial review, committee scrutiny and agreed response contribute to the College's self-evaluation (Independent College, 2026d, Part B1; Independent College, 2026al).

The approved professional-programme governance arrangements clarify continuing oversight through programme documentation, Programme Boards and reporting to Academic Council. They build on existing College and external approval requirements, including the CILEX UK arrangements for professional legal studies. The remaining work is to confirm responsibilities for each programme and put consistent monitoring into practice. Appendix F, Case Study 5 examines these arrangements and their implementation (Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2026j, printed pp.45–47 and 100).

4.5 Institutional Assurance and Governance

Academic Council has approved the academic response to the self-evaluation. Programme Boards will follow up actions relating to delivery, QA&E will oversee policy review and enhancement, and Academic Council will retain oversight of academic standards and progress. The External Chairperson's reports provide a direct route for academic assurance to the Board. Where actions require resource commitments or corporate decisions, these will follow the College's established approval arrangements (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026z; Independent College, 2026c).

The QEP in Section 5.4 identifies the responsible leads, milestones and review arrangements. Supported by the evidence matrix, reporting will distinguish completed work from outstanding actions and identify where further decisions or resources are needed. The phased QAM revision will align documented responsibilities with the approved arrangements, while subsequent review will assess how these operate in practice (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026i).

The action plan for the approved Academic Council self-evaluation recommendations provides a more detailed implementation schedule. Academic Council approved the action plan, and its milestones are reflected in the QEP, with completion assessed against approved documents and

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records of use. The plan does not replace subsequent evaluation of whether the changes have improved practice (Independent College, 2026bj).

4.6 Evidence of Effectiveness

Semester reports are being completed and reviewed, programme documentation has been revised and Academic Council has reviewed revalidation actions. Further checks of programme documents remain outstanding. External Examiners report positively on standards and marking in the assessments examined. The records show improvements in programme oversight and documentation (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b, p.11; Independent College, 2026d, Part A3; Independent College, 2025d; Independent College, 2026o). Evidence of sustained changes in student outcomes is less complete. The newer governance and reporting arrangements need time to operate, and the agreed Examination Board follow-up requires completion. The QEP provides for later review of whether changes have resolved the original issues (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026d, Part B1; Independent College, 2026c).

The approved graduate-attributes implementation paper identifies how progress could be measured. Proposed sources include applied assessment, External Examiner commentary, results on ethical research learning outcomes in the Applied Project and MA dissertation, class-representative coverage, progression and actions taken in response to feedback. Learner feedback will be considered alongside these sources. Peer evaluation in group assessment is a possible future measure and has not yet been scheduled. Indicators will be refined as programme teams undertake the mapping and review the evidence. Targets will follow initial measurements, and indicator owners remain to be confirmed. Mapping coverage and representative participation will show whether arrangements are in place; assessment evidence is needed to judge what learners have achieved (Independent College, 2026ao, pp.2–4).

4.7 Areas Still Developing

Further work is needed to make academic checks before validation consistent, maintain alignment between approved programme documents and working documentation, and follow monitoring actions through to completion. Professional-programme oversight and the revised Examination Board arrangements also require implementation and review through subsequent cycles (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026al). The proposed November milestone provides for review of the remaining documentation queries and agreement on the correction routes and completion dates (Independent College, 2026c).

The QEP in Section 5.4 assigns responsibility and milestones for this work. Academic Council will review progress and the evidence from subsequent programme and assessment cycles to establish whether the changes have addressed the findings (Independent College, 2026c).

4.8 Conclusion

The College has strengthened programme oversight through additional academic appointments, clearer programme responsibilities and more regular reporting. Revalidation recommendations have informed changes to programme documentation and delivery, while internally initiated reviews have

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examined assessment practice, student progression and the application of College policies. The College is increasingly identifying concerns through its own work and bringing them to the appropriate committees for a response (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026d).

The priority is to make these checks and follow-up consistent across the programme lifecycle. This includes stronger checks before validation, reliable information for academic decisions and clearer records of how actions have addressed the findings. The QEP carries these priorities beyond submission, supported by the evidence matrix and reporting to Academic Council. Subsequent review will assess both completion of the agreed work and its contribution to programme quality and the student experience (Independent College, 2026c).

5. Overall Conclusions

5.1 Overall Institutional Evaluation

The College has made substantial progress in academic leadership, staffing, programme review and student support. Revalidation findings have been followed through, programme reporting is more regular, and internal reviews are identifying where established practice needs to change. Much of this work began before CINNTE. The review has brought these developments together, identified improvements and helped the College agree the work still required (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026d).

The College's judgement is that its approach to quality assurance is becoming more proactive and systematic. Review findings have led to decisions and changes in practice, although implementation and follow-up remain uneven. Some recent changes also need time before their effectiveness can be assessed. The priority is to complete agreed actions, review their results and use that learning to inform further decisions. The QEP sets out this continuing work, including the wider QAM revision, student-outcomes reporting and improvements to Examination Board procedures. The evidence matrix and committee reports will record progress beyond submission and help the College assess the effect on academic standards and the student experience (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026i).

5.2 Strengths

The self-evaluation identifies the following strengths:

- **More systematic academic oversight.** Academic Council assigns actions, returns to review progress and considers regular programme reports. Clearer agendas, meeting records and subcommittee reporting support this work, alongside the External Chairperson's reporting to the Board (Independent College, 2026b, pp.10–12).
- **Improvements arising from revalidation. Recommendations have informed academic appointments, learning outcomes, programme documentation and external engagement. Follow-up through Academic Council** has maintained attention to both completed changes and continuing work (Independent College, 2026a).

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- **Stronger academic staffing and leadership.** Additional lecturers and programme-level leadership roles have increased the expertise and continuity available for teaching, assessment and programme development (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026n).
- **Programme monitoring informed by students and lecturers.** Semester reports bring together assessment outcomes, student feedback, lecturers' experience and External Examiner findings. In Marketing, staff shared teaching approaches, considered feedback together and used the programme roadmap to examine repetition and progression between modules. Alternative meeting arrangements enabled more lecturers to contribute (Independent College, 2026ac, BAM, pp.2–3).
- **Student contributions to programme development and support.** Consultation on International Business has been incorporated into the revised programme for validation, including its international focus, assessment sequencing and applied project. Dispute Resolution representatives reported positively on teaching and access to programme management while raising suggestions for improvement. Workshop feedback has also identified practical changes to support provision, including more participatory activities and content suited to different stages of study. These examples show the value of student input, while wider participation and consistent reporting back remain priorities (Independent College, 2026ac, BAIB, pp.4–5; MADR, p.4; Independent College, 2026ar, p.2).
- **Positive external assurance.** External Examiner reports provide assurance on standards, marking and responses to recommendations within the assessments reviewed. TrustEd Ireland provides further positive assurance on admissions, recognition, applicant information and international student support (Independent College, 2025d; Independent College, 2026o; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2025b, pp.5–8).
- **A growing capacity for internal review.** The IRWG, policy owners, Admissions and academic teams have examined established practice and identified matters requiring action. The advanced-entry and Examination Board reviews are examples of the College initiating scrutiny and taking findings through its governance processes (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026r).

5.3 Areas for Further Development

The principal priorities arising from the self-evaluation are:

- **Examination Board follow-up.** The agreed work covers the targeted adjustment review, examiner consideration and any necessary corrections, alongside implementation and review of procedural safeguards.
- Implementation of **revised governance** arrangements. Priorities include detailed committee terms of reference, alignment of responsibilities and wider teaching-staff and student participation. Subsequent review will consider committee follow-up and reporting.

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- **Phased QAM revision. The policy-owner review continues, including Sections 9 and 11, alongside alignment of forms, guidance and public information with approved policies.**
- Programme **development and review.** Priorities include consistent academic checks before validation, alignment of approved and working programme documents, and learning from panel findings.
- Continuing **oversight of professional programmes and partnerships.** Implementation covers programme-specific responsibilities, external approval requirements and reporting, with review of external advice and collaborative activity.
- Student **participation and communication.** Priorities include support for representatives, wider participation in feedback and clearer communication of the changes arising from student input.
- Consistent **student-outcomes reporting.** The reporting framework will support common definitions and analysis across programmes, intakes and entry routes, informing review of support and other interventions.
- Teaching, **assessment and** support. Continuing priorities include assessment feedback, cross-modular assessment, academic integrity, library development, Universal Design for Learning and support for part-time and blended learners.
- Workforce **development.** Career development, workload and capacity review will support programme needs, teaching, scholarship and the student experience.

The QEP sets out responsibilities, timescales and review arrangements for these priorities. Progress and results will be considered through the College's governance processes (Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026i).

5.4 Enhancement Priorities

The QEP brings together the significant institutional actions arising from the self-evaluation, with responsible leads, milestones and arrangements for reviewing results. The evidence matrix supports this work and retains the detailed policy corrections and supporting records (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c).

Academic Council approved the final SER and its academic enhancement priorities for submission to QQI. The QEP incorporates the agreed amendments, while individual policy changes and resource commitments continue through their relevant approval arrangements. Implementation of the agreed assessment safeguards is a priority for the next applicable Examination Board (Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026al; Independent College, 2026bt).

The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will coordinate updates from action leads for consideration by QA&E and Academic Council. Reporting will identify completed and outstanding work, matters requiring a decision and the evidence available to assess whether changes have

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addressed the findings. Some improvements will need more than one reporting cycle before their effect can be assessed (Independent College, 2026c).

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Governance **GOV-14** QAM V5.2: 2	Academic Council reporting and the External Chairperson's reporting to the Board are established. Revised membership and Standing Orders have been approved. The next phase will clarify Group and College responsibilities, reserved matters and committee terms of reference, aligning executive and academic decision-making with the agreed governance arrangements.	Approved governance documents and subsequent decisions will support review of reporting, escalation and the exercise of the agreed responsibilities.	Lead: President for corporate governance; Chairperson and Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Academic Council and subcommittee terms of reference, with the Dean of Teaching and Learning leading the new subcommittee arrangements. Milestones: revised Standing Orders and Style Guide approved; terms of reference and transition arrangements to November 2026 Academic Council. Corporate decisions follow their own approval route. Review: 31 March 2027 through Board and Academic Council assurance routes. Status: academic direction and action plan approved; implementation continuing (Independent College, 2026bj; Independent College, 2026bk; Independent College, 2026bt).

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
QAM and annual QA cycle **GOV-01 / GOV-03 / GOV-11** QAM V5.2: 1, 9 and 11	QAM V5.2 has been approved and issued. Semester monitoring continues; development and introduction of the annual programme-reporting template remain part of the continuing work. The substantive policy-owner review continues, including Sections 9 and 11, alignment of supporting guidance and the annual QA cycle. Interim amendments will address current assessment, appeals and delivery needs through the normal approval routes. Arrangements for AI-assisted minute preparation remain under consideration, including human review, privacy and records management.	Review of the first operating cycle will consider timely reporting, implementation of approved amendments and follow-up of actions. The full revision and any trial of AI-assisted minute preparation will be evaluated separately.	Lead: Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, with President and policy owners. Milestones: V5.2 approved on 2 October 2026 and now issued. Report progress to November Academic Council. Target V6 sign-off: September 2027, allowing consideration of the formal QQI report. Necessary interim amendments continue through the normal approval routes. Review: implementation progress in March 2027; review the first completed reporting cycle after issue. AI-assisted minutes: Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Secretary, Chairperson and Dean of Teaching and Learning to settle the November trial and report the findings. Status: V5.2 approved and issued; full policy review and evaluation continuing (Independent College, 2026bt).

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Programme lifecycle **GOV-02 / GOV-03** QAM V5.2: 3	The Programmatic Review Policy, revalidation follow-up and subsequent Academic Council review provide the basis for continuing programme oversight. Further development will strengthen academic and resource assurance before submission, clarify sign-off responsibilities and incorporate learning from external panels. Programme documentation is being reconciled with current provision through programme-team review and academic scrutiny.	The approved submission criteria and their first application will provide evidence of implementation. Subsequent panel outcomes will inform evaluation of whether identified weaknesses recur.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning. Support: Heads, programme leads and QA. Proposed milestone: record the agreed approach, remaining criteria and approval route by 5 October 2026; target completion of tools by 30 November 2026, subject to approval and before the next submission. Review: within eight weeks of first use and after the next panel outcome. Route: QA&E / Academic Council. Status: proposed controls. Document reconciliation: Dean of Teaching and Learning and Programme Leads, supported by QA; President to seek QQI clarification where needed. Proposed November milestone: discrepancies recorded, correction routes confirmed and completion dates agreed. Completion of all corrections is not assumed by that date.
Professional programmes **GOV-12** QAM V5.2: 3, with 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11	Existing QAM approval provisions and CILEX external scrutiny provide a foundation for professional-programme oversight. The approved alignment arrangements will strengthen Programme Board oversight, programme documentation, results approval and continuing monitoring, including fully online delivery. Programme-specific implementation and transition arrangements remain in progress.	Review of the first operating cycle will consider consistent application of the approved arrangements, external scrutiny and the response to identified gaps.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning. Support: President, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and professional programme leads. Milestones: professional-programme amendments incorporated into the issued QAM V5.2; consequential template changes to follow through QA&E; inventory and transition plan by 31 October 2026. Review: within eight weeks of the first completed cycle; progress check 31 March 2027. Status: governance approach approved; programme-specific implementation continuing (Independent College, 2026bj).

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Student voice **GOV-08** QAM V5.2: 7 and 11	Student feedback reaches committees and Academic Council through established channels. Academic Council has agreed semester feedback arrangements, with student-experience and academic feedback considered separately, and induction feedback scheduled from Spring 2027. Consolidated reporting will bring together themes, College responses and communication to students, alongside work to strengthen representation.	Evaluation will consider participation across programmes and modes, recurring concerns, changes arising from student input and students' experience of the College's response.	Leads: Dean of Student Affairs for student-experience feedback and consolidated reporting; Dean of Teaching and Learning for module-level academic feedback. Support: Programme Leads and QA. Proposed milestone: first consolidated report by 28 February 2027, subject to the committee calendar. Review: 30 June 2027. Route: learner-support committee and Academic Council, with QA&E oversight of systemic issues. Status: existing practice; combined reporting and follow-up require strengthening.
Assessment and standards **QAM V5.2: 6**	The Dean's review and QA&E scrutiny have clarified assessment checks and preliminary-board adjustments. Academic Council has approved follow-up, including the targeted Spring 2026 adjustment review, internal and external examiner scrutiny and revised results where appropriate. Enhanced module-results information and clearer module-level assurance will be reviewed in the next board cycle. Computer-based assessment arrangements are also being developed to support consistent conditions, suitable device access and appropriate alternatives.	The targeted review remains in progress, with outcomes scheduled for November Academic Council. Evaluation of the next board and assessment cycles will consider accurate results, authorised changes, examiner scrutiny, consistent assessment conditions and the operation of the agreed records-management safeguards.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning with Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Examinations Office and relevant internal examiners. Milestone: complete review for finalised results to be ratified at November 2026 Academic Council. Review: safeguards in the next board cycle, including January 2027. Status: follow-up approved; targeted review and evaluation continuing. Computer-based assessment lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning with Academic Operations Manager and QA. Detailed schedule and pilot to be agreed through QA&E; review after the first completed assessment cycle.

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Academic integrity and AI QAM V5.2: 6	Academic-integrity policy review has informed revised procedures and guidance. Learner declarations and assessment documentation have been introduced, and Academic Council has approved the Charter material presented. Continuing work will align policies, staff guidance and student information, including the approved AI Process Appendix. Academic Council's further consideration of process ownership will inform implementation responsibilities.	Review after an assessment cycle will consider consistent decisions, fair procedures, timeliness, appeals and staff and student understanding. Changes in reporting and detection will be taken into account when interpreting patterns in cases.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning. Support: Student Affairs and QA. Milestones: policy approval confirmed; staff guidance by 31 October 2026; approved Spring 2027 requirements ready by 15 December 2026. Review: 30 June 2027 after an assessment cycle. Route: QA&E / Academic Council. Status: policy response approved; implementation continuing.
Student progression retention and institutional data **GOV-09 / GOV-13** QAM V5.2: 4, 9 and 11	Student monitoring and advanced-entry review are established. The approved framework brings this work into common semester reporting. Continuing development will support consistent definitions of progression, completion and retention, comparable reporting and evaluation of support interventions. Post-board advanced-entry follow-up will inform the next module review. Data reconciliation and digital-records controls form part of this work, with oversight through QA&E.	The first report and subsequent comparable outcomes will support evaluation of how findings inform actions. Review of digital-records controls will consider access, reconciliation, change records, recovery and incident escalation.	Lead: Dean of Student Affairs. Support: Dean of Teaching and Learning, Finance and programme teams; Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement coordinates wider indicators. Proposed milestones: definitions and reconciliation position by 5 October 2026; first report by 28 February 2027. Review: 30 September 2027 against the next comparable reporting period. Route: SMC, Academic Council and Board under the approved framework. Status: framework approved; first report and data checks outstanding. Advanced-entry follow-up: Director of Student Admissions with Heads of Department; module review January 2027, exact date to be confirmed. Data reconciliation and the review of digital-records controls form part of the continuing work on student-outcomes reporting, with oversight through QA&E.

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Academic workforce and capacity GOV-10 QAM V5.2: 5	Additional lecturers and academic leadership roles have strengthened programme teams and continuity. Continuing capacity review will connect programme delivery with academic coverage, coordination, workload and staff development across delivery modes. Module evaluation and collegiate peer observation are being developed to build on programme-team reflection and student feedback.	Evaluation will consider delivery coverage, continuity, workload and how staff development informs teaching and programme assurance. Module feedback and peer observation will be considered alongside programme reporting.	Lead: President. Support: Dean of Teaching and Learning, Heads and Human Resources (HR). Proposed milestones: record the decision route, resource requirements and outstanding approvals by 5 October 2026; target framework and capacity review by 31 December 2026, subject to the relevant decisions. Review: 30 June 2027. Route: SMC / Board for resources; Academic Council for academic assurance. Status: existing staffing strengthened; framework under review. Teaching evaluation lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning with Heads of Department. Spring 2027 module evaluation and Autumn 2027 peer observation are planning proposals, subject to agreement of the arrangements and dates. Review each first completed cycle. Resource decisions and any revised dates will follow the relevant approval arrangements.

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Library inclusive learning and support **GOV-04 / GOV-05** QAM V5.2: 5 and 7	Library services and learner-support arrangements have developed. Continuing work addresses the library strategy, UDL and support across part-time, blended and online provision. Implementation plans will connect identified student needs with service development and resources. Workshop feedback will inform the next cycle, with resulting changes communicated to students.	Evaluation will consider access, use and student experience across programmes and modes, examples of inclusive teaching and assessment, and remaining barriers. Further workshop feedback will inform review of relevance and usefulness.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning. Support: Dean of Student Affairs, library services and digital-learning support. Proposed milestones: identify strand leads, resource requests and outstanding decisions by 5 October 2026; target implementation plans by 30 November 2026, subject to resource approval. Reviews: 31 March 2027 implementation; 30 September 2027 effectiveness. Route: QA&E / Academic Council; SMC for resources. Status: revalidation actions remain open. Proposed workshop lead: Dean of Student Affairs with relevant colleagues. Agree response and review date for the next workshop cycle; Decision and implementation pending. Reporting will cover strand leads, resources and progress on planned provision.
External engagement **GOV-03 / GOV-04** QAM V5.2: 10, with 3 and 11	The External Advisory Panel, professional relationships and industry activities provide external input. Programme reporting will strengthen the connection between advice, the College's response and resulting changes. Partnership oversight and progression arrangements continue to develop through the appropriate approval routes. I²sRE remains a development proposal.	Programme teams and relevant stakeholders will review selected changes to assess their contribution to provision and the intended benefits.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning. Support: programme leads, External Advisory Panel and QA. Proposed milestone: strengthened reporting from the next panel meeting, reviewed by 31 March 2027. Review: 30 September 2027. Route: Programme Boards / Academic Council. Status: panel operating; recording and review of the contribution to programmes continuing.

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Priority and QAM link	Action and intended outcome	Completion and effectiveness evidence	Lead milestones and review
Recognition and admissions Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) action plan **QAM V5.2: 4**	The revised Admissions policy and Lisbon Recognition Convention action plan have been approved. Implementation continues through published recognition information, appeal arrangements, staff development and the remaining applicant procedure. A proposed minimum admission age will be considered through QA&E and Academic Council before implementation.	Review will consider the consistency, reasons and timeliness of recognition decisions, access to appeals and implementation of approved procedures. The College's compliance response and QQI confirmation of closure remain distinct stages.	Leads: Admissions; Marketing for website and IT for appeals arrangements. Milestones: website and appeal actions October 2026; staff training and remaining applicant procedure December 2026. Status: approval recorded; implementation continuing. The compliance response has been submitted to QQI; implementation of later milestones and confirmation of closure remain separate stages. Minimum-age policy: Director of Student Admissions with QA and the President; proposal to November 2026 Academic Council. Implementation will follow policy approval (Independent College, 2026bt).
Graduate attributes as academic quality objectives **E58 / GA-IMPLEMENTATION-2026-09** **QAM V5.2: 3, 5 and 11**	Academic Council has adopted the graduate attributes as academic quality objectives and approved the implementation approach as a working document. Programme mapping and reporting will develop during 2026–27, including proportionate application to professional courses. Indicators will be refined through use, with initial measurements informing subsequent targets.	Evaluation will draw on assessment and examiner evidence, student feedback and outcomes. Programme mapping will support this work, while evidence of attainment will develop through the first reporting cycles.	Lead: Dean of Teaching and Learning with Heads of Department and Programme Leads; indicator owners to be confirmed. Milestones: information sheet and implementation paper approved; programme-level mapping during 2026–27, with progress to Academic Council in March 2027. Introduce template changes as mapping develops. Route: Programme Boards and Academic Council; consequential professional-template amendment recorded through QA&E. Status: approach approved; mapping, reporting and evaluation remain to be completed (Independent College, 2026ao; Independent College, 2026bl; Independent College, 2026bt). The March 2027 progress report will address indicator ownership, baseline evidence and the timetable for targets, taking account of Academic Council's consideration of validity and reliability.

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5.4.1 QAM amendments supporting enhancement

Section 11 covers self-evaluation, monitoring, review and enhancement. The phased revision separates amendments ready for issue from the wider policy review. Evidence identifiers link the actions to the findings that informed them (Independent College, 2026i; Independent College, 2026c).

QEP accountability. The Section 11 revision will define coordination by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, one accountable lead for each action, QA&E scrutiny and Academic Council oversight. Resource decisions remain with the relevant executive or corporate body (Independent College, 2026c).

Monitoring and closure. Each action will record the finding, intended outcome, lead, resources, milestones and review evidence. Reports will distinguish completed work from actions awaiting review of results. Delays or ineffective actions will be referred for decisions, with reasons and revised dates; completion will require supporting records (Independent College, 2026c).

Programme and module reporting. QAM V5.2 retains the established semester monitoring cycle. Module findings inform programme reports, and Programme Boards oversee actions and their follow-up. The planned annual reporting template will provide a consolidated overview of programme performance and enhancement. Continuing review will strengthen the recording of actions, deadlines and communication to students, while Examination Board and External Examiner reporting continues (Independent College, 2026bw, Sections 2, 3 and 11; Independent College, 2026c, 11.P01–11.P02).

Student outcomes and information. Sections 9 and 11 will connect the reporting framework with agreed definitions, reliable source records and evaluation. Responsibilities remain as assigned to the Dean of Student Affairs, SMC, Academic Council and the Board. Detailed records-management amendments and reporting implementation will continue beyond V5.2 (Independent College, 2026l; Independent College, 2026i; Independent College, 2026c, GOV-09).

Professional-programme implementation. The approved arrangements will be reflected in programme documentation, Programme Board reporting and the applicable College and external results approvals. Continuing work covers fully online provision, programme-specific recognition and appropriate forms and guidance. The Financial Modelling and Valuation certificate has been approved; any outstanding RPL comparison remains part of implementation follow-up and does not reopen the initial programme approval. The QEP will track this work (Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2026ag; Independent College, 2026aj).

Document control. The policy record will identify each amendment's current and revised location, owner, approval, effective date and implementation arrangements. It will distinguish V5.2 amendments from later work and retain historical references (Independent College, 2026i; Independent College, 2026c).

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5.5 Continuing implementation and review

- The QEP sets out the work that will continue after institutional review. This includes the full QAM revision, detailed committee terms of reference, professional-programme monitoring, student-outcomes reporting and the remaining assessment, library, Universal Design for Learning and staff-development actions. Responsible leads will report progress through the relevant committees. Interim amendments affecting assessment or programme delivery will proceed through the established approval arrangements during the wider QAM review.
- Programme and institutional reports will provide the evidence for reviewing this work. The College will consider whether actions have been completed, whether the changes are operating consistently and what difference they make to teaching, learning and the student experience. Where further action is needed, it will be recorded and followed up through the QEP.
- The evaluation is supported by institutional records and aggregate or anonymised student information. The references identify the sources used; access to supporting records is managed in accordance with the College's information-governance arrangements.

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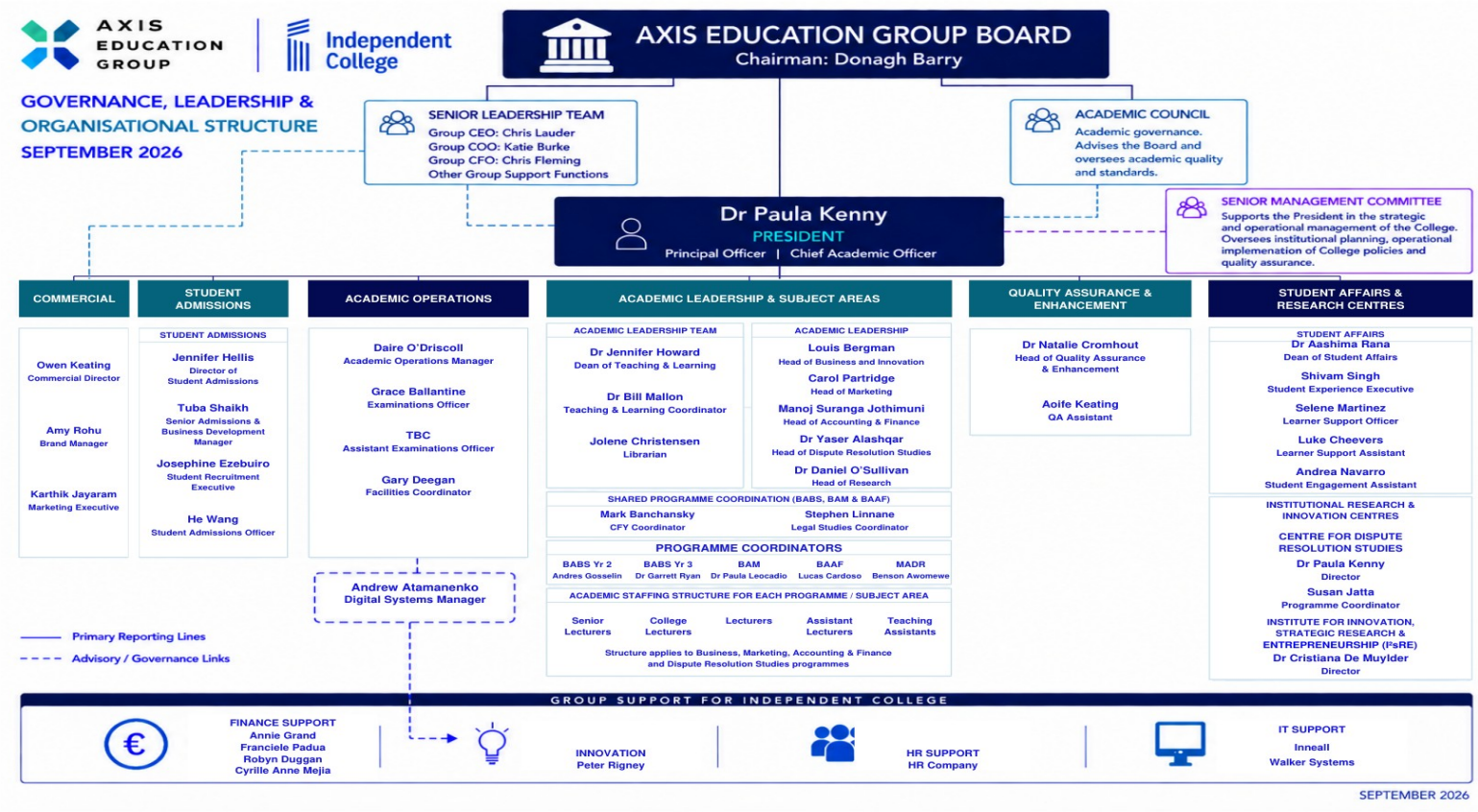
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Appendix A – Organisational Structure

The College's organisation chart shows programme coordination, academic operations, subject leadership, quality assurance and student-affairs responsibilities, alongside separate Commercial and Admissions functions. Sections 2.2 and 2.4 explain these arrangements (Independent College, 2026bo).



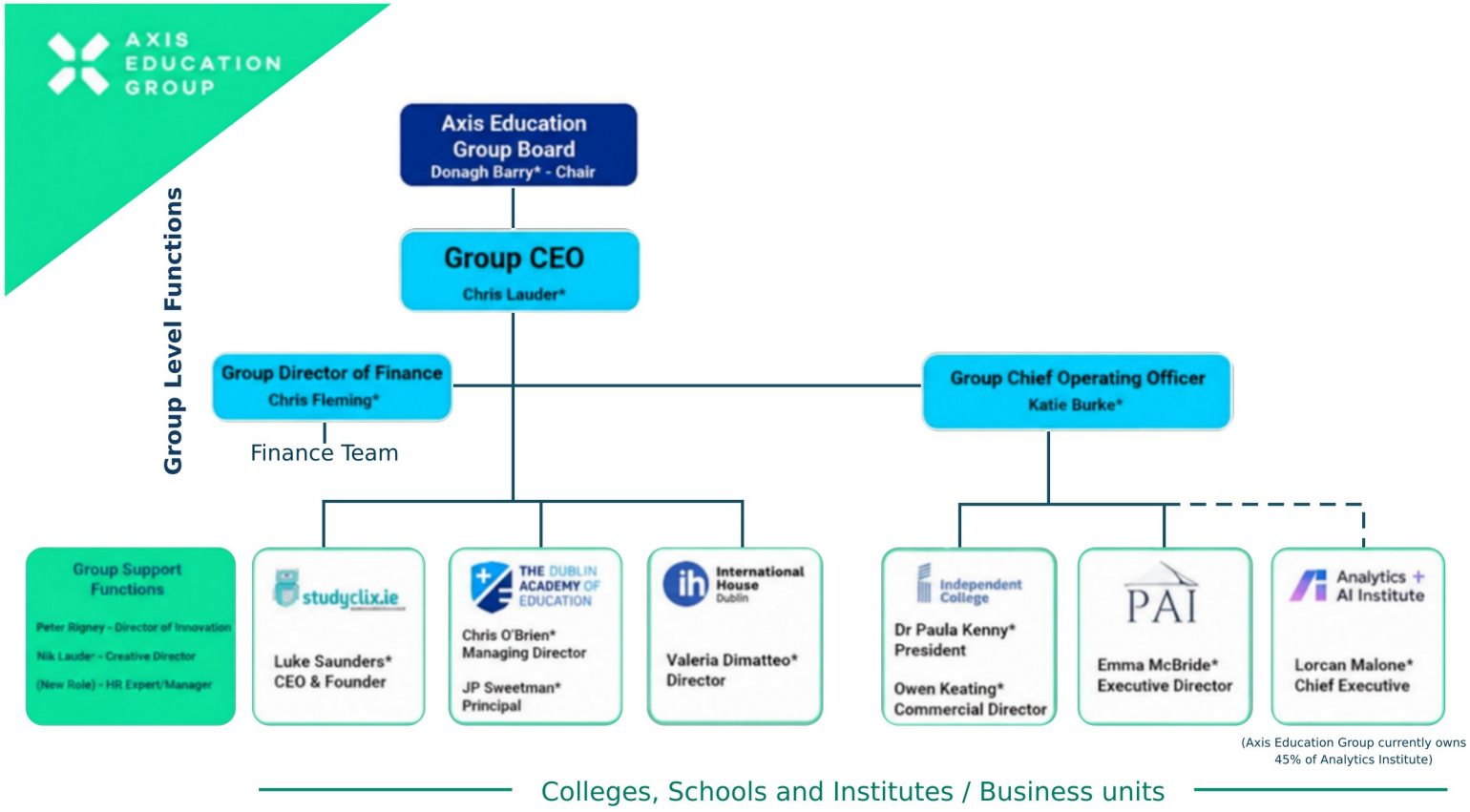
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Axis Education Group organisation and leadership structure

The chart shows the Group structure and support functions available to the College. Source: Axis Education Group (2026), Group Governance, p.7.



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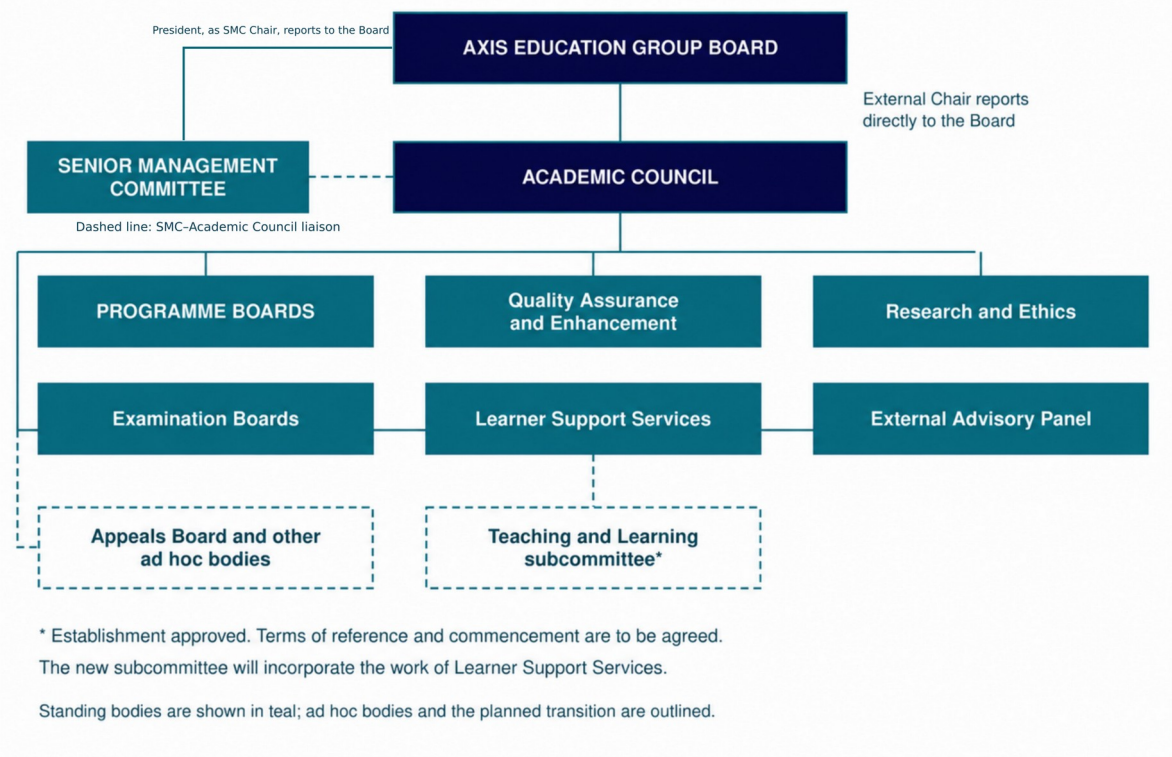
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Appendix B – Academic Governance Structure

Academic Council is supported by Programme Boards, Examination Boards and specialist subcommittees. Its External Chairperson reports directly to the Axis Education Group Board. Membership includes the President, the Dean of Teaching and Learning, the Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of Student Admissions, together with academic heads, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and representatives of lecturers and students (Independent College, 2026an, p.1).

Programme Boards form part of continuing academic oversight alongside the standing subcommittees and Examination Boards. Appeals and other ad hoc bodies are convened for their particular functions. The Teaching and Learning subcommittee has been approved in principle; its terms of reference and commencement will return to Academic Council in November. Existing arrangements continue during the transition (Independent College, 2026bt).



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Appendix C – Programme Portfolio

The College's programme summary brings together its QQI-validated and professional provision, with programmes in development distinguished in Section 2.5. The updated summary includes the approved Professional Certificate in Financial Modelling and Valuation and records the MA in Dispute Resolution duration as three semesters. The proposed MSc in International Accounting and Analytics is listed separately as in development and subject to QQI validation. Commencement arrangements for new provision will be confirmed through the relevant programme records (Independent College, 2026ae; Independent College, 2026ag; Independent College, 2026ah; Independent College, 2026ax, item 7). Credits are expressed using the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

QQI-validated programmes

Programme	NFQ level	Credits	Duration
MA in Dispute Resolution	9	90 ECTS	3 semesters
BA (Honours) in Business Studies	8	180 ECTS	6 semesters
BA (Honours) in Accounting and Finance	8	180 ECTS	6 semesters
BA (Honours) in International Business – Year 3 option	8	60 ECTS	2 semesters
BA (Honours) in Marketing	8	180 ECTS	6 semesters

Professional programmes outside the NFQ

Programme	Award / external relationship	Status
Diploma in Professional Legal Studies (DILEX)	CILEX UK	Next intake: October 2026.
Certificate in Professional Legal Studies (CILEX)	CILEX UK	Next intake: October 2026.
FE1 preparation for Law Society examinations	Examination preparation	Next intake: October 2026.
Award in Radio Production and Podcasting	Independent College / Today FM	Intake: September 2026.
Certificate in Dispute Resolution – Dublin and ZCAS Zambia	Independent College; ZCAS partnership for Zambia provision	In development; commencement to be confirmed. ZCAS provision is fully online. Programme and partnership documentation is being finalised.
Professional Certificate in Financial Modelling and Valuation	Independent College professional certificate	Approved by Academic Council. Ten weeks of live online teaching; commencement to be confirmed. Optional FMI AFM examination is separate.

Programme in development: MSc in International Accounting and Analytics. Development approved by Academic Council; subject to QQI validation.

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Appendix D – Self-Evaluation Methodology and Engagement

This appendix provides further detail on the approach outlined in Section 1.2, including staff and student contributions, the checking of evidence and consideration of findings through the College's governance processes. The evidence matrix described in that section links findings to source documents, the SER and follow-up actions (Independent College, 2026c). Findings were checked against approved minutes, QAM policies, external panel reports, formal provider responses and operating records. Where sources differed, the evaluation used the latest approved or verified evidence, retaining earlier records where they helped explain how the position had developed.

The review distinguished between gaps in documentation and gaps in practice. Some arrangements were operating but were not adequately reflected in the QAM or formal reporting. Student feedback, for example, was gathered and acted on through surveys, class representatives, Student Affairs and day-to-day contact, but the resulting themes, actions and outcomes were not consistently brought together for Academic Council. Where an arrangement was absent or was not working as intended, this was identified for action (Independent College, 2026b, pp.6–7; Independent College, 2026c, Evidence Register, POE-024).

Policy owners reviewed the QAM against their experience of applying it. They checked responsibilities, forms, decision-making and supporting records, identifying outdated role descriptions, inconsistent appeal routes, duplication and procedures that no longer matched policy. These findings informed the phased QAM revision and the record of amendments and continuing work (Independent College, 2026c).

Staff contributed through academic governance, teaching, programme leadership, student support and quality assurance. Following a meeting with subcommittee chairpersons, each Academic Council subcommittee other than the Appeals Committee reviewed its work and submitted a self-evaluation. The IRWG considered these submissions and developed its report through a series of meetings, maintaining its working documents on Moodle. Programme reports, policy-owner reviews and the Dean of Teaching and Learning's Examination Board review brought further evidence from those responsible for putting the College's arrangements into practice (Independent College, 2026b, pp.5 and 12–13; Independent College, 2026d).

Student experience informed the evaluation through surveys, student representation, Programme Board records, Student Affairs and external-review findings. The IRWG did not have a student member. The Dean of Student Affairs contributed a student-experience perspective, but this did not replace direct student participation. The review recognised the need to strengthen formal representation and to communicate more consistently what the College had done in response to feedback (Independent College, 2026b, pp.5–7).

The limited time available for additional consultation on the SER was a challenge. Established surveys, programme discussions and staff reviews supplied substantial evidence, but did not give every group an equal opportunity to comment directly on the report. Programme review and follow-up through the QEP will allow staff and students to consider the College's response and assess the changes.

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Committee consideration helped clarify findings and agree responses. The Examination Board review was considered through QA&E and Academic Council, with subsequent clarification reflected in the revised briefing and the SER (Independent College, 2026al; Independent College, 2026c).

SMC signed off the draft within its executive remit. Academic Council approved the final SER for submission to QQI, incorporating the agreed amendments and requiring circulation of the completed report to members before submission. The Academic Council record provides the evidence for those decisions; the matrix distinguishes approval from the implementation and subsequent evaluation of actions (Independent College, 2026bt).

The External Chairperson of Academic Council contributed an external academic perspective throughout the work. Validation and revalidation reports, External Examiner findings, TrustEd and wider QQI engagement provided further evidence against which the College could test its assessment of progress and areas requiring attention (Independent College, 2026b).

The evaluation distinguishes approved decisions from implementation and evidence of effectiveness. Some recent changes have yet to complete a full programme, assessment or reporting cycle. Their implementation and subsequent review will continue through the QEP, supported by the evidence matrix and reporting arrangements described in Section 1.2 (Independent College, 2026b; Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026ao).

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Appendix E – Glossary and Acronyms

Term	Meaning
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The College holds Business Education Alliance membership; this is distinct from accreditation.
AC	Academic Council.
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.
AE	Advanced entry: admission to a later stage of a programme on the basis of recognised prior learning.
AFM	Advanced Financial Modeler: an external Financial Modeling Institute designation, distinct from the College's professional certificate.
AI	Artificial intelligence.
ATP	Access, transfer and progression.
BA	Bachelor of Arts.
BAAF	BA (Honours) in Accounting and Finance.
BABS	BA (Honours) in Business Studies.
BAIB	BA (Honours) in International Business.
BAM	BA (Honours) in Marketing.
BICC	Brazil–Ireland Chamber of Commerce.
CDRS	Centre for Dispute Resolution Studies.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer.
CFY	Common Foundation Year of the undergraduate business programmes. It does not apply to every College programme.
CILEX / DILEX	Labels used in College records for the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies respectively. Both are subject to CILEX UK arrangements.
CILEX UK	Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, the UK professional body providing external review and approval arrangements for the College's professional legal provision.
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.
CINNTE	QQI's institutional review process. It examines institutional quality assurance and enhancement; it is not programme validation.
Completion	Successful fulfilment of the requirements for an award. Completion is distinguished from progression to a further semester or stage.
COO	Chief Operating Officer.
CV	Curriculum Vitae.
DPO	Data Protection Officer.

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Term	Meaning
DTL	Dean of Teaching and Learning; also used as a prefix in document reference codes.
E / GOV / POE identifiers	Evidence-register, governance-action and policy-owner-review reference codes used in supporting records. They are not policy numbers.
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.
External Examiner	An appointed external academic or professional who reviews assessment and standards within an agreed remit.
FE1	Final Examination – First Part: the Law Society of Ireland entrance examination.
FECAP	Fundação Escola de Comércio Álvares Penteado, Brazil.
FMI	Financial Modeling Institute, Canada.
GNIB	Garda National Immigration Bureau; retained where referenced in earlier records.
Graduate attributes	The six qualities adopted as the College's academic quality objectives. The approved implementation approach maps them to programme learning outcomes.
HR	Human Resources.
IC	Independent College.
ILEP	Interim List of Eligible Programmes.
IRP	Irish Residence Permit.
IRWG	Institutional Review Working Group.
ISD	Immigration Service Delivery.
ISEC	Office of International Scholarly Exchange Curriculum, Beijing, as named in the College's collaboration records.
IT	Information Technology.
I²sRE	Institute for Innovation, Strategic Research and Entrepreneurship; academic approval and implementation arrangements remain in development.
LRC	Lisbon Recognition Convention.
LSS	Learner Support Services.
MA	Master of Arts.
MADR	Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution; also abbreviated MA in Dispute Resolution.
MII	Marketing Institute Ireland.
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding.
MSc	Master of Science.
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications, Ireland.
Off-NFQ	Provision outside the National Framework of Qualifications. Also described as off-framework or professional provision in this report.
PAI	Public Affairs Ireland.
PC / PCs	Personal computer / personal computers.

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Term	Meaning
PGC	Punjab Group of Colleges, Pakistan.
PMI	Project Management Institute.
Programme Board	The academic forum responsible for programme oversight, review and reporting within the College's governance arrangements.
Progression	Movement to the next semester or stage after meeting the relevant academic requirements. A reported measure must identify its cohort and reporting period.
QA	Quality assurance.
QA&E	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. QAE is retained where it forms part of an original document title.
QAM	Quality Assurance Manual.
QEP	Quality Enhancement Plan.
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland.
Retention	Continuation in study over a defined period. Reporting must explain how withdrawals, deferrals, repeats and returns are treated.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning, including formal, non-formal and informal learning.
SER	Self-Evaluation Report.
SMC	Senior Management Committee.
TESCHI	Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Chimalhuacán, Mexico.
TrustEd Ireland	Ireland's international education quality mark, administered by QQI.
UCD	University College Dublin.
UDL	Universal Design for Learning.
UK	United Kingdom.
ZCAS University	Partner university in Zambia, identified by this name in the College's collaboration records.

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Appendix F – Institutional Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Revalidation follow-through

Original issue. The 2024 postgraduate and 2025 undergraduate revalidation panels generated recommendations that extended beyond individual programmes, including staffing, student support, assessment feedback, library and UDL, industry engagement and the use of data (Independent College, 2026a).

Evidence and response. Academic Council assigned revalidation recommendations to committees and programme teams and returned to review progress. Learning outcomes and programme documents were revised where required. Subsequent checks confirmed corrections to a number of standalone module documents and identified remaining discrepancies to reconcile with controlled programme records. These include documentary updates following changes in facilities and IT provision and programme-specific drafting corrections. The detailed findings and correction routes are retained in the evidence matrix (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026d, Part A3; Independent College, 2026c).

Current position. Learning outcomes were revised where required; staffing and academic leadership were strengthened; the External Advisory Panel was established and met twice; postgraduate student data were reviewed; and semester Programme Board reporting was introduced. Library strategy, UDL, cross-modular assessment, assessment feedback and aspects of part-time support remain in progress (Independent College, 2026a). The President has also confirmed two additional full-time lecturer appointments in September 2026; their effect on delivery will be assessed through subsequent programme monitoring. The Spring 2026 BABS report confirms operation of three revised specialist tracks, while the MADR report records updated supervision guidance and practical-exam feedback through Moodle. These are further examples of changes in delivery following review, with their longer-term effect still to be assessed (Independent College, 2026ac, BABS, pp.6–8; MADR, pp.1–2).

Evaluation. Revalidation led to assigned actions, revised documentation and subsequent checking. Reconciliation of the remaining documents continues through programme-team review and the applicable approval arrangements. Stronger internal scrutiny will support accurate College information and programme-specific content through future development and review (Independent College, 2026a; Independent College, 2026d; Independent College, 2026c).

Further work. The proposed Section 11 revision provides for assigned responsibilities, action tracking and review of results, with recurring findings informing subsequent programme development and review.

The approved graduate-attributes implementation approach builds on this work through mapping existing validated programme learning outcomes to the attributes. Gaps will inform the next revalidation; this is separate from the earlier documentary corrections and does not require rewriting validated outcomes (Independent College, 2026ao, pp.1–2).

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Case Study 2 – Student progression retention and success

Original issue. The September 2025 post-Examination Board enrolment document records semester numbers, repeats, potential returns from deferral and transfers between programmes. These records can support consistent cohort comparisons and review of student support. Continuation, academic progression and completion require distinct definitions; comparisons across reporting dates require consistent treatment of repeats, deferrals, withdrawals and returns (Independent College, 2025b; Independent College, 2026l, Appendix A).

Institutional response. The Student Progression, Retention and Success Reporting Framework was approved and will bring together work developed since Autumn 2024 on progression, retention, completion, attendance, withdrawals and support interventions. The template identifies Autumn 2026 as the first intended reporting period. The baseline cohort and first completed report remain to be established (Independent College, 2026l, section 1 and Appendices B–C). Current monitoring includes attendance, assessment checkpoints, withdrawals and deferrals, supporting continuing review of student progress and interventions.

Reporting framework. The semester report comprises an executive summary, cohort and programme analysis, the stages of the student journey, attendance, withdrawals and other pathways, student-support interventions, enhancement actions, recommendations and institutional learning. Each report addresses four questions: what happened, why it happened, what the College did and what happens next (Independent College, 2026l, section 5 and Appendix C).

Governance and ownership. The Dean of Student Affairs leads the work and prepares the semester report. SMC reviews performance, risks and actions; Academic Council oversees academic findings and enhancement; and the Board receives assurance. The next report will review progress against agreed actions. The College will review how these arrangements work after the first completed report (Independent College, 2026l, section 3 and Appendix D).

Evidence and indicators. The framework identifies Quercus, Moodle, Admissions, assessment records and programme teams as data sources. It provides for progression, retention, completion, attendance and withdrawal indicators, comparison with previous periods and an identified baseline cohort. Consistent cohort definitions will support comparisons between reporting periods (Independent College, 2026l, Appendices A–D).

Advanced-entry review. The **July** review **considered** performance **across successive intakes** and noted that most advanced-entry students were performing well, while identifying particular modules and support needs for further attention. **Follow-up considers progression, repeats and deferrals** alongside Examination Board **outcomes** (Independent College, 2026x).

Follow-through. The completed July review follows the action agreed in June to return to results after the Examination Boards. It confirmed CVs and translated transcripts for Year 2 requests, added module descriptors for Year 3 requests and allowed an academic interview with the relevant Programme Leader where sufficient evidence cannot be supplied. Participants agreed clearer guidance on the RPL process, subject preparation and professional exemptions. They also agreed processing targets, reviewed the newly developed SharePoint site and assigned Admissions and

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Heads of Department to take forward the work. Selected modules across Business Studies, Marketing and Accounting and Finance will be reviewed again in January 2027. The College has used this review of student outcomes to improve its admissions checks and identify support needs. The applicant handout, SharePoint launch, use of the revised checks and subsequent outcomes still require evidence of completion and review (Independent College, 2026r; Independent College, 2026x).

Progression **and completion.** The College reviews progression and final-stage completion together to inform student-success reporting. Retention and return to study are considered separately, allowing the reporting framework to examine different stages of the student journey.

Comparisons across reporting periods depend on consistent cohort definitions. Module-level results and programme award outcomes cover different populations, including differences in the treatment of repeats, deferrals and non-attendance. The reporting framework will support more consistent comparison over time (Independent College, 2026l; Independent College, 2026ac).

Programme reports provide context for further investigation: BABS identifies lower first-sitting performance in introductory accounting and other quantitative modules, while BAAF identifies targeted support needs in accounting, law and finance. These findings help focus support and monitoring, with subsequent review considering the effectiveness of interventions (Independent College, 2026ac, BABS, pp.2–3 and 7–8; BAAF, pp.3 and 7).

Institutional learning. The framework connects information collected for different operational purposes. The Dean of Teaching and Learning has confirmed that students register on named programmes from entry and Semester 1 breakdowns are available, allowing programme-level analysis from the outset. Early programme analysis can therefore inform the review, with entry-profile differences taken into account (Independent College, 2026l, Appendix C, section 4; Independent College, 2026d, Part C).

Evaluation. Student tracking is established, and the framework provides a common format for reporting. Consistent definitions and aligned summary records remain necessary for reliable comparisons across reporting periods. Comparable cohorts and later outcomes are needed to assess retention trends and the contribution of support interventions (Independent College, 2026l).

Further work. The first semester report will bring together consistent definitions of retention, progression and completion, including repeats, deferrals, withdrawals and returns, and examine students' difficulties and the College's response. Later reports will allow the College to review outcomes over time (Independent College, 2026l; Independent College, 2026c, GOV-09).

The analysis will reflect students' different starting points, including first-year and advanced-entry admission, the two intakes and return after deferral or repeat study. Progression is also one proposed indicator for the graduate attribute Dedicated to Continuous Learning. It provides useful evidence of students moving through their studies, and will be considered alongside assessment and other evidence of learning when reviewing attainment of the attribute (Independent College, 2026ao, p.3).

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Student pathways. Withdrawal, deferral and repeat study are considered separately within student-outcomes reporting. This supports a fuller understanding of students' pathways and informs review of support needs (Independent College, 2026l).

Student feedback. Formal workshop feedback identified useful explanations of grading and assessment alongside requests for greater interaction, careers content and material suited to different stages of study. The workshop programme already includes academic skills, careers and wellbeing, so the findings will inform the balance and delivery of that support. The response group was small and its response rate was not recorded. An agreed response, communication to students and follow-up feedback are needed to assess the changes; retention figures alone cannot establish their effect (Independent College, 2026ar, p.2; Independent College, n.d.).

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Case Study 3 – Semester programme monitoring

Original issue. The earlier annual programme-monitoring arrangements had not operated as intended. The complex annual form did not reflect two programme intakes each year and, for a period, the College did not have Programme Leaders able to complete it (Independent College, 2026b).

Institutional response. A clearer semester monitoring template was developed in early 2025. Newly appointed Programme Leaders completed Spring and Autumn 2025 reports, Programme Boards reviewed them and Academic Council considered them (Independent College, 2026b).

Current position. Spring 2026 reports extend the operating cycle across BABS, BAM, BAAF, BAIB and MADR. BABS records three specialist tracks operating after revalidation in Spring 2026. A fourth track is operating in Autumn 2026. BAAF reviews the revised final-stage structure and support needs; BAM reports changes to programme leadership, lecturer coordination and applied learning. BAIB records student consultation incorporated into the revised programme for validation, and MADR reports revised supervision guidance and direct access to practical-exam feedback. The reports show programme teams reviewing delivery, making changes and identifying further priorities (Independent College, 2026ac). Marketing provides a further example of follow-up: student feedback was discussed with lecturers and informed priorities on teaching consistency, group work, participation and progression between modules. The programme roadmap supports this work. Classroom observation has begun, and a six-week lecturer check-in is being arranged to return to those priorities. Subsequent programme reports will review the changes and students' experience of them (Independent College, 2026c, MARKETING-2026-02).

Evaluation. Annual reports record follow-up between meetings, including make-up classes, resolution of misconduct cases and release of grades, and improved Moodle stability. They also identify continuing work on assessment scheduling, groupwork and moderation. Student representation was present at some meetings but absent at others. The Autumn assessment calendar adds evidence of scheduled assessments, named internal-moderator allocations and review deadlines across the undergraduate programmes. Completed moderation records and subsequent review will show whether these plans are followed consistently (Independent College, 2026aa, undergraduate reports, pp.1–2).

Further work. The next reports will review progress on these priorities and the resulting changes in delivery and student experience. QA&E's annual report records that the request to provide internal moderation reports was actioned; sampling the later packs will check consistency. BAIB redevelopment and the MADR feedback change offer useful examples for tracing student input through a decision to implementation and subsequent review (Independent College, 2026aa, QA&E, p.1; Independent College, 2026ac, BAIB, pp.4–5; MADR, pp.1–2). QAM V5.2 retains semester monitoring and provides for development of an annual template to bring these findings together. Its introduction and subsequent use will form part of the continuing review (Independent College, 2026bw, Section 3, Policy 02).

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The approved graduate-attributes implementation approach builds on semester reporting. Programme teams will map existing programme learning outcomes, with proportionate arrangements for professional courses, and introduce reporting as the maps and templates are ready. Progress will return to Academic Council in March 2027; indicators will be refined through use (Independent College, 2026ao; Independent College, 2026bt).

Academic Council has approved the stakeholder information sheet and the implementation paper as a working document. Completed mapping and subsequent Semester Programme Board Reports will provide evidence of implementation and inform the review of results (Independent College, 2026bj; Independent College, 2026bl; Independent College, 2026bt). Academic Council reviewed Spring 2026 monitoring reports for all four undergraduate programmes and the MA. It discussed the high fail rate in Introduction to Financial Accounting and identified the module for monitoring in the current semester. Separate Programme Board meetings for each undergraduate programme were also noted for future operation. This shows Academic Council following up a concern raised through programme monitoring (Independent College, 2026ax, items 5(c)–6).

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Case Study 4 – Examination Board review

Original issue. An established two-stage Examination Board process was operating, but its effectiveness had not recently been tested through systematic analysis of the information presented, changes made and decision routes (Independent College, 2026d, Part B1).

Evidence and response. The Dean of Teaching and Learning reviewed assessment records across Common Foundation Year modules and raised questions about grade information, calculations and adjustments. QA&E's subsequent discussion established that the preliminary meeting had identified the anomalies: a data-entry error was checked against scripts and corrected, while a second pattern was recognised and discussed in programme monitoring. The revised briefing also explains the Quercus calculation and recording arrangements. These clarifications allow the College to recognise checks already working while examining the authority and documentation for minor borderline adjustments (Independent College, 2026d, Part B1; Independent College, 2026al, p.1).

Current position. Academic Council approved the QA&E response to the review. Follow-up is progressing through the College's assessment and academic governance arrangements, with the outcomes of the targeted review scheduled for consideration by Academic Council in November 2026. The reporting and subsequent review **arrangements** are recorded in the QEP (Independent College, 2026al, pp.1–2; Independent College, 2026ax, item 10).

Evaluation. The review led to committee scrutiny that tested the original findings, recognised existing controls and specified further work. Recent External Examiner reports remain positive about the assessment and marking sampled. They do not remove the need to check the authority for adjustments or the information presented to boards. The review has brought these questions to Academic Council and established the follow-up required (Independent College, 2026ak; Independent College, 2026al).

Further work. The agreed improvements include enhanced module-results information with examiner commentary and sign-off, alongside clearer module-level assurance at preliminary meetings. Review of the January 2027 cycle **will consider how these arrangements operate** (Independent College, 2026al, pp.1–2).

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Case Study 5 – Professional and off NFQ programme governance

Original issue. The QAM already provides an internal approval route for professional programmes outside the NFQ. The IRWG identified a need to make continuing monitoring and reporting to Academic Council clearer. Existing assurance includes CILEX UK review of the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Legal Studies and External Examiner reports recording fair and consistent marking within the assessments examined. The enhancement therefore concerns the consistency of College oversight and its documentation (Independent College, 2026j, printed pp.45–47; Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2025d; Independent College, 2026o).

Institutional response. Academic Council approved governance arrangements covering programme documentation, learner information, assessment responsibilities and continuing Programme Board reporting. Programme records will specify the applicable College and external responsibilities, including CILEX UK review and approval arrangements, and bring together the external findings and the College's response (Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2026ax, item 9).

Governance and implementation. The approved arrangements allow oversight appropriate to the scale and nature of provision, including related programmes. Academic Council also approved the Professional Certificate in Financial Modelling and Valuation and determined that the FMI relationship is not collaborative provision. Its documentation distinguishes the College certificate from the optional external examination. Programme documentation will clarify the applicable assessment, recognition and approval responsibilities. Further work includes fully online policy coverage and appropriate forms and guidance (Independent College, 2026ax, items 7(c) and 9(a); Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2026ag).

Evaluation. The approved arrangements build on existing programme approval and external scrutiny. The first monitoring cycle will allow the College to assess whether responsibilities are clear, external findings are considered and agreed actions are followed through (Independent College, 2026m).

Further work. Programme reporting will bring together External Examiner findings, CILEX UK review outcomes and the applicable approval responsibilities, supporting Programme Board review and Academic Council oversight across professional programmes (Independent College, 2026m; Independent College, 2025d; Independent College, 2026o).

Template development. The Professional Programme Document is being revised to support implementation. It includes an approval record, guidance proportionate to programme complexity, and sections on the learner profile, delivery, teaching, assessment, graduate attributes and monitoring. The draft still requires alignment throughout with semester reporting. A short initial proposal form for SMC will also be developed. Final approval and use of these revised tools remain distinct from approval of the overall governance arrangements (Independent College, 2026ap).

The professional-programme amendments have been incorporated into QAM V5.2, approved by Academic Council as a working document and now issued. The programme inventory, transition arrangements and evidence from the first monitoring cycle remain to be completed (Independent College, 2026bj; Independent College, 2026bt; Independent College, 2026bw).

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The Professional Programme Document template will include graduate-attribute mapping proportionate to each course. QA&E will record the template amendment, and programme reports will review its use (Independent College, 2026ao; Independent College, 2026ap; Independent College, 2026bt).

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Case Study 6 – Academic integrity and generative AI

Original issue. The College's review of academic-integrity arrangements identified a need for clearer procedures and more consistent guidance for staff and students. The Dean of Teaching and Learning's gap analysis examined notification of allegations, independence of review and appeal, offence classifications, decision timelines, confidentiality and responsibility in group assessment. The review also found that AI guidance and the academic-misconduct procedure needed closer alignment (Independent College, 2026d, Parts A2 and B2).

Evidence and response. Academic Council approved revisions to the Academic Misconduct and Artificial Intelligence policies. These clarify the review and determination of allegations, escalation and appeals. AI-related allegations are dealt with through the Academic Misconduct Policy, rather than a separate procedure. The AI policy sets permitted-use levels and disclosure requirements, and states that Turnitin scores alone do not establish misconduct. The revisions clarify what is expected and how concerns should be considered fairly (Independent College, 2026aj; Independent College, 2026ax, item 9).

Current position. The Academic Misconduct Policy takes effect on approval and includes transitional arrangements for cases already notified under the previous policy. The AI policy requires an AI Process Appendix for continuous assessment completed without supervision, including a declaration where no AI was used. A graded component is scheduled from Spring 2027. The Charter of Learner Rights and Responsibilities is in the Learner Handbook. Academic Council approved the material presented and requested circulation of the full document, including learner responsibilities. Moodle declarations and revised assessment cover sheets support its implementation. Revised Turnitin guidance remains under review, and staff briefing and student guidance require follow-through (Independent College, 2026aj, Academic Misconduct, commencement and transition; Artificial Intelligence, guidelines; Independent College, 2026d, Parts A2 and B2).

Evaluation. The review has led to approved policy changes that address identified weaknesses in procedure and clarify how AI use is considered within assessment. Their effectiveness will depend on consistent application and students' understanding of what is required. Approval alone does not demonstrate those outcomes. Anonymised case records, appeal outcomes, decision timelines and staff and student feedback will be used to assess whether decisions are fair and consistent. Review of case numbers will also consider reporting practice and the nature of the concerns raised.

Further work. The QEP sets out milestones for issuing Turnitin guidance, staff development, student information and review of the revised procedures after an assessment cycle. Reporting measures will include student understanding. The first review will examine implementation and any difficulties encountered, with later review considering effectiveness over a fuller assessment cycle. Separate proposals on process ownership and administrative support remain subject to their own decisions (Independent College, 2026c; Independent College, 2026am).

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Appendix G – Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) Structure Cross-Reference

This table maps the SER to the 11-section structure adopted in QAM V5.2. Academic Council approved V5.2 as a working document, and it has now been issued. Historical references retain the section numbering of the evidence reviewed. The substantive policy-owner review continues through the QEP, with V6 targeted for September 2027 and necessary interim amendments proceeding through the normal approval routes (Independent College, 2026i; Independent College, 2026bt; Independent College, 2026bw).

QAM section	Main SER coverage
1. Quality Assurance Framework	Sections 1.2, 3.1 and 5.4
2. Governance and Management of Quality	Sections 2.4 and 3.1
3. Programme Lifecycle and Academic Provision	Sections 3.1.2.5, 3.4.2.3 and 4
4. Access, Admission, Transfer, Progression and Recognition	Section 3.2
5. Teaching, Learning and Academic Development	Sections 2.7 and 3.3.2.1
6. Assessment, Academic Standards and Integrity	Sections 3.3.2.2–3.3.2.3
7. Student Experience, Support and Engagement	Sections 3.2 and 3.3.2.4
8. Appeals, Conduct and Student Protection	Sections 3.2 and 3.3.2.2–3.3.2.4
9. Information, Data, Records and Public Information	Sections 3.2.2.2, 3.3.2.3 and 3.4.2.1
10. Partnerships and External Engagement	Sections 2.8, 3.2.2.5 and 3.4.2.4
11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, Review and Enhancement	Sections 3.4 and 5.4; Appendix F