



## Introduction

A commitment to excellence in the student learning experience, scholarship, research and innovation, and the University's contribution to wider society are the principal drivers through which Dublin City University achieves its mission of transforming lives and societies. Our approach to quality assurance in delivering on this mission is the foundation for a quality culture that both safeguards the University's highest standards in all that we do, and responds to the needs of all our stakeholders.

DCU welcomed the opportunity for an externally-led assessment of the effectiveness of our approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement afforded through the Cinnte Institutional Review process. The University extends its thanks to the International Peer Review Team, and is grateful for the expertise, energy, and thoroughness of their engagement with the University during the review.

In considering the findings contained within their report, DCU is particularly pleased that the Review Team found that there was a deep commitment to a quality assurance culture evident at all levels, within the University, and that the quality assurance mechanisms adopted by DCU were compliant with the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and had regard for the QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG).

The University welcomes commendations by the Review Team of our comprehensive and inclusive approach to the development of our current strategic plan and the implementation of a "rolling planning process" to meet the challenges of a dynamic, global higher education landscape in an agile manner. In their report, the review team commend and highlight two key initiatives from our current strategy, which contribute to our goal of providing a transformative student experience- the ongoing enhancement of digital learning, and extended opportunities for high-quality, structured work-based learning opportunities for students at DCU.

The University is mindful that this quality review has taken place just two years after the formal completion of the Incorporation Programme in 2017. The completion of this programme has enabled the creation of the DCU Institute of Education, the first Faculty of Education in an Irish university, and an expanded Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Incorporation has further resulted in increasing the DCU student body by more than 4,000, bringing the total number to approximately 17,000, and an increase in staff numbers from 1,100 to 1,500 across both academic and professional support units. The University is pleased that the review team, in noting the significant organisational and structural change within the University, commend the progress achieved to date in the Incorporation process, and the creation of a new shared mission and values for the expanded University community.

DCU also welcomes the recommendations of the Peer Review Team, some of which reflect areas of enhancement identified by the University in its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report. A number of the recommendations align to actions and initiatives already identified in our current University strategy, Talent, Discovery and Transformation. Examples of this include the development of strategic intelligence capacity to enable the University to identify better and understand differences in student progression and performance, and the implementation of a comprehensive Internationalisation Strategy that will support the University's global engagement, including international partnership development.

Following the publication of the findings of the DCU Cinnte Institutional Review report in April 2019, DCU has shared and discussed the findings of the Review across a number of key university committees, including DCU Governing Authority, Academic Council, Education Committee, DCU Heads and Deans Group, and DCU Quality Promotion Committee. The full and summary reports were further shared with all staff by email and are available on the DCU Quality Promotion Office website.

The following Implementation Plan has been developed in response to the recommendations of the Review, with an improvement plan for each recommendation formulated by the departments with leadership and operational responsibility for relevant recommendations. The Plan includes a clearly identified actions, a timeframe for implementation, as well as identifying the area of the University responsible for leading the delivery of each action. The University notes that, as a result of strategy implementation, work is already progressing in relation to a number of themes contained within the recommendations of the report. Approval and oversight of the implementation of actions arising from the Implementation Plan will be provided by Education Committee and DCU Executive. Additionally, progress in relation to the Implementation Plan shall be reported to DCU Governing Authority on an annual basis.

No	Cinnte Review Recommendation	DCU Response	High Level Activities	Timeframe	Delivery Led by
1	The review team recommends that the University provide training and support for student representatives on Governing Authority to enable them to make an effective contribution in that role.	The University and Office of Student Life currently provide annual briefing and training to elected DCU student representatives who are members of DCU Governing Authority for their term of office. In response to the Cinnte Institutional Review recommendations, DCU will re-examine and enhance training and support for elected student representatives who are members of Governing Authority.	Review and refine the annual briefing and training for elected student representatives to Governing Authority	Q3, 2019	Office of Chief Operations Officer
			Develop a comprehensive induction and training materials for new members of the Governing Authority, including student representatives	Q4, 2020	
2	The review team recommends that, as a matter of urgency, DCU should implement a fit-for-purpose, University-wide, system of independent evaluation of the student learning experience at the module level. Resulting reports should be used as a regular part of Annual Programme Review, Periodic Programme Review and internal Quality Reviews and effective feedback provided to students.	The University shall develop a new, institutional-wide student feedback system, based on international best-practice, and aligned to the University's broader Teaching Enhancement Framework.  The outputs of the resulting system shall be embedded within the University Quality Assurance procedures at programmatic and internal review cycle.	Completion of a scoping paper informed by sectoral best-practice on student-feedback systems for evaluation of student learning	Q2, 2020	Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs/ Registrar
			Agree a survey and operating methodology for module-level student feedback on the learning experience	Q3, 2020	
			Roll-out of pilot survey and ensure analysis and enhancement as a result of feedback is aligned to relevant quality assurance procedures for programmatic and internal review	Q4, 2020	
3	The review team recommends that the University should take steps to ensure effective communication to staff and	The University shall develop a multi-platform communications plan to share the results and	The University shall develop enhanced modes of communication for the communication of results of	Q2, 2019	Quality Promotions Office

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	students about responses to feedback provided and changes implemented (or not) as a result of quality assurance activities.	responding actions implemented as a result staff and student feedback surveys, and quality assurance activities.	student feedback surveys, and information on how student feedback has led to the implementation of changes to enhance the student experience		
			Develop a communication plan for the results of the DCU staff surveys, aligned to the implementation of the Our DCU Initiative	Q2, 2019	
			Introduce Faculty-level Staff Student Forums, facilitated by the Quality Promotion Office, to supplement and discuss issues raised by student feedback surveys and action items for progress	Q3, 2019	
4	The review team recommends that the University develop a Data Analytics Support Plan to ensure that the Quality Framework is supported by appropriate analytic capacity enabling the University to better identify and understand differences in student progression and performance. In addition, the team recommends that the regular use of internal and external benchmarking data should be increased.	The University shall continue to build analytics capacity to support evidence based decision-making, including student performance metrics across a range of differentiated student groups.  Additional analytical capacity shall be enabled in the first instance by the development of a new Student Information System (SIS), which	progression reporting, with a particular focus on a number of identified cohorts (Access, Mature, FETAC, International entry etc)	Q4, 2020	Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs, and Quality Promotion Office
			Development of a comprehensive suite of analytical tools for student performance reporting, including progression and completion analysis as part of SIS implementation.	Q1, 2023	

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		includes an identified Reporting work stream to support the development of appropriate analytics.	Scoping for the application of strategically focused analytical tools using data from across multiple University systems to provide new insights into, and inevitably support improved student attainment	Q4, 2023	
5	<p>The review team recommends that the University should a) develop systematic sets of University-wide policies clarifying the minimum expectations of what Faculties and Schools should provide to secure a consistent student learning experience and b) monitor their implementation.</p> <p>The team recommends that these should initially include guidance on standard sets of assessment information and marking/grading criteria to be provided at module level, expectations for a point of contact for students for discussion of their academic progress on a programme (e.g. year tutor/personal tutor/subject lead), timelines for return of assessed work, and appropriate training for all postgraduate research students who teach on undergraduate courses.</p>	<p>The University shall undertake a comprehensive review of policies to ensure a consistent student learning experience, focusing particularly on policies relating to information, grading criteria and guidelines regarding feedback on assessment.</p> <p>The University shall also develop clear information for students on how to access both academic and professional supports to discuss academic progress.</p>	<p>Completion of a review of current DCU practices in relation to information, module-level grading criteria, and feedback on assessment, including a benchmarking assessment relatively to sectoral norms and identified best-practice in relation to policies on assessment.</p> <p>Development of 'module handbooks' to provide information to students on expected activities and assessments for each module</p> <p>Completion of revisions to existing and, where appropriate, approval of revised or new policies by DCU Academic Council</p>	<p>Q4, 2020</p> <p>Q3, 2020</p> <p>Q2, 2021</p>	Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs/ Registrar

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6	The review team recommends that the University should consider both setting and monitoring expected targets in order to clarify expectations for both research students and supervisors.	The University shall enhance its reporting and monitoring of postgraduate research student progression and completion and, where appropriate, introduce expected targets for time to completion and overall completion rate	Select a number of key metrics of ongoing monitoring by Graduate Studies Research Board in relation to PG research student progression and completion	Q4, 2020	Graduate Studies Office, and Quality Promotions Office
			Develop an accessible reporting format for the ongoing analysis of student progression and completion at Faculty level	Q1, 2021	
			Distribute and communicate analysis results and activity in place to enhance, where necessary, rates of academic progression and completion of PG research students	Q2, 2021	
7	The review team recommends the implementation of a regular staff satisfaction survey for all staff in order to monitor the prevailing culture and identify the support and development required.	In 2018, the University launched a <b>Staff Engagement Survey</b> which was one part of a three-part consultation programme in line with Objective 5.1 (Culture & Community) of the University Strategic Plan. The aim of this objective was to <i>Foster the development of a Staff Community ('One DCU') focusing on culture, identity and the lived experience</i>	Completion of analysis of 2018 staff engagement survey to inform the development of <i>Our DCU Framework</i> , and facilitation of follow-on workshops with staff.	Q4, 2018	Human Resources
			Communication of analysis of staff engagement survey.	Q2, 2019	

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		<p>...taking account of our post-incorporation situation Following the consultation programme, <i>Our DCU Framework</i> and <i>Our DCU Implementation Plan</i> were launched.</p> <p>The University will review the suitability and value of this survey, and will roll-out a bi-annual staff experience survey.</p>	<p>Launch of <i>Our DCU Framework and Our implementation plan</i>, informed by survey, focus groups and Fuse event.</p> <p>Develop a schedule for bi-annual surveying of staff experiences.</p>	<p>Q4, 2019</p> <p>Q2, 2020</p>	
8	The review team recommends that the University should continue to implement operational changes to build a more systematised recruitment process focusing on increased efficiency, speed and the adoption of online rather than manual transfer of data.	The University shall develop and implement an enhanced process for recruitment, with a focus on leveraging appropriate online solutions to improve the efficiency of staff recruitment processes.	<p>Review and redesign staff recruitment process, with a focus on adopting lean approaches to all processes</p> <p>Explore appropriate technologies to support an online recruitment processes</p> <p>Pilot revised processes and review effectiveness among stakeholders</p> <p>Implementation revised recruitment process</p>	<p>Q4, 2019</p> <p>Q2, 2020</p> <p>Q4, 2020</p> <p>Q2, 2021</p>	Human Resources
9	The review team recommends that it is essential for the revised Performance Management Development Scheme to be implemented, on schedule, by the third quarter of 2019 in order to underpin quality and provide staff support (for	The University shall finalise and launch a <i>Performance Review &amp; Development (PRD)</i> scheme. The implementation and rollout of the scheme will be supported by an on-line system.	<p>Finalise and agree PRD Framework with cross-institutional Working Group and Steering Group.</p> <p>Select, configure and test the technology platform to facilitate the</p>	<p>Q4, 2019</p> <p>Q4 2019</p>	Human Resources

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	example through links to probation, sabbaticals and promotion applications).		implementation and management of PRD.		
			Design and develop Learning & Development PRD Programme for both <i>Reviewers</i> and <i>Reviewees</i> .	Q4, 2019	
			Rollout and implementation of the University Performance Review & Development (PRD) Scheme.	Q4, 2019	
10	<p>The review team recommends that, in the light of the University's plans for the expansion of Transnational Education (TNE), it should as a matter of urgency mainstream the quality assurance and enhancement of TNE under the University's existing structures and clarify the roles of the Deans, members of Senior Management Group, and the various professional units (in particular the role of the Strategic Partnership Office in relation to the International Office and Quality Promotions Office).</p> <p>The review team also recommends that the University should continue its ongoing efforts to refine its global strategy and its protocol for partner approval, protocols for collaborative provision and requirements for legal memoranda</p>	<p>The University currently has a range of existing policies and procedures for external partner selection and due diligence, as well as a comprehensive framework for collaborative programme provision.</p> <p>In light of the recommendations of the Peer Review Group, the University will undertake a comprehensive review and alignment of QA policies and procedures for partnership approval and for collaborative provision.</p>	<p>The University shall consider the optimal structure to manage the governance and ongoing assurance of TNE partnerships.</p> <p>The University will review current policies and procedures for initiating, managing and review and governance of collaborative partnerships for TNE purposes, to ensure that structures reflect a coherent institution-wide approach</p>	<p>Q4, 2020</p> <p>Q4, 2020</p>	<p>Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs/ Registrar</p>



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	/agreements in the light of best practice nationally and internationally. In so doing, it is recommended to build more control into the procedures for partner selection and due diligence, setting explicit criteria for academic integrity, ethical standards for student enrolment and staff recruitment, the monitoring and review of partnerships, risk management, exit strategies and refreshing due diligence.		The University shall ensure broad communication of the protocols and responsibilities for governing TNE partnership	Q3,2021	
11	The review team recommends that the University address arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners at linked providers, procedures for the withdrawal of approval of linked provider arrangements (and appeal against them) as soon as possible. The review team also recommends that clear criteria should be developed for the selection of research degree supervisors and the identification of adequate research capacity at Dundalk Institute of Technology. These should be reflected in the Linked Provider schedule and implemented when admission of students was considered.	<p>The University will address this recommendation through agreement with Dundalk Institute of Technology on an updated 'Schedule' relating to the overall DCU-DkIT partnership on postgraduate research education.</p> <p>The University notes that the development of this agreement will redefine the partnership between DCU and Dundalk Institute of Technology reframed as that of a collaborative partnership, rather than a linked provider relationship.</p>	<p>The updated Schedule within the revised Agreement with Dundalk Institute of Technology the will include clear information and procedures relating to the protection of enrolled learners</p> <p>Clear criteria will be developed and agreed for the selection of research degree supervisors and the identification of adequate research capacity at Dundalk Institute of Technology, together with a review of previous and current applications.</p> <p>A review of the effectiveness of the DCU-DkIT partnership will be conducted, including a focus on the effectiveness of the QA procedures which govern the partnership, and the experience of postgraduate research students in Dundalk IT.</p>	<p>Q2, 2020</p> <p>Q3, 2020</p> <p>Q2, 2021</p>	Graduate Studies Office

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12	The review team recommends that improved support for international students should continue to be addressed. In particular, the respective roles of the Graduate Studies Office and the International Office should be clarified in respect of international postgraduate research students in order to provide proactive information and support in a timely way.	The University will continue to develop appropriate needs-based supports for all international students. In particular, the University will conduct a review to assess the level of supports provided specifically to supporting the studies of international research students.	<p>A review of the supports for international postgraduate research students shall be developed by the Graduate Studies Office and the International Office.</p> <p>Review of the respective roles of the Graduate Studies Office and the International Office will be clarified in respect of international postgraduate research students</p>	<p>Q2, 2020</p> <p>Q4, 2020</p>	Graduate Studies Office, and International Office