

[Athlone Institute of Technology]

2021

Annual Quality Report
Athlone Institute of Technology
Reporting Period 2019-2020

Annual Quality Report
(Athlone Institute of Technology)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2019-2020

[Athlone Institute of Technology]

2021

PREFACE

Note: QQI's provider portal, QHub, is currently under development and will be completed in November 2020. AQR 2021 will be submitted via QHub.

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are

encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				

9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Athlone Institute of Technology for the reporting period **1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020**.

The Institution

Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) was established in 1970 as Athlone Regional Technical College (RTC) amid the national educational reform agenda. Its goal was to provide technician-level courses at both Certificate and Diploma level. The Institute quickly outgrew the limitations of this RTC designation, which prompted a change in nomenclature and a shift in public perception towards the value of an applied, industry-focused education. AIT became an autonomous institution in 1993 and later, in 1998, was officially re-designated Athlone Institute of Technology. Over the course of its 50-year history, AIT has established itself as a centre of academic excellence with an applied, industry-focused offering, world-class research, and development capabilities, and state-of-the-art facilities. Located in the heart of the Irish Midlands. AIT is home to 6,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students from 84 nations around the world. AIT enjoys a well-established international profile.

AIT has a student-centred ethos which is the cornerstone of its success. AIT's students, according to StudentSurvey.ie, are the most satisfied with their college experience in Ireland. AIT has held this top position for six consecutive years in the response levels by students to the survey and also enjoys the highest student response rate nationally - 68% versus 29% national average.

AIT was the first Institute of Technology and third HEI to receive College of Sanctuary designation. Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) achieved 'College of Sanctuary' status in 2017 in recognition of its efforts to create a culture of welcome and inclusion for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants on campus. Following this award, the Institute established the AIT Institute of Sanctuary Scholarship Programme, which runs on an annual basis. The scholarship comprises six places on the AIT access programme, as well as three scholarships for students on undergraduate programmes.

The exceptional student experience offered by AIT, in tandem with its focus on experiential learning, strong industry ties, and innovative research activities, are among the reasons it was named Ireland's Institute of Technology of the Year for 2020. This is the second time in just three years that AIT has won the prestigious accolade, having previously held title in 2018.

As the sole higher education provider servicing the Midlands, AIT already plays an integral role in educating and upskilling the local workforce in key areas of technological advancement. The third-level Institute offers 200+ industry-focused programmes on a full, part-time, blended, and online basis, which range from Level 6 on the NFQ (Higher Certificate) through to Level 10 & PhD programmes. AIT's offerings are distributed across six primary areas – Science, Health, Business, Hospitality, Engineering and Informatics. The Institute also has agreements with a wide range of professional bodies, which benefits students in terms of the professional and academic recognition of their awards.

AIT is home to world-leading academics who are at the forefront of exciting research in areas like smart drug delivery, antimicrobial resistance, virtual reality, and cybersecurity. Home to three strategic research institutes and two Enterprise Ireland technology gateways, AIT conducts high Technology Readiness Level (TRL) research of international importance. It is partnered with five leading Science Foundation Ireland research centres - CONFIRM, SSPC, ADAPT, CÚRAM and AMBER - which help it contribute to fundamental knowledge generation. It also offers contract services and houses a business incubator which provides business development support for knowledge-based start-ups. The institute is currently rated 2nd nationally for most Enterprise Ireland Innovation Vouchers completed (valued at €2,135,000).

AIT has a well-developed international market and is at the forefront of international partnerships within the technological higher education sector. AIT has partnerships with universities across Europe, Asia and the Americas and encourages its students to study abroad for a semester or full year. Inward mobility also continues to increase year-on-year with international students now comprising 15% of AIT's full-time student population.

Since 2008, AIT has invested €130+ million in the development and modernisation of its campus. The Institute will soon break ground on a €25 million STEM building which, when completed, will create capacity for up to 1000 additional students and 70 staff. Currently, 55% of AIT's student body is made up of students studying STEM.

Process for the development and approval of the AQR

The process and development of the Annual Quality Review is co-ordinated through the Quality Office in AIT under the guidance of the Head of Quality and the Registrar. Each year, QQI requests that each Higher Education

Institute carry out a review of their quality processes and these are subsequently reflected within the AQR. The Quality Office liaises with the faculties and various professional, administrative and student support units throughout the Institute to collate the information sought by QQI under various headings within the report. It is a collaborative approach which is developed over a number of months. Once complete the report is then submitted to the Academic Strategy and Quality Committee (ASQ) for further review before submission to Academic Council for ratification and submission to QQI in keeping with their deadline for submission.

Alignment with the AIT Strategic Plan

The quality assurance, enhancement activities, and standards set by AIT align with its Strategic Plan and strategic priorities therein. These are outlined in the attached: [AIT Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#).

The [AIT Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#) was launched in December 2019. AIT's Strategic Plan is guiding the transition to becoming a technological university, ensuring AIT's regions' continued growth and prosperity from an economic and social perspective. Each of the five themes identified in AIT's strategic plan – Learner Experience, Educational Provision, Research and Innovation, Engagement, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - are central tenets underpinning this transition and were derived from an extensive stakeholder consultation process with representation from students, staff and a broad cross section of civic, social, cultural, business and industry groups.

The quality assurance and enhancement activities of AIT and the associated standards it sets are also informed by:

- (i) the relevant standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education area (ESG): [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Education Area #](#),
- (ii) by the sector specific quality assurance guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies, [QQI Sector Specific Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies](#),

AIT as a Designated Awarding Body

The main consequences of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 is to establish the Institutes of Technology as autonomous, designated awarding bodies.

The cultural shift associated with AIT being a designated awarding body is encapsulated in the organisation's quality assurance and enhancements activities:

- Shifting to autonomy and ownership – for awards, their standards, and their level on the NFQ while maintaining public accountability
- Being self-governing and responsible for such award standards using internal academic governance structures
- Enabling the seeding of trust from QQI to the QA & QE systems and processes of AIT including those that the AIT applies in its collaborative provisions

The implications of this accountability and ownership is that the internal checks and balances for AIT's quality management include:

- The robustness & explicitness of Award Standards on NFQ re. Knowledge, Skill and Competence
- The quality assurance of both new programmes, and existing programmes, through robust two-stage validation/re-validation processes and publications of relevant reports on such processes
- Consistent mechanisms for the management of awards and their associated standards through examination boards and associated QA processes
- AIT demonstrating its QA procedures & processes with QQI through participation in Annual Monitoring and Cyclical Review
- Decision making on awards and their standards via Academic Council
- Calibrated change in emphasis from assurance (accountability) to enhancement (continuous improvement) as evident from the range of case studies outlined in Part 2.

In summary, as a designated awarding body, AIT is conscious of the complimentary purposes of accountability and enhancement. These are the foundations for all AIT quality assurance activities. Further details on how AIT has embraced the dynamics associated with being a designated awarding body with the shifting emphasis of quality assurance and enhancement responsibility being one of autonomy and ownership from reporting and compliance are outlined in **Part B**.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Overarching Governance & Management Structures

AIT continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its institution wide quality assurance system for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining, and improving the quality of its education, training, research, and related services. This ensures public confidence in the quality of its provision and demonstrates the ownership and accountability in managing its quality assured provisions. The Quality Assurance system in AIT adheres to the following principles:

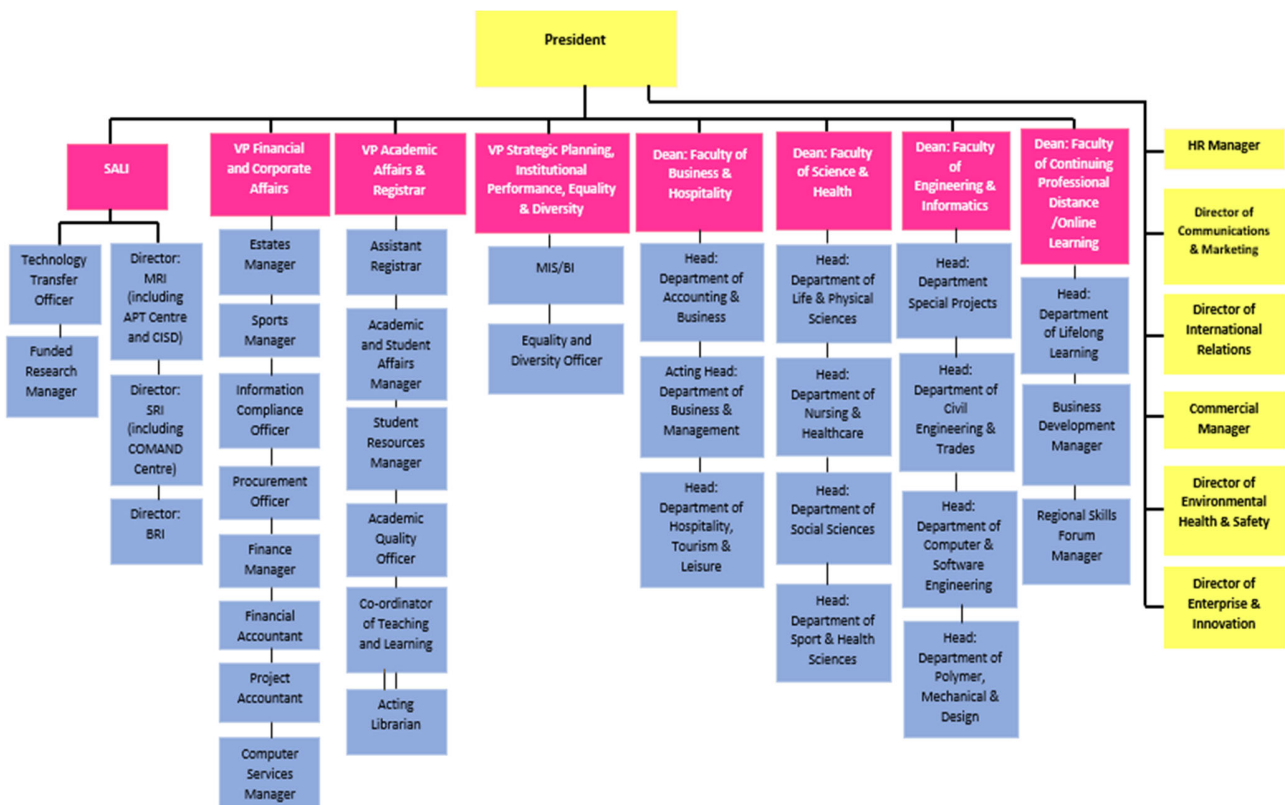
1. Academic excellence and student-centred values.
2. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom
3. Fostering a quality culture
4. Informed practice and stakeholder engagement
5. Proportional implementation
6. Comprehensive, transparent, and publicly accountable procedures
7. Evidence-based decision making
8. Consistency with policy and effective international practice.

Through AIT's Strategic Plan, it has developed action plans that demonstrate these principles.

Illustrated below is the overall Athlone Institute of Technology organisational chart and then the Quality Assurance Process chart utilised in the workflow of the Quality Office.

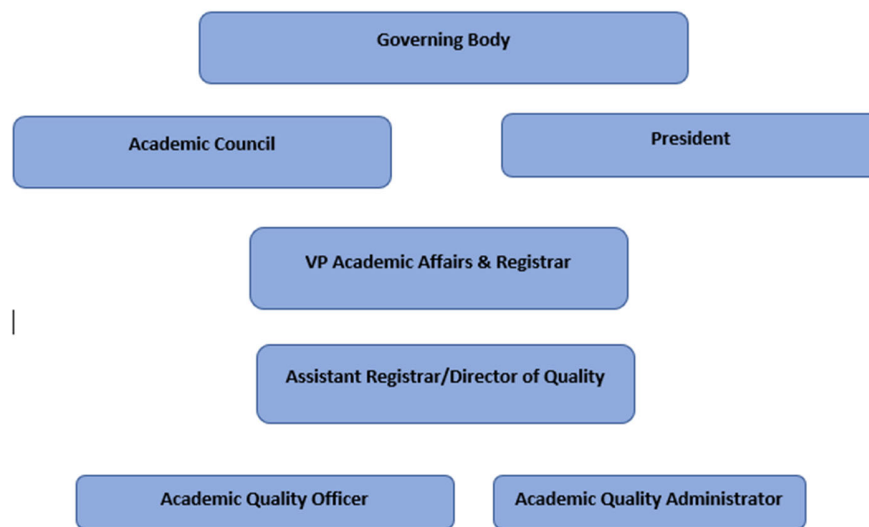
Both vertical and horizontal corporate and academic management activities are implemented to quality assurance the work of the Institute. An upward reporting structure throughout the organisation enables the planning, organisation, implementation, control and review of corporate, academic and professional activities.

An example of this is manifested in the annual review of the activities for completion in line with the strategic plan. These are correlated to the *HEA Compact* and annually reviewed for progress reporting. The implementation activities associated with the realisation of both the cascading HEA Compact Plans and the Strategic Plan are reviewed through the Executive Management structure of the organisation, as synopsised below.



AIT Quality Assurance Organisational Structure

The Academic Governance structure of the organisation has overall responsibility for the quality assurance of all activities conducted within the Institute. The structure to support the management of these activities is outlined below.



At AIT, its philosophy is that quality is embedded in all that it does. All AIT colleagues work to ensure a collaborative and collegiate approach to quality assurance and enhancement. Its quality culture is supported by strong academic and corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development and improvement. AIT firmly believes in accountability, transparency, and the public provision of information. On-going monitoring, through the collection and reporting of data internally, on the range of academic, professional and student support activities of the Institute allows for the Institute to take actions to improve the student experience, their engagement, and success. Such monitoring is also applied to AITs research activities.

Academic Governance of Policies, Procedures and Regulations

AIT takes a multi-layered approach to the governance of quality management, with the first layer consisting of executive structures such as Governing Body, Academic Council, and their associated sub-committees and working groups. AIT complies with statutory and regulatory requirements relating to quality assurance and quality improvement. Under the *Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006*, the Academic Council protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute [Section 10 (1) of the 1992 Act [3]]. AIT's Quality Assurance is in line with the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012)* and the *Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)*, and with national guidelines and criteria for QA procedures, as overseen by the QQI.

The management of all policies of the Institute is managed through the Quality Manual by the Quality Office of AIT. Any new policy is progressed and managed by the Quality Office. A running catalogue of policies is managed and controlled by the Quality Office. All policies are reviewed on a cyclical basis by the Quality Office. Relevant research or consultative work is undertaken. A draft of each policy is sent to the Registrar for review. Once approved the policy moves to committee stage in the form of the Academic Standards & Quality Committee (ASQ). The ASQ committee reviews the policy and if approved the draft policy is then sent to Academic Council for ratification.

The Institute has developed rigorous procedures to ensure that the quality of its programme portfolio is maintained and enhanced. These processes are continually monitored, reviewed and updated through the internal academic governance structures and in accordance with the requirements of appropriate national agencies and accrediting bodies. AIT's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures govern the design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its apprenticeship programmes.

AIT Quality Manual

The Quality Manual of AIT provides the framework of the overarching policies and procedures that underpin AIT's quality assurance; its academic governance framework; the procedures for quality assurance in teaching, learning, assessment; the quality assurance of its research activity; the on-going monitoring and review of academic and student support activities; the demonstration and inclusion of the learner voice in the academic governance of the Institute; procedures for the design, development, validation and withdrawal of programmes; the management of student admission, progression, retention, and completion; the continuous professional development of staff; the provision of learner supports; and data and information management.

Evidence of the quality assurance activities that were conducted in the 2019/2020 year related to each of the above are outlined in **Part B of the AQR**.

Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders

Students are considered academic partners at AIT. Student representatives are full members of both the Academic Standards & Quality Committee and Academic Council. Their input and counsel are sought for student related policies to ensure comprehensiveness and equity for learners.

AIT engages a broad range of stakeholders in the design, development and validation of its teaching and research activities. Both academics and industry stakeholders are engaged to review both new and existing academic programmes and research activities. Both External Examiners and Professional Accreditation bodies are examples of critical stakeholders who formally quality assure the nature, content, teaching and assessment academic programmes, both taught and by research, on the National Framework of Qualifications.

AIT partakes in a range of industry forum in the region. It also works with the educational sector to ensure that eligible students can readily and efficiently access programmes in AIT. This includes a wide range of marketing activities within the region and structured engagement programmes with second level schools and further education providers. Through its student outreach programme and designated staff School Liaison Programme, students learn about AIT and the academic opportunities available.

Through the class representation system under the auspices of the Student Union in AIT, the student voice is represented on programme boards with regular feedback provided to enhance the quality of the programme content, and the teaching, learning and assessment of programmes. The extent of changes to programmes addressed annually, as outlined in Part B of the AQR, highlights the degree and extent of this ongoing work.

Representatives from the Student Union sit on a variety of committees including the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (ASQ) and Academic Council. The Student Union representatives work closely each year with the Quality Office to promote and encourage student participation in the annual Student Survey.ie campaign.

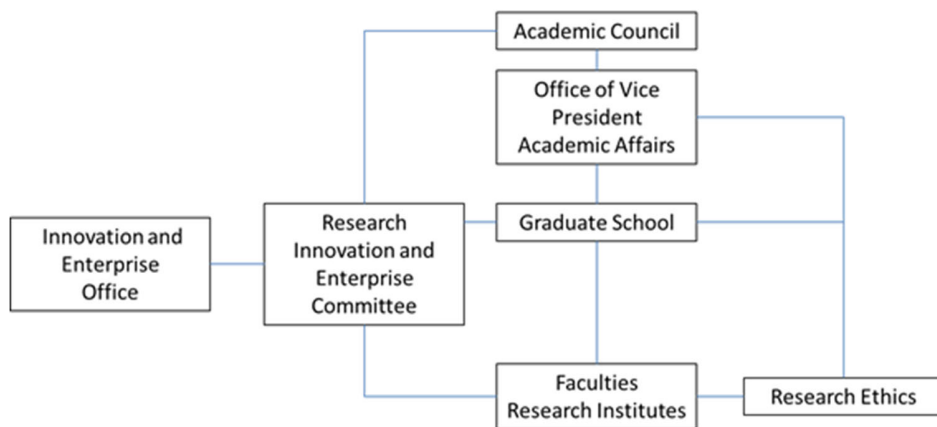
Quality Assurance of Research Activity

Governance of Research in AIT is managed through a series of committees. Where research relates to postgraduate student activities, it is managed through the Graduate School Research Committee (GSRC), which assesses the suitability of each student and supervisory team to their projects. Each Faculty has a Faculty Research Committee, which assesses each research student on their progression annually and reports this to the GSRC. Each Faculty Research Committee assesses that projects are in strategic alignment with the Faculty and that there are appropriate facilities for the project requirements. Additionally, each of AIT's three Research Institutes report on their activities to the Research Committee. Further details on the Quality Assurance of Research Activity is outlined in **Section 4**.

AIT's Ethics Committee reviews all research projects for any ethical considerations including the use and storage of data, engagement with vulnerable populations and informed consent. AIT is developing a Research Integrity Policy and recruiting a Research Integrity Officer to ensure best practice in the design and conduct of research and the publication of research findings.

The cornerstone of quality assurance in research activity is international peer review. AIT engages with this through a series of external examiners for programmes, encouraging and supporting publication in top journals and submitting proposals to funders, which use such reviewing in their assessment, such as the Irish Research Council, European Commission and Science Foundation Ireland. All projects funded by AIT are sent for external review.

Academic Council is the overall body in AIT responsible for Research Governance and to which GSRC report to. See Fig 1. below.



1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Collaborative Provision of Programmes

QA policies have been developed in AIT for the engagement and management of collaborative provision of programmes, transnational delivery of programmes and linked providers. AIT's framework for collaborative provision is benchmarked against international best practice and complies with relevant policies and guidelines, such as the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (2013) and QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012.

AIT's Academic Council has approved the policy and procedures for the collaborative provision of programmes. The AIT Supplementary Quality Assurance Procedure for collaborative provision, to include national and transnational programmes Policy "ensures that programmes delivered in collaboration are consistent with the Quality Standards expected of all AIT provision". This policy assures that the students who are enrolled on specific programmes with the following collaborative or linked providers, have acquired and demonstrated the appropriate standard of knowledge and competence for their awards, under the National Framework of Qualifications. In addition, AIT must satisfy itself that the learner has attained an appropriate standard in examinations in a manner regarded by AIT's Academic Council as being satisfactory.

This policy is currently under review as part of the review of all policies and procedures that academically will govern taught programmes of AIT and LIT on designation as a Technological University.

In line with current practices in AIT, all procedures regarding the internal approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught provision are formally conducted through the programmatic review process. This formal, periodic quality review of collaborative programmes allows for the quality assurance of the overall student learning experience, the academic provision, the award standard of the programme, and the academic governance arrangements for the partnership(s).

The following organisations, through formal agreement, are involved in the provision of programmes of education with AIT, as the designated awarding body:

- Cavan Institute,
- Gurteen College.

Details of the programmes provided through collaborative provision are outlined in **Section 9**.

Linked Providers

Section 36 of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019* amends the Regional Technical Colleges Act of 1992 to grant award making powers, with the exception of doctoral awards, to all of the Institutes of Technology. This measure establishes AIT as an autonomous, designated awarding body.

Per the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act, 2012, the following organisation, who is not a designated awarding body in its own right, provides programmes of education and training that satisfy all or part of the prerequisites for an award of AIT as a designated awarding body:

- Equal Ireland.

Details of the programmes provided by this linked provider are outlined in **Section 9**. These programmes are reviewed as part of the programmatic review process, and which are due for review in the 2021/2022 by the Faculty of Business and Hospitality. All of the quality assurance policies, processes and procedures that academically govern AIT taught programmes are equally applied to those delivered by the linked provider.

The existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) between AIT and collaborative and linked providers are currently under review in the context of AIT's designation as an awarding body and on designation as a Technological University.

Trans-national delivery of programmes

Athlone Institute of Technology currently does not wholly or partially provide a programme of education in any transnational jurisdiction.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

AIT mission, as a designated awarding body, is to ensure and assure the academic standards of its awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. To attain this goal, it manages a strategic, tactical, and operational quality framework for the development of new programmes, the validation/re-validation of awards, the ongoing macro and micro review of existing programmes, the monitoring of assessments that demonstrate the students' attainment of the learning outcomes associated with validated programmes, and the external monitoring of the assessment arrangements for taught programmes.

New Programme Development

The [Quality Section](#) on the AIT Website outlines the procedures and guidelines document that governs the *Design, Development, Evaluation and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes at Athlone Institute of Technology*. This procedure and guidelines document ensure that where the Institute has responsibility for curriculum development and the assessment of learners on a particular programme that;

- a clear, rigorous and systematic mechanism exists within the Institute to encourage and assure the design, development, evaluation and/or withdrawal of institute taught programmes, as appropriate
- new programmes are developed and existing programmes are reviewed/modified in an orderly, timely and efficient manner, within the context of the Institute's Strategic Plans (programme proposals are considered both on their own merit and within the framework of overall institute strategy)
- the essential market analysis for all programme design, development and/or withdrawal takes place and is documented
- the personnel and physical resource implications of programme design, development and/or withdrawal are properly evaluated by appropriate personnel within the Institute and;
- the efficient submission of the associated documentation to accreditation and/or professional bodies, where/as required, is supported.

In keeping with QQI requirements, a rigorous, systematic, and consistent process for the design and review of programmes has been developed and agreed with all the relevant stakeholders through the academic governance structures of AIT. This process must be adhered to when developing new programmes within the

Institute. A detailed process flow chart was devised by the AIT Quality Office, which assists programme design teams by outlining the steps involved and can be accessed [here](#). The process begins with the initial idea for a new programme through to evaluation by an external programme validation panel. In addition, to support the programme development process, the Quality Office, in consultation with the Learning and Teaching Unit devised a [Programme Development Support Document and Checklist](#) and sign-off by the Heads of Faculty. It aims to give the programme development team (PDT) a brief guide of key areas for consideration and inclusion in advance of submitting a programme proposal to the Academic Strategy and Quality (ASQ) committee.

ASQ is a subcommittee of Academic Council and it has responsibility to:

- make recommendations to academic council on the identification, achievement and enhancement of standards for the Institute's programmes
- identify the requirement for, establish, monitor and review procedures for quality assurance for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which is provided, organised or procured by the Institute in accordance with *section 28* of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999
- evaluate at regular intervals and as directed from time to time by academic council of the Institute's programmes of education and training (including evaluation by persons who are competent to make national and international comparisons in that respect) in relation to the development, validation and review of programmes; assessment of student performance; ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programmes; evaluation by learners of that programme; and evaluation of services related to that programme, and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the Institute thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures
- Actively contribute to the major quality assurance instruments such as institutional and programmatic reviews
- to lead on all elements relating to learning and teaching and assessment approaches. In so doing to ensure that that curricular content and design are informed by recent developments in techniques of learning and teaching, by current research and scholarship, and by any changes in relevant occupational, legal, or professional requirements.

Finally, external expertise and reference points are also an integral part of programme design and form part of all programme validation panels.

The following policy documents assist with the Quality Assurance for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes:

- The AIT Standards, Assessment and Awards document applies to all types and modes of assessment, including continual assessment, recognition of prior learning, and assessment in research degree programmes. It is designed to cover the administration and regulation of the assessment and examination of learners on all programmes at AIT.
- Institute Policy on Programme Delivery and Assessment: The Institute encourages differing modes of delivery appropriate to any given programme. Any proposed mode of delivery will be evaluated initially on how it addresses student characteristics and the requirements of a given cohort of learners. The preferred mode of delivery will be consistent with the pedagogical and presentational requirements of the subject matter and reflect the preferred teaching strategy, both in terms of methodologies and learning outcomes. The proposed delivery model will be evaluated at the initial programme development stage and will be reviewed as part of the regular monitoring of a programme.

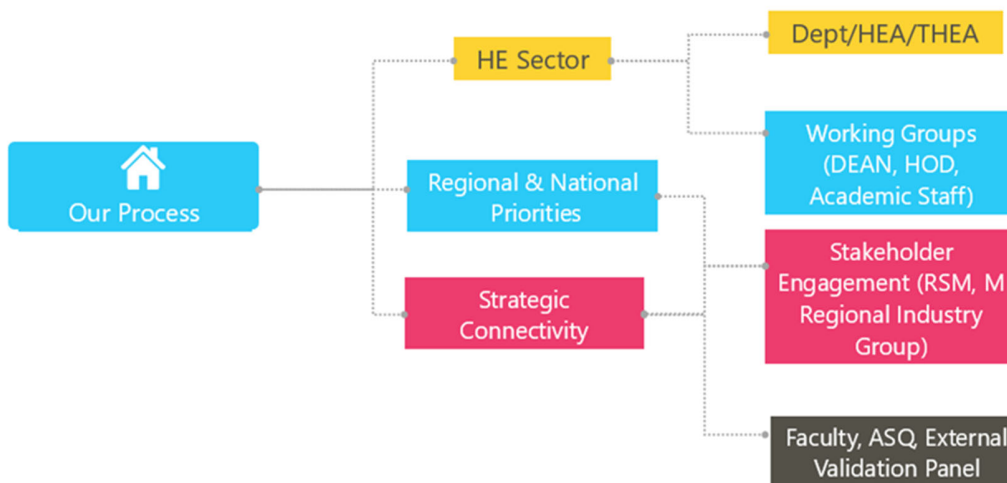
Stages for New Programme Development

There are **five** clear stages which are undertaken within the Programme Development process at Athlone Institute of Technology. Details of same are outlined in the table below.

STAGE	PHASE	FOCUS
Stage 1	Pre-Proposal Development Phase	This phase marks the genesis of programme development and usually occurs within the relevant Faculty. The primary step within this phase is the securing of preliminary approval for the development on submission of a Draft Proposal Document to the Executive Management Team (EMT).
Stage 2	Proposal Development Phase	This occurs within the appropriate Faculty and may include discussion at programme board meetings. The relevant programme submission documentation is developed by the programme development team (PDT). This phase includes review and completion of the programme by the Course Board. Liaison with professional bodies, and discussion with Industrial Advisory Boards (IABs), forms part of this process.

STAGE	PHASE	FOCUS
Stage 3	Internal Review Phase	This occurs at institute level and is coordinated by the Quality Office. The internal review of the programme submission is conducted by the Academic Strategy and Quality (ASQ) Committee
Stage 4	External Review Phase	This phase happens with the inclusion of external academic and industry inputs and is coordinated through the Quality Office. It includes the review by the Programme Evaluation Panel (PEP) and accreditation activities with the associated professional bodies, if/as relevant.
Stage 5	Post-Approval Phase	This phase requires multifunctional support to finalise the programme content and set up to enable student admissions. The main focus of this phase is the close-out of issues and the communication of all relevant information to both internal functional areas and external agencies, including accreditation, liaison with professional bodies and funding agencies.

Programme Design Process at AIT
Clarity, Collaboration & Transparency



Apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes

AIT is committed to making a regional impact and works closely with industry and community stakeholders to support sustainable development. Working with the Regional Skills Manager, AIT combines the capacity to audit regional skills needs, identify gaps and respond proactively. As part of the [National Skills Strategy](#) there is a greater emphasis on the “earn and learn” Apprenticeship model of Training and Education. The strategy was developed in the context of significant reform in the education and training sector to ensure a more dynamic, responsive and high-quality system that provides all learners with the knowledge and skills they need to participate fully in society and the economy. AIT offers a range of Craft apprenticeships, including Heavy Vehicle Mechanics, Motor Mechanics, and Plumbing. Apprentices earn while they learn and build valuable work-ready skills in a chosen occupation. Apprenticeships open up exciting and rewarding careers. The learning offered by AIT to apprentices completing Phase 4 and Phase 6, in collaboration with Solas, is grounded in the academic and practical experience needed to enable graduates to undertake a qualified craft apprenticeship role. The Institute also works closely with Longford/Westmeath ETB in scheduling apprentices, monitoring apprentices and certification at the end of their completion of earlier phases of their apprenticeship.

The quality assurance of Apprenticeship programmes in AIT are governed by similar processes, procedures and policies that govern all of its taught programmes.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

AIT is committed to fair, transparent and consistent access, transfer and progression opportunities for all students. AIT welcomes applications from people from every background and endeavours to make the application process as transparent, applicant focused, efficient, and effective as possible.

Policies and procedures for learner admission, progression, and recognition include:

- Fit-for-purpose admission, progression, recognition of prior learning, and completion policies and procedures
- Learner induction
- Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on learner progression and completion rates
- Recognition of education and training qualifications, including the recognition of formal and non-learning such as experiential and certified learning

Access, Transfer and Progression Policies and Procedures

Access, transfer and progression policies, coupled with admission processes and criteria, are established and implemented consistently in a transparent manner and in accordance with national policies and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP). Policies and procedures for learner admission, progression and recognition include:

- Standards, Assessment and Awards
- Programme Delivery Policy
- Exit Awards Procedure
- Internal Transfer Policy and Application Process
- AIT Deferral Policy

Policies and procedures for student access, transfer and admission are managed by the Admissions office and are located on the [Admissions section](#) of the AIT website.

Admissions

Application to the Institute for Year 1 programmes is through the Central Applications Office (CAO) system. The Institute recommends those eligible for offer and instructs the CAO to make the appropriate offer. Application to second and subsequent years is managed directly to the Institute.

Transfer

AIT accepts transfer requests from students who have completed an element of a programme of study. The applicant must have successfully completed a stage award and have sufficient credits and attained the learning outcomes from the modules on that stage to enable transfer into AIT. Students may apply to transfer to the second or subsequent year of a cognate programme and the transfer will be subject to places being available in AIT. FETAC Level 5 and Level 6 award holders are eligible for advanced entry to 2nd and subsequent years of approved programmes in cognate areas. Internal transfers will take place with due regard to equity of treatment of students, including current school leavers and in accordance with the Institute's commitments to the CAO process. As a participant in the CAO process the Institute has signed up to and abides by the Memorandum of Understanding which governs the admission of first year students. Details of the internal transfer process are managed by AIT's Admissions Office.

Progression

AIT is guided by the principles of progression as outlined in the [Standards, Awards and Assessment](#) document. Data is collected, monitored and acted upon with regard to learner progression and completion rates. Relevant statistics are presented to Academic Council on progression and completion rates annually. Such information is used to inform the quality assurance of programme, through Programme Boards, the quality assurance of the programme portfolios managed by the Faculty, and the strategic plans of the Institute.

A reporting platform has been developed to produce management reports to enable the efficient and effective monitoring of student data including registrations, completion, retention, and withdrawal rates. Details on this are provided in **Section 6**.

ACCESS Programme

The Institute plays a pivotal role in educational provision in the Midlands and fulfils this role by contributing to the creation of access pathways to the Institute. The provision of the one-year Access programme for mature students, designed to equip candidates with the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to progress to third level education also fulfils this objective. The Access office delivers a range of supports to promote access to higher education and the office also co-ordinates a College of Sanctuary programme and participates in the Path 2, 1916 Bursaries programme and Path 3, Higher Education Access Fund and College Connect, all of which are designed to promote and increase access to Higher Education.

AIT is fully committed to helping people with disabilities meet their academic potential. The DARE (Disability Access Route to Education – a supplementary admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities) and HEAR (Higher Education Access Routes) Schemes are offered by the Institute.

- DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who, as a result of having a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.
- HEAR is a college and university scheme that offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.

Recruiting a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population;

AIT continues to focus on ensuring that its student cohort is reflective of the diversity of Ireland's population in its student profiles; is committed to addressing the Access agenda and the impact of this work is reflected in achieved performance rates in the reporting period in some key target groups including:

- 2019/20 - HEAR: 6% (54 students) of the overall intake of Full-time new entrants; this exceeds AIT's target of 35
- DARE: 5% (48 students) of the overall intake of Full-time new entrants; this exceeds AIT's target of 15
- Mature Students: 159 via the CAO route
- Travellers: 4 students – target to increase to 7 in 2020/2021

AIT has continued to work with MEND and the College Connect programme, which aims to enhance educational aspirations for the most socio-economically disadvantaged in the MEND region through a participative and

sustainable suite of activities and resources to illuminate pathways and provide opportunities into, through and beyond higher education. AIT conducts desk-based research into pathway/routes into higher education and is the lead Institution for Traveller Community Needs Analysis as part of the MEND project. AIT provided student assistance to 453 students in 2019/20, of which 44 were lone parents. In the reporting period, 24 students were in receipt of the 1916 bursary fund.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Act, 2019

On 01/01/2020, Athlone Institute of Technology was designated as an autonomous designated awarding body (DAB), following the publication of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Act, 2019, The conferral of designated awarding body status on the Institutes of Technology, and on Technological University on their appointment, is reflected in the Revised Qualification and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and defines a designated awarding body as “*previously established University, the National University of Ireland, and educational institution established as a University under Section 9 of the [Universities] Act of 1997, a Technological University, an Institute of Technology, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Royal College of Surgeons*”.

The importance of the power that this Act conveys to AIT is in relation its academic awards and their quality assurance as:

- (i) Section 36(a) of the new act amends Section 5 of the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 to enable IoTs to: *make awards, with the exception of doctoral degrees, to students where the college has satisfied itself that the students have acquired and demonstrated the appropriate standard of knowledge, skill and competence for awards that are included within the National Framework of Qualifications*
- (ii) Section 36(b) provides such awards may: *only be conferred, granted or given on the recommendations of the academic council of the college or to or on persons who satisfy academic council that they have attended or otherwise pursued or followed appropriate courses of study, instruction, research or training provided by the college, or that they have previously acquired learning in accordance with procedures established under Section 56 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and have attained appropriate standards in examination or other tests of knowledge or ability or have performed other exercises in a manner regarded by the academic council of the college as being satisfactory*
- (iii) Implications of Section 36(a) and Section 36(b) is to establish all IoTs as designated award bodies (DABs) on the same basis as the previously established Universities, RCSI, and TU Dublin, except in relation to the awarding of doctoral degrees.

The above legislative context impacts on the culture, awarding powers and standards, academic governance of awards, and the quality processes of AIT, each of which have been adapted from January 2020.

Cultural Shift in Quality Management

The Quality Management by AIT of its awards moves from a culture of accountability and reporting to:

- Shifting to autonomy and ownership – for awards, their standards, and their level on the National Framework of Qualifications while maintaining public accountability
- Being self-governing and responsible for such award standards using the internal academic governance structures of AIT including Academic Council, its sub-committees, programme boards, external examining, revalidations processes and annual reporting
- The seeding of trust by QQI to the Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement activities of AIT and its systems and processes including those that it applies to their collaborative provisions and linked providers
- Ensuring the implications of the Act on the internal quality assurance “checks and balances”, including the:
 - Robustness & Explicitness of Award Standards on the NFQ by defining levelled learning outcomes are aligned to the award standard as they relate to the knowledge, competence and skills the student will attain and demonstrate through their assessment, with the cumulative achievement for all modules across stages leading to the attainment of the programme learning outcomes
 - Consistency mechanisms for the management of awards and their associated standards
 - Control – Through annual reporting, AIT as a DAB agrees their QA procedures & processes with QQI and participate in Annual Monitoring and Cyclical Review
 - Decision making on awards and their standards via Academic Council
 - Calibrated change in emphasis from assurance (accountability) to enhancement (continuous improvement).

Awarding Powers and Standards

The implications of this Act are primarily centred on the awards made by AIT including:

- (i) *Awarding Powers*: which have shifted to AIT from 01/01/2020

- (ii) *Academic Standards:* From 01/01/2020, AIT is no longer subject to the provisions of the 2012 Act relating to QQI awarding functions, including the setting by QQI of the award standards. Delegated authority still applies to Level 10 until AIT obtain Technological University status. AIT now sets its own award standards cognisant of the NFQ [Sections 43(3) to 43 (6)]. AIT has adapted the award standards for disciplines as outlined in award type descriptors

- (iii) *Awarding Body:* The **DAB is the awarding body**. Parchments no longer will carry reference to awards being under delegated authority (up to and including Level 9). The DAB must ensure their award is an award on the NFQ and ensure that the learner acquires the knowledge, skill and competence (KSC) associated with the level of that award within the framework before and when the award is made (this latter element is preserved in tact from the 2012 Act).

Quality Assurance Processes & Procedures

AIT has the primary **statutory responsibility** for quality and its assurance; QQI role shifts to providing guidance and accountability. With this statutory responsibility:

- (i) AIT now cooperates and consult with QQI to facilitate the performance of its functions in relation to the NFQ, and to provide information to QQI in relation to such functions through annual reporting;
- (ii) (ii) AIT confirms to QQI that its programme awards are on the National Framework of Qualifications;
- (iii) All of AIT award standards reference the NFQ award type descriptors as required legally.

All other AIT Quality Assurance processes for continue such as Annual Reporting (AIQR, Annual Dialogue meeting) and Cyclical reviews.

Academic Governance:

From 01/01/20:

- (i) All awards (to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications are now conferred, granted, or given on the recommendations of AIT's Academic Council
- (ii) Appropriate standards in assessment of the Knowledge, skills and competence are also adjudged by Academic Council;
- (iii) AIT takes the role of assuring the accountability and reporting by linked provider for their quality assurance processes, procedures and standards.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Teaching and Learning

The Learning and Teaching Unit continued to engage in a range of enhancement initiatives in 2019-2020. The Unit commenced initially with email communications and online sessions to support staff in the transition to remote online learning. Initially these were themed around 'staying connected'. This afforded staff the opportunity to meet online and identify ways to connect with their students through a variety of online platforms. In addition, the L&T Unit launched a dedicated Learning and Teaching Covid 19 Moodle page.

This page was available to all staff and students and was populated with key resources carefully selected or created by the L&T team. The approach involved devising "How to" sections with relevant resources. In addition, the L&T team designed a range of "How to" guides for staff and students. These included a range of resources relating to alternative assessment and using the VLE for a variety of assessment types and submissions. Also, the Unit designed and facilitated a range of training sessions to assist staff for the academic year 2020 -2021.

Learning and Teaching Key Activities 2019/2020

<p>National Forum Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Call 2019:</p> <p>Led by the Learning and Teaching Unit, and through consultation with a selection of staff and students with representation that was cross faculty and multi-disciplinary involving Heads of Department and senior academic leaders, key areas of focus were identified for the funding application which were in keeping with both the strategic priorities of the AIT Strategic Plan 2019-2023 - 'A Technological University for the Region' and those of the National Forum.</p>	<p>Three successful proposals were approved which were led by the four Deans of Faculty, involving multi-disciplinary teams;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Collaboratively to Enhance Provision for those who Teach and Learn Online in Athlone Institute of Technology. Led by the Dean of the Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning • Team Based Learning (TBL): a unique student-centred pedagogy. Led by the Dean of Business and Hospitality with the Dean of Science and Health Studies
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing Placement Experience in Civil Engineering. Led by the Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Informatics.
<p>Progress in Learning Enhancement Initiatives and Learning Enhancement Projects in 2019-2020</p> <p>Working Collaboratively to Enhance Provision for those who Teach and Learn Online in AIT (Dr Anne Marie O'Brien and David O'Hanlon)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Learning Enhancement project commenced in January 2020 in order to enhance expertise across the institution in the "Team Based Learning" (TBL) teaching approach In early 2020, the project team conducted a literature review and met with staff from several universities who use TBL to learn more about best practice in TBL delivery. The team also attended several workshops offered by the TBL Collaborative in order to learn more about ways the approach can be tailored within AIT programmes.
Digital Badge Learning Enhancement Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of workshops were delivered to inform staff about digital badges and micro credentials The Digital Badge Working Group was formed.
Write Right- the development of a self-directed Moodle course	Supported by the L&T Unit, the Student Resources Centre devised and implemented a proposal which was informed by student feedback in the National survey of Students. An online, self-directed and interactive writing course aimed at 3rd and 4th years was designed and developed with LEP funding. This course will be made available in 2020-2021.
Response to Covid 19 - preparing staff for remote/online delivery in 2020- 2021	The Learning and Teaching Unit designed and facilitated a range of workshops and training sessions to assist staff in their preparations for the academic year 2020 -2021.

Learning environment

The learning environment of AIT consists of multi-purpose and specialised teaching laboratories, art studios, design laboratories, simulated nursing and veterinary clinical laboratories, classrooms, lecture theatres and IT laboratories with data projection facilities. This is also supported by the learning environment of the library with a comprehensive book-stocks, journals and databases. Further details are provided in Section 3.

Moodle

Moodle is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) used across the Institute to support formal and non-formal learning activities. Academic staff use Moodle to frame and support active learning, by providing resources specific to their modules, as well as activities designed to foster student engagement and collaboration.

Moodle is also used as an assessment tool, and teaching staff create a range of assessment types to assess different forms of learning, i.e., quizzes and reflective journals. Turnitin assignments, used in AIT to promote academic integrity, is embedded within Moodle for ease of access. The VLE is also used to communicate with students, both in the provision of feedback and also as a support mechanism.

Moodle is also used to provide support for students by way of resources for Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS) and Academic Writing. Work is underway to develop a Learning Support Hub through AIT's Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle. This will serve as a portal for all Learning Supports including Science, Maths and Business Tutors and the Academic Writing Centre; along with Library, IT and the Disability and Learning Support Service.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the commitment to and demonstration of honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting by the enrolled learner. It assumes that all interaction with the Institution is approached with honesty. This includes all documentation submitted to the institution for academic purposes. Responsibility for demonstrating academic integrity lies with the enrolled learner and this "includes compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, and practices by individuals or institutions in education, research, and scholarship". Academic integrity is relevant to all areas of academic endeavour undertaken by the enrolled learner. This includes, but is not limited to, all activities related to the achievement of academic credit for awards; all methods of learning practice including in the classroom; research; online, distance and work-based learning; in all methods of assessment; and in academic scholarship. The purpose of assessment, both formative

and summative, is to ascertain the learner understanding and demonstrate the achievement of specific learning outcomes by the learner.

AIT's Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy is aligned with two key stakeholders in mind: The Institute and the learner. It recognises that academic behaviour is based on the behaviour of both the enrolled learner and the enrolling Institution. From the enrolled learner perspective, academic integrity is based on the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. From the Institutional perspective, academic integrity is nurtured through academic leadership which embeds the principles of academic integrity in its teaching, learning and assessment policies and practices.

AIT staff have become very active members of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) with two members of staff on each of the three working groups of NAIN. Learnings both on the network and from AIT are feed into and out of the network. The Institute has implemented training across the institute for students and staff to address themes that align with those investigated by NAIN.

The Institute has also implemented a programme of Academic Integrity activities targeted at both academic staff and students to align with the National Academic Integrity week held in October annually and led by QQI and NAIN annually.

Student Survey

The data obtained and analysed from the Student Survey is used annually as a guide to develop enhancements in programme design and delivery at Institute and Faculty level. Full analysis is conducted on each of the indices by the Quality Office with comparative analysis conducted year on year in the comparative performance on indices

- year on year,
- by faculty,
- by programme type
- by stage
- by level

The Quality Office has also introduced briefing sessions for Faculties to review their annual data and has invested in reviewing a management information system to enable faculties being self-directing in their capabilities to

analyse their respective data sets. The results on the annual student survey are feed into programme board to determine what changes should be adopted on programmes. The information is also fed into professional support units for any enhancements actions to be taken.

The above approaches, as examples of responding to the student survey data, allows for 'double looped' learning from the primary data collected to inform current academic and professional practices and embeds a quality enhancement culture.

Faculty Led inputs to assuring the Quality of Learning and Teaching Practices

The Faculty approaches to institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning include:

- Programme Boards - feedback from students and staff leading to continuous improvements supported by Academic Strategy and Quality Sub-Committee of Academic Council
- External examiner feedback via external examiners' reports
- Examination Board meetings and annual statistical analysis of examination results at faculty and by Academic Council
- Focus on timely assessment feedback to students including via the usage of Moodle
- Consideration for timing of all directed learning activity and the provision of a calendar of assessments
- Academic Writing Centre provides supports to students when faced with challenges in academic writing, referencing etc.
- The usage of External accreditation bodies (for example, the Veterinary Council of Ireland, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Engineers Ireland, the Irish Dental Council) in the ongoing review and accreditation of programmes through validation and revalidation processes.

The Role of Programme Boards

Each Faculty in AIT has Programme Boards to consider all matters affecting the operation and innovative teaching and learning practices suitable to enable the student achieve the expected programme learning outcomes. The overall management of the Programme Boards lies within the domain of the Faculty, which facilitates effective articulation of its programme reviews with the sub-committees of Academic Council. The

Programme Boards meet once per semester. The role of the Programme Boards includes monitoring the implementation of academic policies associated with learning, teaching, and research and maintaining the award standards, the assessments standards, and the administration of the programmes(s) within the faculty in a quality assured manner.

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMME BOARD MEETINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020		
Faculty of Science and Health	Semester 1	Semester 2
Department of Sport & Health Sciences	15 th October 2019 19 th October 2019 23 rd October 2019 30 th October 2019	12 th March 2020 02 nd April 2020 22 nd April 2020 29 th May 2020
Department of Social Science	13 th November 2019 14 th November 2019 21 st November 2019	02 nd April 2020 22 nd April 2020 28 th May 2020 17 th June 2020
Department of Life & Physical Sciences	29 th October 2019 30 th October 2019	30 th March 1 st April 18 th June
Department of Nursing & Healthcare	12 th November 2019 13 th November 2019 14 th November 2019	11 th March 2000
Faculty of Engineering & Informatics	Semester 1	Semester 2
Department of Computer & Software Engineering	05 th December 2019	10 th June 2020
Department of Polymer Mechanical & Design	06 th December 2019 09 th December 2019	09 th June 2020
Department of Civil Engineering & Trades	04 th December 2019	09 th June 2020
Faculty of Business & Hospitality	Semester 1	Semester 2

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMME BOARD MEETINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020		
Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	04 th December 2019	30 th March 2020
Department of Business & Management	04 th December 2019	30 th March 2020
Department of Accounting and Business Computing	03 rd December 2019	30 th March 2020
Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning		
Department of Lifelong Learning	13 th November 2019	19 th March 2020 20 th March 2020

The Role of External Examiners

External examining verifies that the content, teaching and assessment methods for programmes, and their standards, are appropriate for the nature and level of the academic award being reviewed. Feedback is provided annually on the quality of learning via external examiner reports, with a total of 123 reports received from externs for the academic year 2019/2020 for the various faculties covering all programmes. All reports are reviewed by the Academic Council Sub-Committee on Academic Quality, Teaching and Learning. Any issues raised by external examiners are returned via Faculty and Department management to relevant staff members for identified action and response. Full details of AIT's External Examiner Policy are available at: <https://www.ait.ie/contact/staff/quality/external-examiners#>.

The selection, approval, and appointment of external examiners is central to the quality assurance practices of AIT as it invokes the support, guidance and insights from recognised professionals in various fields. The process of the management of the panel of external examiners is overseen by the Quality Office, but the decision making and evaluation and appointment of these examiners is decided by Academic Council. Procedures and Guidelines for External Examining can be accessed [here](#).

The main purposes of external examining are:

- To verify that learning outcomes as assigned to a programme/module to which the external examiner has been appointed have been met

- To assist AIT in the comparison of academic standards across higher education awards and award elements
- To ensure that all programme assessments are reviewed and critiqued annually to ensure that the assessments set ensure that they are align to the approved programme schedule and the learning outcomes that such assessments are to demonstrate achievement of by the examined student.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

3.1 Library: Student, Social, and Study Facilities

The academic year 2019/2020 was a year of two halves, divided by an era-defining pandemic, but connected by continued library staff focus on adapting to AIT's learner needs and continuously improving library offerings in space, services, collections, supports and outreach.

3.1.1 Library - Supporting Learners Onsite & Online

Learning Spaces: Library opening hours of at least 80 hours per week in the Main Library have been maintained between September 2019-March 2020. Physical space reopened, with appropriate safety measures, in support of repeat examinations in August 2020 to support repeat examinations. The academic year also saw a consolidation of library spaces (Main Library & satellite Nursing Library) into one location, with new larger dedicated Nursing & Health Collections area alongside a new model of satellite services to the Nursing Building including *Click & Collect*, computer access for virtual library and onsite information literacy sessions.

Library & Information Skills for Learners: From September 2019, the library team has offered a range of in-class information skills sessions for new learners, advanced learners, researchers and staff with specialist sessions for vulnerable cohorts or those with extra needs. Lecturers work with the library to get the best session for their learners, and specialist supports & one to one consultation are offered on collection discovery, search strategies, literature reviews and systematic reviews.

Self-Directed Online Learning: During 2019/2020 the library's online guides, LibGuides, have expanded to include new resources and skills materials for students in Business & Hospitality; Engineering & Design; Health & Sciences; Continuing & Professional Learning. A new suite of Referencing pages and guides and library skills videos have enhanced offerings for students and are available ubiquitously.

3.1.2 Innovating for Learner Engagement

Library Induction Fair & Library Student Ambassadors: September 2019 saw the introduction of a new model for Library Induction with an interactive onsite Induction Fair hosted by library staff and new appointed Library Student Ambassadors. See the *AIT Library Student Ambassadors Case Study* for further details. Watch the Library Induction [video](#).

Rapid Transition to Online Learning: With the rapid move to online learning in March 2020, the library team created a one-stop-shop guide to getting the best from the library remotely and supported the cross-department development of the Student Survival Guide for Summer Assessments & Repeats 2020.

Library Live Support Sessions: In support of new constraints on offering in-class sessions and onsite 1:1 supports, the library team offered online sessions to students to enhance using and accessing learning materials and supports, understanding referencing, avoiding plagiarism and improve search skills.

Accessing Collections Remotely: New Click & Collect, Scan & Deliver and contactless book returns services were introduced to provide access to collections for student assignments and study alongside enhanced access to electronic materials through database trials, new and existing e-collections.

3.1.3 New Frontiers in Research: Scholarly Communications supporting Research Culture in AIT

September 2019, saw the appointment of a new Scholarly Communications Librarian role. This role was critical to preparedness for the TU application alongside the further development of research support services for new postgraduate learners, early career and established academics in scholarly communications. Activities across the year included:

- Library Research Training & Awareness Events covering topics on scholarly publishing, where to publish, networking for researchers, introductions to metrics & altimetric as well as the scholarly publishing process.
- Researcher Bootcamps focusing on how researchers can be active to build their profiles
- Collaborative co-ordination of the *Inaugural Pioneering AIT Women in Research* event
- Supporting Departments & Faculties with research profile exercises in advance of reviews
- Sessions to Research Institutes on scholarly communications & best practice
- Systematic Review training for postgraduates and researchers
- Representing AIT on national transformative agreement negotiations for *ScienceDirect*
- Building supporting online guides for researchers on research & scholarly communications topics

AIT Institutional Repository: April 2020 was the first anniversary of the establishment of the AIT Institutional Repository to host open access full-text copies of all AIT produced research outputs including journal articles,

posters and other written outputs as a copy of record and to allow public engagement with research. After just one-year AIT Library's repository is leading the THEA Libraries Repository in the number of works represented, demonstrating the increasing visibility of AIT research within the sector and more broadly.

Research Publications, Profiles, Metrics & Benchmarking – Towards a new TU: In parallel to the Open Access agenda, the Scholarly Communications Librarian function has developed particular expertise and focused work on the ORCID Researcher ID platform representing AIT as one of the founding partners of the Irish ORCID Consortium established in early 2020. ORCID Membership has been rolled out to AIT staff and students through workshops, bootcamps and a Departmental webinar series in support of the Technological University project in collaboration with colleagues in LIT Library in June 2020.

3.1.4 Library without Borders: Outreach & Collaboration

The 2019/2020 Library outreach and collaborative campaigns included a wide variety of campaigns led with huge energy and a collaborative spirit by Joanne Gillivan, the Library's new Outreach Co-ordinator for the academic year 2019/2020 including:

- AIT Library #DitchTheDisposables Campaign: October 2019 in support of AIT's *Keep it Clean, Keep It Green* campaign raising awareness of personal behaviour.
- International Men's Day Celebration: November 2019 in collaboration with the AIT Health Campus Initiative and the EDI office promoting positive mental health for men.
- Library Ireland Week: December 2019 event in collaboration with AIT Careers Office 'Libraries Inspiring the Way We Work'.
- Less Stress, More Success Campaign: February 2020 in collaboration with AIT Students' Union. Activities included a library pop-up, a meditation session, stress management information, a free gym pass for a day and a video detailing the college supports available to students in an engaging way.
- Blind Date with a Book Campaign: February 2020 a fun campaign to engage with students around Valentine's Day organised by Joanne Gillivan and Anne Conway.
- International Women's Day: March 2020 in collaboration with AIT EDI Campaign, the Library hosted Irish author and journalist Caitlin McBride to discuss her new book *The Day that Changed my Life* (2020), a remarkable collection of stories from Ireland's women.

- *Minding Your Mind in Covid-19*: April 2020 new resource in support of all AIT staff and students during national lockdown and rapid transition to online learning.

3.1.5 Systems Updates 2019-2020

Koha Library Management System: system update was implemented in summer 2020 where AIT Library was the pilot library for the IoT sector to share learning and ensure implementation issues were addressed.

Resource Acquisitions, Cataloguing & Processing AIT Library was represented on the National Tender for the Framework for Provision of Library Goods (Book and e-book tender) which informed the final framework and national rollout from January 2020.

Self-Check-Out Circulation, Click & Collect and Scan & Deliver: these learner-directed services were developed to support contactless student access to physical collections through online orders.

Entry/Exit Management System: developed in-house for re-opening in August 2020 to meet Covid-19 requirements for track and trace and support with capacity management.

Keylinks Reading List Management System: rolled out 2019 to a pilot number of academics to access wider rollout and will be picked up again in 2021.

Institutional Repository developed continuously throughout the year in-house and in collaboration with the THEA Research Group.

ORCID Researcher ID System was introduced from AIT's membership of the Irish ORCID Consortium in early 2020.

SciVal Research Metrics System supporting detailed metrics, analytics and international contexts for AIT and AIT-LIT Consortium research, as indexed in Scopus.

3.1.6 AIT Library Planning for the Future with Purpose: The TU Library journey begins

AIT Library Strategy: The Path to 2023: 2019/2020, launched in February 2020, sets a bold vision for the library that is aligned to AIT's institutional strategy and positions the library as an institutional 'centre' and a 'third space' which is a connector between the formal learning of the classroom and the informal of peer-to-peer

learning. It also focuses on expertise areas for the new university library that matches the ambition and potential of Ireland's next technological university.

3.1.7 AIT Library as a Sectoral Voice for Academic Libraries in Higher Education

Library Staff representing AIT Nationally and Internationally: Through library staff representation, AIT has a voice on sectoral, national, and international library and library related committees. Library staff are also active on internal AIT Committees and across the TU working groups.

AIT Library Sectoral Awards & Recognition 2019/2020: Library staff were successful in attaining funding for new projects, which included:

- (i) Learning Enhancement Project Funding in support of an Open Education Resource (OER) Guide & Index to be launched in late 2020.
- (ii) Shortlisted for the Library of the Year Award at the National Education Awards 2020 on the basis of a range of new services, supports, events and collaborations initiated and strongly supported by institutional colleagues and AIT students. That shared voice from the AIT community in recognition of the library service and its impact was highlighted in the library's supporting [video submission](#).
- (iii) '[Engaging & Informing Students with Disabilities: Inclusiveness & Information](#)' selected for the AHEAD

3.2 ICT Infrastructure within AIT

AIT's ICT infrastructure includes 44 IT computer labs running an array of software applications to meet the needs of the modern learner. Two open student computer labs, consisting of 165 PCs reserved for student use are available on campus, along with dedicated study/project rooms, bookable in the Library. AIT boasts a 10Gbps connection to the internet to ensure extremely fast upload and download speeds to various cloud services.

All students have a Microsoft Office 365 account including email, cloud storage (provided by OneDrive) and anywhere online access to the Microsoft Office suite via their Office 365 accounts. AIT's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is based on the Moodle platform and offers all students secure online access to course programme & module notes. All AIT classrooms are equipped with a lecturer's PC, document camera, data projector and whiteboard. Lecturer desks include connections for external devices (laptops, tablets etc) via both

HDMI and VGA connections. The campus has a state-of-the-art Wi-Fi infrastructure allowing students, staff and researchers to get wireless connectivity from all campus locations. The Computer Services Department provides an IT Helpdesk to assist users with general IT issues throughout the campus.

3.3 Infrastructure to support Teaching, Learning and Assessment during the COVID-19 Pandemic

From March 2020, the evolving nature of the Covid19 pandemic, led to the Registrar leading a review of its impact on all academic delivery and professional services provisions in the immediate. Scenario planning working groups were established to review the impact of the pandemic across a range of operations. One such scenario planning group focused on the quality of the online teaching and learning environment for students including the need for the provision of a synchronous learning platform that would replicate the class room environment. A key element of this scenario planning was the selection of an appropriate platform/s for emergency remote delivery, with an emphasis on replicating the quality of the face to face student experience, synonymous with AIT. The Learning and Teaching Unit team, utilising their expertise in online learning and experience in the professional development of staff, conducted a rigorous analysis of a range of platforms for 'remote' teaching and learning widely used in Higher Education (HE). Carefully selected criteria were used as part of a due diligence study. This analysis was presented to the Executive Management Team for approval and Zoom for Higher Education was selected as the platform for 2020-2021.

The Learning and Teaching Unit team recommended the purchase of a selection of software and hardware options which would improve the remote online learning and teaching experience for students and staff and enhance student engagement. Informed by its research the L&T team also devised and published a guide to the AIT digital ecosystem, titled "*Tips and Tools for Remote Learning, Teaching and Assessment*" based on an adapted version of the ABC Learning Design Model. This guide focused on use of AIT-specific digital technologies organised along a continuum of the level of student engagement. Once the online platforms for 2020-2021 had been agreed, a range of appropriate supports was designed and facilitated by the L&T Unit. These activities were aimed at preparing staff for remote/online delivery in 2020-2021. The Institute, through the Computer Services Department, managed the selection and purchase of technology required for staff to teach online.

3.3.1 Digital Technologies Working Group

Stakeholder engagement in the development of the digital infrastructure continued from the initial scenario planning with the establishment of a Digital Technologies Working Group. Chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, this group, which met on a weekly basis, included student representatives.

The aim of this group was to oversee the provision of appropriate digital technologies to support and sustain learning, teaching and assessment in the Institute during the COVID-19 and enforced lockdown.

Its terms of reference included:

- Engage with key stakeholders to identify and resolve operational issues identified by both Staff and Students arising from the use of digital technologies in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, through online platforms in a timely manner and on an ongoing basis.
- Provide solutions that take cognisance of both the student and the lecturer to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of directed learning with particular focus on the impact of the move to remote online delivery
- Select appropriate digital technologies for learning, teaching and assessment, using an evidence-based approach.

Primary research was undertaken by the DTWG throughout the 2019/2020 year and thereafter to use any feedback in the initial period to quality assure the ongoing teaching, learning and assessment practices adapted and adopted.

3.3.2 Alternative Terminal Assessments

The reliability and validity of assessments that measure the achievement of learners is central to the quality assurance mechanisms for all forms of assessments that operate within the institute. These are based on QQI's *Assessment and Standards* (Revised, 2013); *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes* (QQI, 2018); and *Guiding Principles for Alternative Assessments* (QQI, March 2020); and AIT's internal academic governance for Academic Delivery Planning, 2020-2021 in the context of COVID-19, approved by Academic Council in October 2020.

AIT was committed to ensuring the academic integrity of the alternative terminal assessments methods that were designed and implemented in the context of the ongoing non-availability of physical examinations locations for proctored examinations for the 2019/20 period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and levelled restrictions applying to on campus activity.

A protocol that defined the internal structures, mechanisms, and principles that provided for the quality assurance of the alternative terminal assessments, in lieu of the original terminal examinations on programmes, was approved through the academic governance structures of AIT

The alternative terminal assessment made an evidence-based determination on whether the expected **core** learning outcomes for the module had been achieved, as envisaged originally by way of the terminal examination. The core learning outcomes approach thus lends itself to changing the assessment method to accommodate emergencies like Covid-19. All alternative terminal assessments proposals were reviewed through the following structural mechanisms:

- (i) All proposed alternative terminal assessments are reviewed by the **Programme Board** and through the **Department and Faculty management**.
- (ii) All proposed alternative terminal assessments are reviewed by the **External Examiner**.
- (iii) All alternative terminal assessments for modules are notified to **Academic Council** through the **Academic Strategic and Quality Assurance Committee**. A spreadsheet of the alternative terminal assessments methods that replaced planned proctored onsite examinations for each programme and stage are submitted by the Department and Faculty for presentation to ASQ as a record for QA purposes. This process was conducted to cover notice of Semester 1 and Semester 2 alternative assessment plans.

The above structural mechanism supports the internal and external quality assurance of the alternative terminal assessments proposed by module leaders for their original terminal examination.

3.4 Student Supports/Welfare provided to students

There are a range of student service supports provided by AIT to ensure that its students have every opportunity to progress successfully through their programme of study and to complete it successfully. These supports are coordinated and managed through the AIT Student Resource Centre.

The AIT Student Resource Centre supports students who may face queries, challenges or problems during their time in the Institute. The Resource Centre prides itself on being friendly and welcoming and strives to do its

utmost to help students. In order to facilitate the student experience, the Resource Centre engages with fellow staff members throughout the Institute and external agencies, employers and stakeholders.

To support students during Covid-19 restrictions, all services were offered remotely, primarily through Zoom. Experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic envisages that a blended approach of on-line and in person student supports will be operated. A significant range of online resources for students are available and all are accessible through Moodle. The procedure for engaging with the Student Resource Centre to seek learning resources or student supports varies according to the service area and the nature of the help sought. The following resources are available to students:

- The Access Office
- Disability and Learning Support Service
- Student Assistance Fund
- Careers Office
- Health Centre
- Counselling
- Tutor Support
- Academic Writing Centre

3.4.1 Access Office

The AIT Access Office supports students from groups within society who are underrepresented in third level education such as mature students, people with disabilities, migrants, travellers and grant assisted students. This office works towards the goals of the AIT access plan which reflects and documents AIT's continued commitment to widening participation at third level and to providing a supportive, equal opportunity learning environment for all of its students. The Access Office provides a range of pre and post entry supports to assist students in accessing education.

- **The Access Course** (Special Purpose at Level 6): This course has been available in the Institute since 1994. It was formerly called the Foundation Certificate. This part time course is intended for adult

learners who wish to study after a break in their formal educational experience and who may not have benefited fully from, or have had access to, previous educational experiences

- **Saturday Mathematics Programme:** The Institute works with 24 schools in the midland region providing a leaving certificate pass mathematics programme. The programme runs from January to March. 80 students attend this programme each year
- **Liaison and Support:** The access office works with individuals and groups who want to explore third level education. This work includes facilitating visits to AIT, providing course and support related information
- **Higher Education Access Route (HEAR):** AIT's Access Office, together with AIT Admissions Office, plays a central role in the HEAR programme admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who have completed the Irish Leaving Certificate. Eligible students compete for a quota of reduced points HEAR places in the Institute. Students who gain a place in AIT through HEAR benefit from a range of personal, academic and social supports while they are studying including a pre – entry induction programme called *Ready, Steady, Connect*.

3.4.2 Disability and Learning Support Service

The Disability & Learning Support Service (DLSS) at Athlone Institute of Technology is committed to the provision of an equitable learning environment and avidly promotes, through its inclusive policies, an active participation and seamless integration into college life, that will enable all students to become independent learners and skilful graduates. Athlone Institute of Technology welcomes and encourages applications from students with disabilities. It aims to ensure that all applicants with a disability are given an opportunity to enter the Institute and while in AIT, to complete their studies successfully. The DLSS provides a range of supports and services which include: Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), individual and group learning support, Dyslexia screening, assistive technology training, alternative assessment formats, examination supports, note takers, and personal assistance. Each student's learning supports needs are assessed individually based on the evidences presented.

3.4.3 Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund (SAF) provides limited financial support to qualifying full-time and part-time registered students of AIT on courses that lead to a higher education award at level 6 to 10 of the national framework of qualifications. The SAF is targeted to students who may be experiencing financial difficulties/

have experienced a major change of circumstances. Students are required to complete an on-line application form and provide supporting documentation to the Access Office as part of the SAF application process.

Financial support is also provided through the 1916 Bursary.

3.4.4 Careers Office

The Careers Service supports students and graduates to develop their employability skills and to implement successful career plans. The main focus of the service includes the provision of student career guidance including:

- Employability Module: The module develops the student both professionally and personally and equips them with the skills and knowledge to enable them to plan for and achieve their career goals.
- Employer liaison: facilitating industrial recruitment - organising employer presentations, career fairs, advertising job vacancies, employer networking sessions, Site visits, with key employers assisting with student mock interviews.
- Career Workshops: Workshops are held on general topics such as CV preparation, interview skills, preparing for postgraduate study and effective job search.
- One to one consultation: Individual appointments are very popular amongst the student population. Consultations relate to general career directions, job search, interviews, UCAS applications, CVs, career options, postgraduate applications, difficulties with course, electives, and internal transfer mechanisms.
- Interview Preparation – Mock Interviews: The Careers Service organises annually hundreds of online mock interviews for students from all disciplines within the Institute. Relevant employers and careers staff participate in these.
- Psychometric Testing: The Strengths Based tests package has proved very successful with students in terms of: (i) career exploration; (ii) personal career development, and (iii) the preparation for testing at an assessment centre. It is also used with potential students at Open Days in advance of their pre-booked careers appointments.

The Careers Service has the responsibility for conducting the annual Graduate Survey which forms part of the *First Destination Report- Graduate Outcomes Survey*. It gives valuable information in relation to those employed, seeking employment and those engaged in further study. A detailed report is used by management & academic staff for programmatic reviews and other Institute reporting.

Virtual Careers Fair: The Careers office organises an annual careers fair using the platform Gradauteland where up to 70 Employers engage with students online for placement and graduate recruitment.

3.4.5 The Student Health Centre

This unit provides a comprehensive medical and nursing service to all full-time registered students and apprentices throughout the academic year. It offers a confidential, student friendly services in a professional and courteous manner with an emphasis on preventative medicine and health promotion. The service operates as an addition to a student's own family doctor or specialist medical service.

3.4.6 Counselling

AIT Student Counselling Service provides free, confidential professional psychological counselling, available to all registered student of AIT. A team of psychotherapists/counsellor, led by a Counselling Psychologist as Head of Service, provide individual and group therapy, psychoeducational workshops and seminars, outreach to the student community, crisis responding, and staff consultations regarding students of concern. The Counselling Service also input to committees, policies and procedures regarding student wellbeing where relevant. The service will liaise, with students' consent, with other services and with academic departments in AIT to enable all appropriate counselling supports to be provided, enhancing the student experience. The counselling service is provided based on student screening and prioritises its services based on the level of need/risk assessed grounded on the student information provided. An important KPI for the service is that students will have contact with a counsellor within 5 working days of making first contact, and within 48 hours where risk identified in screening is a concern. In 2019/2020 10% of AIT students availed of the AIT counselling service.

3.4.7 Tutor Support

AIT has identified key area where students benefit from additional assistance; tutor support is available to AIT students in Science, Mathematics and Business subjects. In addition, Learning Support and Assistive Technology is provided to Students with Disabilities and/or Specific Learning Difficulties.

3.4.8 The Academic Writing Centre:

The Academic Writing Centre (AWC) at AIT is a resource dedicated to improving students' performance and confidence in all areas of academic writing. The Academic Writing Centre offers a range of services and supports including workshops, individual tutorials, and online learning opportunities. The ethos of the centre is to build the student's skill and help with them with practical strategies to facilitate their academic writing.

3.5 The First Year Experience

Following acceptance of a place on a first-year programme in AIT, the AIT Student Resource Centre begin engaging with incoming students. An information pack is sent out from Registry with details of how to register on-line and an invitation to attend their Faculty tailored New Student Induction programme. The emphasis is on creating a warm and welcoming environment and giving students enough and timely information to allow them to engage efficiently and effectively in their first year of college. The process is centrally managed through the Student Resource Centre with involvement from all of the Institute Faculties, mentoring students, and the Students' Union, each of whom play a role in creating an atmosphere of welcome and celebration.

AIT has invested in key initiatives to support the transition to higher education for a diverse student population. AIT Connect is a seven-week extended induction/transition programme coordinated by the Student Resource Centre in collaboration with faculties and other key stakeholders. In 2019-2020, in the final week of the AIT Connect programme, called '*Inspiration Week*', a new remote learning initiative was launched - Careers Fest. It delivered skill building opportunities such as CV, LinkedIn and job application workshops (all of which were delivered live through Zoom and recorded and available for continuous access on Moodle). Careers Fest culminated in the AIT Virtual Careers Expo, which was delivered through well-established virtual careers platform GraduateLand. The platform enabled AIT to conduct:

- Live chats for students based on jobs or unique topics
- Interactive webinars, Q&A's and company presentations
- Active recruiter sourcing and access to student CV's
- 100% compatible with desktop, iPad or mobile

The following valuable engagement data was gathered:

- 1269 Students logged in to the AIT Virtual Careers Expo
- 492 signups and 212 job applications submitted
- 4163 total conversations with employers

3.6 Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS)

This is a student-led facilitated study programme where trained 2nd year student PASS Leaders run a series of study sessions to help first year students. This programme has doubled in size since the 2018/2019 year. 42 PASS Leaders were trained up to run peer led sessions at the end of August 2020 in readiness for the start of

term in September. AIT's PASS Leaders are facilitating 19 PASS sessions on 34 first year programmes compared with 2019/20 when AIT had 20 Leaders delivering 10 sessions over 14 programmes. PASS is being delivered remotely through Zoom in the context of the current COVID-19 safety guidance.

3.7 A Quick Bite of Resilience workshop Series

Over a period of 2 weeks in November the Counselling Service delivered 5 short workshops titled 'A Quick Bite of Resilience'. Each workshop teaches one important skill in building resilience, in increasing capacity to deal with life's difficulties and challenges. The workshops were open to all students and all staff to attend. The feedback from staff and students alike was extremely positive. Recordings of all five workshops are available to staff and students on Moodle.

3.8 AIT Connect Social Media Ambassador programme

Third year students who had been PASS leaders in their previous year of study were trained to run Faculty specific social media accounts throughout the academic year. As AIT Connect Social Media Ambassadors, these students are available to answer incoming students' questions, build awareness about events and supports and signpost services through social media channels (Snapchat, Instagram). This peer-to-peer approach has been very successful and the use of social media has enabled the Institute to engage with students in their preferred mode of communication. This mode of communication is now used to regularly releasing sound bite videos on a range of student services and academic information for students.

3.9 Student Ambassadors

The Student Ambassador program supports the work of the Student Union but also involves students to be advocates who are easily accessible on campus and via Social Media. The Library became involved in this program but the demand for Library Student Ambassadors was so high that a separate recruitment and training programme was developed. All Student Ambassadors were linked through the Student Union.

3.10 Support Services provided to International Students

The International Office is committed to supporting its international students in their transition from their home country to their studies at AIT. International students benefit from having an international office with staff dedicated to supporting them during their studies in Athlone.

The following link provides more information on the [Procedures and Guidelines for the Operation of Activities within the International Office](#). The following support services are of particular relevance to international students:

3.10.1 Orientation programme

A two-day orientation programme is organised by the International Office in September to familiarise new students with college life in Athlone. On their arrival in Athlone, non-EU students are provided with advice on immigration procedures. Appointments with the Immigration Officer in Athlone are organised for all Non-EU students after registering at the Institute.

3.10.2 English language, Academic Writing and Tutorial Support

English language classes are organised to assist international students during their study, particularly during Semester One of their programme. These classes are timetabled in addition to hours for registered programmes of study. Once students are assigned projects/assignments they can seek an appointment at the Academic Writing Centre at AIT. Students who are experiencing difficulties in their programme of study can arrange an appointment with a tutor to aid outside of normal class contact hours.

3.10.3 Chaplaincy Services

The overall objective of the chaplaincy service is to make Institute life as meaningful and as enjoyable as possible and to create a spirit of cooperation and personal care. An emergency service is provided in the event of sudden illness, family or personal problems. Student volunteers assist the chaplains with running the service. A food drop service is also available and this service was very beneficial to international students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Interdenominational services are celebrated each month and a special purpose room is available for prayer and meditation. International students are encouraged to avail of Chaplaincy services, particularly at the weekend and holiday time when other students are spending time at home with family and friends. There are a small number of Muslim students, mainly from Turkey, Pakistan and India in AIT. A multi faith room is available to Muslim students on campus.

3.10.4 Peer Mentoring Service

International students who have been studying at the Institute for the previous academic year volunteer as peer mentors. This can act as a great comfort to new international students, particularly at the start of the

academic year. New students feel that they can ask fellow students to assist with general queries during their studies.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

In 2019/20, AIT continued to grow and develop its research expertise and diversify its research funding sources. Senior Leadership Team structures relating to research have been established in all faculties with each Faculty's Research Committee. Senior Leadership team structure are in place and operating in the Faculty of Engineering & Informatics and in the Faculty of Science & Health. The Faculty of Business and Hospitality has identified key areas of research and innovation development and now has 12 postgraduate research students since February 2020 with cross faculty and cross RUN-EU partner supervisory teams in place. It is envisioned that these students will be part of proposed *Disruptive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Academy*. The *Research Time Release* programme has continued to be successful and grows steadily, and each applicant now identifies KPIs and deliverables. New initiatives to highlight research have taken place, such as the postgraduate poster competition and Women in Research Award. The Graduate School has been established in the reporting period as well as revised academic regulations for postgraduate research. These were approved by external panel and operationalised in 2019. The institute appointed a Dean of Graduate School and Research in 2020. The impact of Covid has been mitigated in several ways, for example the postgraduate poster competition was held virtually, however, programmes for researcher mobility were profoundly affected. AIT has been successfully funded for several projects which include researcher mobility and will promote staff and student exchanges when they become possible again.

A summary of the academic and governance arrangements for all research activities and programmes to ensure their quality are outlined in the following sections.

4.1 The Role of the Academic Council to Research

The Academic Council of the Institute is responsible for research governance. The Academic Council delegates, as appropriate, to the Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee, to the Graduate School Research Committee, to the Faculty Research Committees and/or to the Registrar:

- formulating, developing and reviewing Institute research policy and strategies
- the implementation and development of research operating systems
- application of national research guidelines
- research funding applications
- the management of research student application, progression and examination.

The Academic Council is ultimately responsible for the approval of any updates or deviations from the approved governance/regulations that may occur, in the development of research practice at the Institute.

Research, while guided by the strategy of the Institute, is maintained by four major structures:

- The Research Office is responsible for the standards, regulation and procedures that ensure the quality of research
- The Graduate School is responsible for the academic administration, regulations, and procedures that assure the standard of postgraduate research maintained within the Institute
- The Faculties and Research Institutes are responsible for the academic standards of the research itself, and
- The Innovation and Enterprise Office is responsible for commercialisation and technology transfer.

The Academic Council acknowledges and supports the work of administrative offices, faculties, departments and individuals in regard to research. Its terms of reference in this regard are to:

- Ensure the Institute's Research is aligned with national policy/procedures
- Approve research programmes proposed by Faculties
- Approve, amend or reject research student applications and enrolments into the Institute as presented by Graduate School Research Committee (GSRC)
- Approve, amend or otherwise the progression of research students through programmes
- Approve, amend or otherwise the appointment of external examiners for research programmes as per the academic regulations
- Approve or otherwise the outcome of research examination boards
- Approve, amend or otherwise academic appeals in regard to research in line with the Institute's procedure
- Approve, amend or otherwise student/staff disciplinary decisions in line with the Institute's procedure
- To note the decisions made by the Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee in line with the Institute's procedure.

The Academic Council is the ultimate body in regard to reporting and recording of academic decisions related to AIT's research activities. It also has statutory requirements to report to Governing Body and/or government bodies.

4.2 Delegated Authority - Level 9/10

Athlone Institute of Technology has delegated authority to award Masters and PhD degrees in the following disciplines:

- Toxicology
- Microbiology
- Polymer Engineering
- Communications and Software Engineering
- Sports Science.

The Institute may be the facilitator of research in other areas, supported by QQI as the awarding body. The Institute follows the validation process defined by QQI for Level 10 awards. While the Institute develops and supports its research strategy by providing human and physical resources, its principal role is in maintaining the standard of the awards that it offers. To this end, AIT has introduced new Structured Research Programmes for all students for the 2019/2020 academic year. The Institute has updated its delivery of research modules, research regulations, and their governance, which were ratified by AIT's Academic Council in September 2019.

4.3 Research Structured Modules

The Structured Research Programmes provide students with a complete suite of taught modules coupled with an Individual Study Plan derived from the consultation between the student and their assigned Research Supervisor. This allows the student to develop their generic research transferable skills, discipline specific competencies, and graduate attributes associated with a student who has completed a research programme of study at AIT.

The modular elements consist of:

- Core modules: These modules will enable the student to refine their skills, the majority of which will be undertaken in the first year of learning. The student in consultation with their research supervisor will decide upon how and when these modules are completed which is informed by the student's identified learning needs

- Discipline specific modules: These modules are taught and facilitated within the Faculty. They will provide the discipline specific theoretical input relevant to the student. The decision as to when a student completes these modules will be taken in consultation with their supervisor
- Elective modules: These modules can be taken across all faculties within AIT and must be a validated module that forms part of a Level 9 major or minor award. The student identifies up to 20 ECTS of learning which he/she can complete in Year 2 and 3 or their studies
- An Individual Study Plan: The completion of this plan is a mandatory requirement for the new Structured Research Programme. The plan is shared by both student, supervisor and Graduate School. The responsibility for the maintenance of the plan is with the student.

4.4 Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee

The Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee (RI&E) has overall responsibility for the development of research, innovation, and enterprise policies and reports to Academic Council on its work.

The Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee is responsible for:

- Advising Academic Council on matters related to research and innovation work
- Formulating, developing and reviewing Institute research, innovation and enterprise policy and strategies
- Enabling and encouraging research within the Institute consistent with the mission of the Institute, and regional and national strategies for research, innovation and enterprise
- Further developing and reviewing guidelines and procedures in respect of internal resource allocation for research and advising on the most effective utilisation of the Institute's research accommodation, facilities and expertise
- Determining and applying performance indicators in relation to the Institute's research activities
- Formulating, monitoring, and further developing the Institute's policy in relation to intellectual property rights, patents, copyrights, trademarks, technology transfer licensing, consultancy, commercialisation of research and campus companies
- Advising on legal, ethical and safety issues in relation to research projects
- Monitoring compliance with the Institute rules and regulations relating to the award of postgraduate degrees

- Liaison with other subcommittees of Academic Council and appropriate external institutions, as required
- Carrying out any or all such functions as may be assigned to the subcommittee from time to time by Academic Council and/or Governing Body.

The RI&E may establish subcommittees and working parties, some of whose members may be from outside the Committee or from outside the Institute, with the approval of Academic Council and Governing Body. The Research Ethics Committee and the Intellectual Property Committee have reporting responsibilities to the RI&E. The Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee reports to Academic Council.

4.5 The Role of the Office of Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar (VPAAR) to Research

The office of Vice President Academic Affairs, in terms of research within the Institute, is supported by the academic governance of Academic Council which monitors the research work carried out by the Research Office, the Graduate School, Faculties, Research Institutes and individuals in this regard. The Registrar's Office terms of reference for research activity within the Institute include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the academic standard of research is upheld within the Institute
- Ensuring national and Institute research policy is applied within Institute
- Evaluating the research procedures
- Ensuring that research within the Institute is carried out in an ethical manner
- Ensuring that any proposed research is in line with the Institute's research interests and does not bring the Institute into disrepute
- Adjudicating on appeals/disciplinary procedures in line with the Institute's procedures.

The office of the Vice President Academic Affairs reports on research matters to Academic Council in regard to the:

- Decisions of the Institute's research examination boards
- Outcomes of academics appeals /disciplinary procedures, disputes
- Any legal, financial or academic issues that will affect the Institute in regard to research that the office has adjudicated on

- Decisions of the Research Ethics Committee
- Evaluation of the Institute's research procedures and application of national research policies.

The office will also relay decisions back to relevant committees/faculties.

4.6 Graduate School

The Graduate School is responsible for the academic administration of all research students, from application to graduation. The Graduate School acknowledges the research work carried out by the Research Office, the Faculties, Research Institutes and individuals and is supported by the office of Vice President Academic Affairs, the Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee, and Academic Council.

Its terms of reference are to:

- Implement national and Institute policy
- Administrate the Graduate School Research Committee, which includes decisions on:
 - Research student applications
 - Enrolment types
 - Progression/non-progression of research students
 - External examiners, research examination panels
 - Aid in the creation of appeals panels
- Offer supervisor and student training programmes.

The Graduate School reports to the Academic Council for approval of the decisions at the Graduate School Research Committee in regards to:

- Standard and non-standard enrolment
- The composition of research examination panels
- External examiners
- Implementation of National and the Institute's research policy as it pertains to postgraduate students
- Aid where necessary in the creation of appeals panels

The Graduate School will report to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar in regard to:

- Appeals issues
- Research student progression decisions
- Exceptions to the research student progression regulations
- Research examination board outcomes.

The Graduate School report to the faculties/research supervisors the decisions of the Graduate School Research Committee, via the Associate Deans of Research.

4.6.1 Graduate School Research Committee (GSRC)

The Graduate School is responsible for calling meetings of the Graduate School Research Committee (GSRC) who have the authority to make decisions on:

- Research Student Applications in terms of:
 - Alignment with Institute strategy
 - Entry qualification including where necessary, English language requirements
 - Institute ability to service the research (facilities, Library etc.)
 - Student/project finance
 - Adjudicate on disputes between Faculties in regard to cross Faculty research.

The committee have the authority to return research student applications to faculties based on the above criteria. The committee make decisions on the following criteria:

- Enrolment method: Based on the qualification of the applicant, a decision will be made as to how the student is enrolled
- Standard: The applicant must hold a suitable undergraduate award at 2.1 NQQI Level 8 or above, or non-national equivalent; or at least a Second Class Honours level award in a higher graduate programme
- Qualifier Programme. The applicant will complete a qualifier programme outlined by the Faculty before enrolment onto a research programme

- The required amount of work experience deemed appropriate for entry to a research programme as indicated in the academic regulations
- The required professional qualification deemed suitable for entry onto a research programme as defined under the Institute's APEL policy.

The committee also address:

- Research student progression/non-progression
- Note decisions of Faculty Research Committees to progress individual students for reporting to exam boards
- Approve the panels put forward by the Faculty Research Committee to review non-performing research students
- Approve panels put forward by Faculty Research Committees to review non-performing students outside normal progression points
- Approve, amend or otherwise the outcomes of the non-performing research student panels for reporting to exam boards
- Approve, amend or otherwise exceptions to the above to allow research student progression, to be reported to examination boards/Academic Council
- Approve the withdrawal of a research student from the registrar in line with academic regulations.

The Graduate School Research Committee has the authority to approve, amend or reject the decisions of the faculties based on the above criteria, before reporting their decisions to Academic Council/examination boards. If amendments are made, they must be relayed to the Faculty via the Associate Dean of Research.

4.7 External examiners, research examination panels

The Graduate School Research Committee will have the authority to approve, amend or reject the external examiners and examination panels put forward by the faculties, prior to submission for approval by Academic Council. Decisions made by the Graduate School Research Committee are presented to:

- Research Innovation and Enterprise Committee
 - Graduate School Research Committee update

- Academic Council:
 - Make up of Examination panels for approval
 - Appeal panels when asked to aid in their formation
- Examination Boards
 - Research student progression decisions
 - Examination outcomes
- Office of Vice President Academic Affairs
 - Application decisions
 - Appeals of decisions by Graduate School Research Committee
 - General research appeals panels when asked to aid in their formation
- Faculties
 - Decisions of the Graduate School Research Committee that do not require approval of Academic Council

4.8 Faculties

The faculties and individual supervisors hold the expertise to determine the ability of the student to complete their research based on the Faculty Research Discipline expertise and experience. The Faculty will make the decision on the suitability of a student to carry out the research, their progression through the research programme and whether the facilities to carry out the research are available. The Faculty will, in line with Institute regulations appoint supervisor(s) and supervisory panels, propose examination panels, accommodate viva voce examinations and administer research review panels. All Research students will be aligned to a Faculty, for the purpose of application, progression and examination. In order to complete this process, research student applications, and their progression through the research programme will be vetted by the Faculty Research Committee. The outcome of the decisions made on academic research ability will be reported to the Graduate School Research Committee, which will review the decisions based on academic regulation. The Faculty will have the responsibility to:

- Apply national and Institute policy

- Administrate Faculty Research Committee, which includes decisions on:
 - Research student applications
 - Enrolment types
 - Research student progression/non-progression
 - External examiners, research examination panels
- Form Research review panels for student transfer and non-performing students as per the postgraduate research regulations.

4.8.1 Faculty Research Committee (FRC)

Each Faculty has the responsibility to create a Faculty Research Committee (FRC). The Faculty Research Committee will make decisions in regard to:

- How to apply national / Institute research policy
- Research student applications
 - The suitability of the applicant to carry out the proposed research (which may include qualification, and English language requirements)
 - The expertise of the primary supervisor/supervisory panel to complete the research
 - The ability of the Faculty to support the research in the form of facilities, finance and support personnel
 - The alignment of the research with the Institute strategy
 - Feedback from the Research Ethics Committee
- Enrolment Type
 - The way in which the student should be enrolled (standard, qualifier programme other)
 - Define the qualifier programme or other enrolment requirements
- Research student progression

- Research students should be reviewed at least once a year in line with postgraduate research regulations
- All outcomes (positive, negative, or proposals outside academic regulations) of the review must be presented to the GSRC
- The review is informed by the individual study plan of the candidate and include information regarding ECTS awarded for the review period
- Each Faculty define the optimum format of the review
- Each Faculty inform research students of progression formats immediately after enrolment
- Faculties wishing for a research student to progress, that fall outside academic regulations must make a formal submission to GSRC indicating the reasons for the default
- Faculties that consider a student not to be performing will propose a Research Review panel to GSRC for approval in line with academic regulations. The outcome of the review will initially be reported to FRC prior to reporting to GSRC in line with academic regulation
- An extraordinary meeting of FRC may be called on the request of the Dean of Faculty, to review progression outside normal time frames, to constitute a review panel, in line with academic regulations. The outcome of the review will initially be reported to FRC prior to reporting to GSRC in line with academic regulation
- External examiners/ research examination panels
 - External examiners/research examination panels proposed by the Faculty will initially be vetted by FRC for their suitability based on qualification, expertise and qualification, prior to being presented to GSRC for final approval by Academic Council. (Academic Council may approve examiners retrospectively)

All decisions of the Faculty Research Committee will be reported to the Graduate School Research Committee. Outcomes of decisions that affect research students/supervisors should be relayed to them as soon as possible after approval by the relevant Committee / Academic Council. Where research crosses Faculty boundaries, each Faculty Research Committee must approve the Research student application.

4.9 Future Plans

As per the Strategic Plan (2019-2023), AIT will 'continue to embed research excellence within its teaching and learning activities to support staff development, student progression and knowledge creation, maximising the economic and social returns from our research and innovation activities'. In 2020/21, AIT intends to grow its activities in the Graduate School, with a weekly postgraduate seminar series and three-minute thesis competition, as well as supporting emerging practice in open access publications and data management.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

5.1 Staff Development

AIT offers Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to staff which the [Professional Development Policy](#) formalises. This policy enshrines AIT's commitment to supporting staff to develop their skills and competencies through the acquisition of academic qualification, in line with the needs and objectives of the Institute. Athlone Institute of Technology recognises that staff are a vital and valued asset and encourages and enables everyone to develop their potential. Support for professional development encompass' staff at all levels and in all categories of the Institute.

Ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities offered internally is a central feature of the Institute's professional development environment. The Teaching and Learning Unit of the Institute offers a Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning (T&L), to academics, which must be completed within a three-year period from employment commencement date. This T&L unit also offers regular workshops on various aspects of pedagogy to teaching staff and a wide variety of resources and supports for improving their teaching, while also providing a coordinated approach to the use of technology-enhanced and blended learning.

The *Professional Development Committee*, a sub-committee of Academic Council, advises on and helps to coordinate professional development activities in AIT. The Professional Development Committee prioritises and oversees the allocation of training resources and ensures that equality and transparency prevail in the allocation of CPD funding to AIT staff members. Funding which has been allocated to AIT staff members during 2019/2020 can be accessed [here](#).

The Learning & Teaching unit of AIT implements an annual plan of training and up-skilling activities to support academic staff in their teaching and assessment practices.

This unit has been successful year on year in securing national funding through the National Forum for Teaching and Learning to design and initiative new development and support programmes for staff.

Full details of such programmes are outlined in **Part 2**.

5.1.1 Staff Development during 2019/2020

Academic Staff holding PhD or Equivalent

- Percentage of full-time academic staff who hold level 10 qualifications or equivalent as per TU Criteria
- Pre-2018/2019: **34%**
- 2019/2020 Actual (Reporting period 1 Sept 2019 – 31 Aug 2020): **53%**

Academic Staff on Research Time Release

- Pre-2018/2019: **12**
- 2019/2020 Actual (Reporting period 1 Sept 2019 – 31 Aug 2020): **14 Academic Staff** on Research Time Release
- An additional 10 new supervisors to PhD supervision

Cultural Awareness Training

- Pre-2018/2019: 0 completed training in this area
- 2019/2020 Actual (Reporting period 1 Sept 2019 – 31 Aug 2020): **15 staff** completed cultural awareness training delivered by the Learning and Teaching Unit when delivery was interrupted by spread of Covid-19 in March 2020.
- The Learning and Teaching Unit, who would normally deliver such sessions, became full time trainers for academic staff to upskill them to deliver remotely to students due to the pandemic. Their focus shifted entirely to ensuring that the pivot to online programme delivery was achieved to the highest standards possible when all academic activities on campus ceased due to the lockdown.
- This had a major impact on AIT's cultural awareness training plans in 2019/2020, however AIT remains committed to delivery of cultural awareness training and will resume in 2021/22. Two academic staff from AIT completed the Intercultural Trainer Certificate at Jacobs University, and Intercultural GMBH, Bremen, Germany from 20-31 January 2020.

Continuous Professional Development

In addition to excellent participant rates in a full range of non-accredited CPD offerings, engagement by staff in the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment continued in 2019-2020. Full details of all Staff Development opportunities provided by AIT to its staff during 2019/2020 are outlined in **Part B**.

5.2 Staff Recruitment

AIT Human Resources policies and procedures for the recruitment of academic, support and research staff comply with Irish public sector recruitment and appointment procedures. Recruitment policies, procedures and practices comply with the Universities Act 1997, the Employment Equality Acts 1998/2004, the Equal Status Acts 2000/2004, and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

The recruitment policy is reviewed regularly, updated as required, approved by Governing Authority and published on the HR website. AIT's recruitment policy is currently under review due to all policies of the Institute being reconsidered in the context of TU designation. However, it will be re-designed to ensure that the Institute's recruitment procedures and practices operate in a manner that is consistent with the Institution's commitment to equality of opportunity as outlined in the Institute's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) and do not discriminate against individuals on grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, socio-economic status, ethnicity, national identity or neurodiversity. Recruitment decisions in AIT are accordingly based on merit, qualifications, abilities, skills, knowledge and attitude required to perform the job effectively and efficiently, to the standards required both in the present and in the future. Opportunities for promotion and career development for all staff are provided.

The Institute's recruitment and staff development procedures for academic staff are designed to ensure that teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their teaching and research roles. Following the interview process, the successful candidate is offered the position pending receipt of satisfactory references and Governing Body approval. Prior to taking up an offered position, the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of academic, professional or technical qualifications.

Newly recruited members of staff participate in an intensive, one-day general induction programme delivered by HR and the relevant hiring Department/Faculty. General induction includes reference to web-accessible HR employee policies and procedures, including the [Code of Conduct for Employees](#) and the Dignity and Respect Policy provided with local induction to familiarise them with their designated roles and responsibilities and their place within the unit.

5.3 Staff Management

Athlone Institute of Technology is committed to safeguarding employee's health, safety and welfare at work and seeks to provide employees with appropriate support and advice at all times. The HR office supports the

Management of the Institute in ensuring all HR policies and procedures are updated regularly. All policies are designed to enhance the working experience of all staff of the Institute, and to ensure all staff are supported to work to the best of their abilities.

Athlone Institute of Technology is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment in which staff are treated equitably and where they can realise their potential. It is committed to equality of opportunity for existing and potential employees and to promoting a work environment free from discrimination on the grounds of Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race or Member of the Travelling Community, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Institute sponsors female staff to attend the Aurora Leadership Development Programme which is run by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education UK and coordinated by Human Resources. This Leadership programme is targeted at women who would like to develop and explore issues relating to leadership roles and responsibilities.

5.4 Equality and Diversity in the Recruitment, Development and Support of staff

Athlone Institute of Technology is committed to promote and advance equality, respect and value the responsibilities and diversity of all staff and ensure that it is recognised and respected. An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been developed to endeavour to create an environment in which all members of the community should expect to be able to;

- thrive
- be respected and valued for their unique perspectives and contributions
- achieve their fullest potential and;
- have a real opportunity to participate in and contribute to AIT activities

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has also been identified as a key strategic goal in AIT's Strategic Plan 2019-2023. AIT champion an agenda of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion among its students, staff and the wider community as AIT recognises its value in fostering an environment of equal opportunities for all.

The Institute disappointedly received an unsuccessful outcome to its 2020 Athena SWAN (AS) application. Feedback received in June 2020 has now resulted in AIT carrying out a deeper analysis of the data gathered as part the Athena Swan Bronze application process. Additional focus groups held, specifically designed to look at gaps in understanding of staff views and spotlight the significance of the data in relation to staff lived experience. This was supported by a qualitative analysis of comments in the staff survey and has resulted in a stronger submission and a more robust action plan due for submission in January 2021.

Implementation of the Institute's approved EDI and Athena SWAN Action Plans have begun.

The Institute continues to implement National Review Gender Equality recommendations with 19/22 implemented and confirms gender balance improvement on Governing Body (GB) and Executive Management Team (EMT) in 2019/2020.

6.0 Information and Data Management

6.1 Institution's information systems and processes

Athlone Institute of Technology has a comprehensive suite of Information Management Systems (IMS). Many of these are interconnected, however there are also a number of standalone systems within specific departments. Information Management systems are designed to become an integral part of the data information flow in an organisation and to provide data which establishes the information requirements that aid decision making in the organisation.

AIT has carried out a data privacy review of its record management systems within the Institute. Certain factors were considered:

Some systems are part of a collective suite of systems managed by Educampus, a company set up to provide IT system support to the HEI sector. An evaluation of these common systems must consider any change management processes as they would apply to all other users in the sector. These include:

- DXC Banner Student Record Management System
- Agresso Financial Management System
- CoreHR – Staff Record Management System
- Koha – Library Record Management System

AIT is part of an IoT (Data Protection Officer) DPO group and this has enabled a collaborative approach to addressing any data compliance concerns. The DPO group is currently carrying out a DPIA to look at the migration of the DXC Banner new build to the Cloud. This approach does not prevent local data compliance processes being identified and implemented on an Institute level.

There are a number of legacy systems in use in the Institute. These include the Course Planner timetabling system, and its sister system, Exam Scheduler. The Course Planner Timetabling system was tendered for by the IOTI (now THEA), with collaboration and input by representatives of all the IoTs at the time. Upgrades to this system have been purchased and implemented by AIT. The most recent upgrade to the Course Scheduler system was in 2011.

An upgrade to the Exam Scheduler system is currently being considered. A DPIA is scheduled to take place in 2020/2021.

6.2 Learner and management information systems

In AIT has developed Management Report platforms which are continuously being improved and developed. These report platforms allow for AIT management to make informed decisions on its operations based on the bespoke extraction of data from various systems and applications. The platforms include a Report Builder - SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) and Power BI. Such platforms are deemed core to the quality management of AIT's activities and to identify areas for attention and/or quality enhancement.

Access to these reporting platforms in AIT is granted based on user needs and roles. These platforms supplement the standard reports that are available in certain systems such as the Banner and Scientia report options. The Management Report platforms allow for more effective and efficient access, extraction, interrogation and interpretation of data including the export of data to excel files to enable management to interpret and inform operational, tactical and strategic decisions, actions, and activities based on trend data profiling.

The SSRS Reports are based on live data extracted from the Timetabling System, Banner and CORE. These reports have been developed by the MIS Office with the engagement and input of managers and other relevant stakeholders in the reporting period. AIT's objective is to improve its use of data and to optimize the availability to internal stakeholders of AIT's reports, and to assure its evidence/data-based decision making. Examples of such reports include

- Staff utilization reports from Timetabling – used by Heads of Department and Deans of Faculty and critical for resource planning
- Scheduled hours by Activity type Source Timetabling
- Scheduled hours by programme, named availability, host key, module etc. Source Timetabling
- Student numbers by programme, department, faculty and Institute Source – Banner
- Approved Course Schedule with detailed fields Source – Banner

Power BI has been developed since the end of 2019 and presents AIT with data that incorporates its presentation using visuals and graphs including historic data for trend analysis. It is considered a very useful tool to assist in quality enhancement initiatives as it aids in strategic discussions and highlight areas that are challenging and require discussion and actions.

6.3 How data informs practice and decision making

Student data is collated and submitted to the HEA twice annually for statistical purposes. The provisional student numbers report is submitted every November and the final student numbers report is submitted every March. These extracts are used within AIT to analyse trends and student numbers by the Institute, Faculty, Department and Programme teams. Such data is used to inform strategic discussions and decisions including: (i) programme portfolio planning; (ii) programmatic reviews; (iii) student engagement initiatives; (iv) student retention; (iv) student performance reviews.

AIT strives to ensure that all of its decision making is achieved through reflection, evaluation and confidence. To achieve this, where possible its decision-making processes are data driven and evidence based. This is achieved by the collaboration and support of colleagues in the Management Information Services (MIS) department who provide analysis and insights into a variety of data sets.

The following is a list of systems which support records management on various levels within AIT. This is a comprehensive list of the current systems but not an exhaustive list.

1. DXC Banner Student Record IMS
2. Agresso Financial IMS
3. CoreHR – Staff Record IMS
4. Socrates – Student Medical Record Management System
5. Digitary – a student result (post-graduation) online access system.
6. Yellow Schedule – Counselling appointment booking system
7. CoreNet - Counselling Student Record IMS
8. MyClinic 365 – Online medical booking and assessment
9. MindaClient – Disability Office Record IMS
10. Docuware – Cloud Document Management System
11. Course Planner (Scientia) – Course Timetabling System
12. Exam Scheduler (Scientia) – Exam Management System

13. Clearbookings – Event scheduling system
14. Moodle + Plug Ins – Learning management platform
15. MiVoice – Electronic Voting System
16. Koha – Library Record IMS
17. Target Connect – Careers record IMS
18. I.D. Card Record system
19. INPLACE Placement System
20. ARC Nursing Placement System
21. Metacompliance: training system
22. RSA Bespoke Build
23. GURU Exam management system
24. IACT – Online Training Provider

AIT has data agreements in place with all service providers. AIT also have a User Administration Procedure for all systems. This outlines the process for approving, assigning, and removing user access from all of its systems. The Information and Data Compliance office requests a report on an annual or, in some instances, biannual, basis to check user access on systems. DPIAs have been carried out for any new, proposed systems, where appropriate.

6.3.1 Timetabling

Timetabling is managed in AIT through the Scientia timetabling system. Reporting is available through Enterprise, a subset of Scientia. Appropriate metrics are identified and used to ensure class schedules are efficient, effective, maximise resource utilisation, and meet the needs of students and staff.

6.3.2 Library Systems

AIT Library systems provide access to, search and retrieval of books, journals, dissertations, reports and other materials which have been purchased or subscribed to by the Institute; as well as open access and material created by library staff. These materials support teaching, learning and research. Library systems also provide regulated access to computers, study rooms and currently, study spaces in the library. The system analytics and

statistics provide management with insights to allow decision-making and strategic planning of resources and services in response to, and in advance of the requirements of students, researchers and staff. Reports may be focussed by Faculty, department or course level. Off-campus access to online material is facilitated by single sign on authenticated by using Edugate from HEANet. Library systems are constantly updated and developed to improve the user experience.

6.4 Records maintenance and retention

The data retention policy and schedule for the Institute was updated in 2019/2020 following a lengthy process involving the IoT DPO group and PWC and supported by THEA. In February 2020, the data retention schedule was approved by AIT's Executive Management Team. It can be found on the [AIT website](#).

The data retention schedule will be reviewed on a regular basis with the first review scheduled for 18 months after final approval, and at least every 5 years, thereafter. The Institute record retention policy specifies the period for which data must be recorded and kept. With regard to the Registration department, such records would include examination results, correspondence, admission records, fees information, audit reports and planning documentation. The introduction of the exam management system, GURU, will manage, track and control the flow of data with respect to the development of exam papers.

A self-reporting platform has been developed to report on student data and to allow for the management of student data in a useable format, as outlined in **Section 6.2**.

6.5 Data protection and Freedom of Information

Data Protection and Freedom of Information are now combined under the Information and Data Compliance office. Joining the two under the auspices of the Data Compliance Officer has proved to be useful from the perspective of managing data access requests and the consideration of the release of information.

AIT has a Data Protection page on the [website](#) which provides stakeholders with ease of access to relevant policy documents including AIT's privacy policies for the website, staff, and students. These policies are reviewed on an annual basis and updated with any new information. AIT has completed Registers of Processing Activities for each functional area in the reporting period.

6.5.1 Adherence to relevant laws – Point to note:

In relation to personal data there is an opportunity for different interpretations around what should be released, depending on which of the Acts the data is requested under. In the Freedom of Information Act, personal data

relating to public servants in the course of carrying out their duties, is considered to be accessible. In general, AIT will err on the side of the Data Protection Act and redact any non-essential personal data from records requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

6.5.2 Model Publication Scheme

Under Section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2014*, FOI bodies are required to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. The Department of Expenditure and Public Reform has issued guidelines for a Model Publication Scheme, which outlines the kind of data which public bodies should publish through a medium available to the public. AIT has published data on the [website](#) in line with this publication scheme.

6.6 Key Performance Indicators

The Higher Education [System Performance Framework 2018-2020](#) details the national priorities and key objectives of government for higher education, as set by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

This framework is used by the HEA to conduct a process of strategy and performance dialogue with HEIs. The main aims of this process are to improve system and institutional performance, enhance system accountability and enable the HEA to manage system risks. The Institute engaged in this strategic dialogue process with the HEA during the reporting period and agreed a set of key performance indicators in 2018 for the period 2019 to 2021. The Institute reports on progress to the HEA at regular intervals.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The primary source for stakeholders to source information relevant to them is the [AIT website](#). AIT publishes information about its activities that is relevant, easily accessible and accurate in line with the principles set out in ESG 1.8. The primary channel used for the provision of information is the AIT website: www.ait.ie. The inclusions on the website are regularly reviewed to ensure that all information remains relevant for external stakeholders.

7.1 GOVERNANCE INFORMATION

The public can access information on the Governance structures of AIT and its strategic plans. The publications available on the website include:

- Governance:
 - o Governing Body Code of Conduct: [Available Here](#)
 - o Governing Body Code of Governance:
https://www.ait.ie/uploads/downloads/THEA_Code_of_Governance
- Academic Governance: https://www.ait.ie/uploads/downloads/Committee_Structure
- AIT's Strategic Plan: <https://www.ait.ie/about-ait/strategic-plan/>
- AIT's Annual Reports: <https://www.ait.ie/about-ait/annual-reports/>
- AIT's President Reports: <https://www.ait.ie/about-ait/presidents-reports/>

7.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME INFORMATION

AIT ensures that all information about its activities including education and training programmes is clear and readily accessible for general consumption either for prospective, current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

For current and prospective students, the online prospectuses for AIT provides clear and transparent information on the Institute's programme offerings. Full details of the Institute academic programme offering are provided annually in the discreet prospectus available on:

- Undergraduate programme information:
https://www.ait.ie/uploads/downloads/Prospectus_2020_%28web%29.pdf
- Postgraduate programme information:

Other information on short programmes related to upskilling or reskilling across the NFQ framework in responses to Government initiatives, such as bespoke programmes offered as part of the Human Capital Initiative or Springboard, are published on the respective faculty website areas and notified on social media and media channels.

The Faculty of Continuous Professional Online and Distance Learning regularly published new academic and training programme offerings as it responds dynamically to the market needs. These can be found on the Faculty's website at: https://www.ait.ie/uploads/downloads/AIT_2019_Prospectus_.pdf

7.3 STUDENT INFORMATION

Enrolled Students

A recent improvement in the provision of information, via the website, was initiated in 2019/2020 with the onset of the COVID-219 pandemic. Through the Registrar Office, a full review was conducted through the establishment of a *Digital Technology Working Group*, to review the student efficient and effective access to any information they required whilst studying remotely due to COVID-19.

A 'one stop shop' of information was designated to ensure that students, whilst engaging remotely in their studies due to the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, could efficiently and effectively access information at: <https://www.ait.ie/life-at-ait/campus-services/student-learning-portal>

The following areas were created on the website to support their immediate information and service needs:

- Student Guide to Assessments: [Examinations | Technological University of the Shannon \(ait.ie\)](#)
- Learning Support Hub on Moodle: [eLearning@AIT with Moodle: Log in to the site](#)
- Moodle: AIT's Virtual Learning Environment: [Moodle - Student Guide - Subject & Study Guides at AIT Library \(libguides.com\)](#)
- Zoom: AIT's Live, Online Teaching Platform: [Zoom - Student Guide - Subject & Study Guides at AIT Library \(libguides.com\)](#)
- Microsoft Office 365: A suite of tools to help students:
 - [Access your Microsoft Office 365 apps here](#)
 - [Take a look at some Microsoft 365 training videos](#)
 - [Access a Student Guide to MS Office Tools](#)
 - [Complete the FREE Certified MS Office Training](#)

Prospective Students

7.3.1 Outreach and Engagement

AIT engages in school outreach throughout the year to inform and encourage students to attend third level education. Visits are tailored to the requirements of the school with a view to satisfying the interests of students, guidance counsellors and teachers alike. The student recruitment team in AIT's Marketing Department also organise campus tours for individuals and schools. During these taster days, students get a flavour of college life, subject offerings and demonstrations of lab and sports facilities.

7.3.2 Guidance Counsellor Briefing

Every year, AIT hosts a guidance counsellor briefing session with the view to sharing recent institute achievements and developments. The Registrar, Admissions Officer, and various Faculty leaders and supporting staff are always on hand to discuss developments in AIT's suite of industry-focused CAO course offerings that address foreseeable skills gaps in industry which make certain career options currently attractive. Guidance counsellors will also glean some insight into the admissions process and get a feel for the friendly, welcoming AIT campus environment. As a result, guidance counsellors are better positioned to advise prospective students and their parents on CAO programme choices and Apprenticeship options.

7.3.3 Autumn and Spring Open Days

AIT's autumn open days give career guidance counsellors and prospective students an opportunity to speak to lecturers, current students and industry partners about course content, placement opportunities, and career trajectories. AIT typically holds an interactive open day in Spring to give prospective students, parents, and guidance counsellors an opportunity to visit its campus for an interactive day that is fully timetabled with learning and development labs sessions, demonstrations, and other activities. The Spring open day has a specific focus on career and future employability and gives parents and prospective students the chance to mingle with industry professionals, including engineers, accountants, graphic designers, hotel managers, marketers, scientists and more.

7.3.4 Transition Year 'Taster' Events

AIT hosts a series of Transition Year taster events throughout the year with the expressed intention of showcasing the depth and breadth of its CAO course offerings. Senior cycle students have an opportunity to visit the campus, sit in on real lectures and check out the campus facilities first-hand. These events give prospective students a gentle introduction to their discipline of interest. Students can also avail of a campus tour which will

familiarise them with the facilities on offer at AIT as an award-winning Institute. For many students and their families, this enables their thought processes to explicitly consider the transition from secondary level to third level education.

7.3.5 CAO Information Evening

AIT hosts an information evening every January suitable for early school leavers and mature students. Attendees meet with admissions staff and learn about the CAO application process and converse with current students from the Faculties of Business and Hospitality, Engineering and Informatics, and Science and Health. During the session, attendees learn about the CAO process, AIT's student support services and schemes, and the scholarship programme in AIT.

7.3.6 AIT and Industry

AIT partners with industry to offer tailored talks, school visits etc. all with a view to encourage the future matriculation of students into STEM (among other) degrees and ensuring industry is supplied with a steady stream of technically-adept, work-ready graduates. The Marketing and Communications team visited in the reporting period more than 15 schools in AIT's key feeder areas, eliciting an extremely positive response from teachers and students alike.

A successful school outreach partnership is the AIT and Ericsson '*Future Careers in Software Development*' programme. Ericsson engineers, accompanied by their line manager and an AIT representative, give senior cycle students a talk about a career in the software telecoms industry and why they should consider it. The event also includes demonstrations of code and software projects, an overview of the company's core product, its employee culture, emphasis on work-life balance, and some of the key projects the company is working on - namely the roll out of 5G.

7.3.7 College Awareness Week

College Awareness Week is a national initiative supported by the Department of Education & Skills whose objective is to increase the awareness of college among young people and underrepresented groups entering third level education. Taking place in November annually, AIT encourages primary and secondary school children from local DEIS schools, early school leavers and young adults from community training centres to participate in sports activities and workshops held in AIT. It is an opportunity to reach out to the local community and to foster social inclusion. It is vital that young students who are socio-economically disadvantaged meet fellow third level

students, lecturers and see what facilities are on offer so that they themselves can envision entering third level education with the goal to attain a third level qualification, and in some instances, the first member of their family to do so.

7.3.8 AIT Skills@Work Programme: Inspiring DEIS Students

The AIT Skills@Work is a programme dedicated to encouraging and inspiring DEIS students to attend third-level education by providing them with valuable first-hand insight and experience of the working world. Through the Skills@Work programme, students engage in site visits, attend 'A Day in the Life' employee presentations, CV preparation and mock interviews. Students are encouraged to develop their teamwork and presentation skills through these interactive sessions.

7.3.9 FREE 'Taster' Summer Schools

Annually, AIT holds two free summer schools to give fifth and sixth-year students from DEIS schools (and AIT's feeder schools more broadly) a taster of its undergraduate courses. Over the course of the week, students explore the worlds of technology, business, and innovation, participating in brainstorming and ideation sessions, business modelling, user behaviour analysis, branding workshops, prototyping and coding.

7.3.10 Encouraging Matriculation into STEM

SciFest is a national Science initiative dedicated to fostering active, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning among second-level students. It involves second-level students showcasing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) projects at a series of one-day science fairs held locally in schools and regionally in the 14 Institutes of Technology, DCU and St. Mary's College, Derry. AIT consistently hosts the country's largest regional SciFest fair annually.

7.3.11 Midlands CanSat Regional

AIT is a CanSat Ireland Regional Partner and hosts the Midlands CanSat Regional competition annually. Competing against secondary schools across the Midlands, aspiring young engineers design and build a miniature satellite using a soda can, incorporating all the major subsystems found in an actual satellite, such as power, sensors and a communications system, into its minimal design. Coordinated by the European Space Agency (ESA), the CanSat Ireland competition is designed to simulate all aspects of a real satellite mission, including design, development, testing, launch, operations, and data analysis by means of teamwork with the strategic purpose to foster an interest in STEM careers by those competing.

7.3.12 Try Science: Third Level Taster Sessions

Annually, AIT organises a series of taster workshops designed to encourage second level students' interest in STEM. *Try Science* is a dedicated programme intended to encourage the future matriculation of students into science degrees and careers, with the view in the long term to supply the Midlands with a pipeline of highly qualified, capable, and work-ready STEM graduates. Third level taster sessions like "Try Science" are immensely helpful for students who want to know where a science degree will lead in terms of their future career prospects and opportunities.

7.3.13 Leaving Certificate Special Subject Workshops

Annually, AIT holds several special subject workshops to help students excel in their Leaving Certificate exams. The workshops act as a vehicle to prepare students for the transition to third level education by treating them as if they are undergraduate students – from the material delivery, to giving them access to AIT's state-of-the-art laboratories and letting them experiment first hand with AIT's cutting-edge equipment. The following are examples of such programmes:

Biology: The Biology revision days assist senior cycle students in their preparation for their Leaving Certificate examinations. 200+ secondary school students from across the Midlands - accompanied by their teachers – benefitted from these practical, hands-on workshops which covered many of the mandatory experiments on the Leaving Certificate biology curriculum.

Engineering: The Engineering revision days assist students focussed on Engineering and Construction studies. Students benefit from a series of lecturer and laboratory demonstrations covering a wide variety of topics, among them building information modelling, water quality, hydraulics, U values and concrete testing, polymer physics, automation to control and polymer processing.

7.3.14 Career and Further Study Expo

AIT hosts the *Career and Further Education Expo* annually, showcasing some of Ireland's leading employers in areas including Engineering, ICT and Medical Technology. Attendees learn about the demands of the jobs of the future and the soft and hard skills necessary to succeed in a digital, networked world that is constantly in flux. Over the course of the Career and Further Study Expo, students' network with some of Ireland's leading employers. The expo provides AIT's industry partners with a gateway for identifying and recruiting talent. AIT also avails of the event to liaise with industry representatives; conducting interviews, collecting video testimonials and other digital assets to be later used as marketing resources.

7.4 PUBLICITY INFORMATION: THE SUNDAY TIMES GOOD UNIVERSITY GUIDE

AIT was named The Sunday Times ‘Institute of Technology of the Year 2020’ in Ireland’s official league table, which benchmarks the country’s 19 third level institutions, after topping the national rankings. This was the second time in just three years that the multi-award-winning institute secured the prestigious accolade, having previously been awarded the overall ‘Institute of Technology of the Year’ in 2018 and the ‘Institute of the Year Runner-Up’ in 2017. AIT’s ranking in the national higher education league table has an impact on CAO numbers, the attractiveness and success of its research activity, and on the general highly positive perceptions of the Institute, regionally and nationally.

7.5 THEA IMPACT 2020 – INNOVATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

This year’s edition of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) Impact supplement (available online and published in The Irish Times) featured seven stories showcasing the depth and breadth of research and innovation activities taking place across AIT’s award-winning institute. AIT is typically the largest contributor to this supplement every year and uses it as a vehicle to communicate the variety of exciting research taking place across AIT’s four faculties, three research centres and two technology gateways.

7.6 GENERAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

AIT engages internal and external stakeholders through a variety of mediums, including print, broadcast, online and social, and uses the PESO model (paid, earned, shared and owned media) as a vehicle for reputation management and brand advocacy. The goal of such activity is to ensure the Institute achieves brand salience regionally, nationally and internationally with the goal of boosting student numbers and attracting and retaining top talent – ultimately ensuring the continued prosperity of the Midlands region.

7.7 RESEARCH AND RELATED SERVICE INFORMATION

A full outline of all information in related to the structure, functions, activities related to the core areas of activity of the Research Faculty are outlined on the website. Throughout the year, up-to-date information on new events and activities and initiatives are notified through social media and other media channels

- Research and related services: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation>

AIT Research communicate to its public via the [AIT website](#), AIT Twitter@athlonelT, AIT Research Twitter @AIT Research and local and national media.

7.7.1 Stakeholder Engagement

AIT Research also undertake engagement with stakeholders by:

- annual promotion features with THEA Research in national press with the STEM feature
- attending local and national conferences to promote AIT research
- attending local and national workshop and meetings with business organisations IBEC, County Enterprise Boards
- sitting and participating on local boards of voluntary groups and organisations, St Hildas, Athlone SVP, etc. for Research expertise
- attending AIT Careers Fairs and that other HEIs in the region and nationally to promote AIT Research
- undertaking joint postgraduate projects with voluntary groups and industry
- holding research talks open to AIT and the public in AIT and now seeking to move online through the use of platforms such as Eventbrite
- holding research and postgraduate poster and conference events
- publishing in open access journals for public access on most recent AIT research
- providing access to the public to the AIT library where AIT Research is available in poster and thesis format for viewing.

7.7.2 Research Activity Information

The information provided on AIT's Research activity, via the website and other media channels, can be delineated under the following core areas:

7.7.2.1 Innovation and Enterprise

- (i) Midlands Innovation and Research Centres: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/midlands-innovation-research-centre/>
- (ii) New Frontiers: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/new-frontiers>
- (iii) ESA Space Solution Centre: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/esa-space-solutions-centre-ireland>

- (iv) Commercialisation and Technology Transfer: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/commercialisation-technology-transfer>
- (v) Funded Research Support: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/funded-research-support>
- (vi) HR Excellence and Research: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/hrs4r>
- (vii) Innovation Vouchers: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/innovation-vouchers>
- (viii) Case Studies: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/case-studies-with-impact>

For the future, AIT proposes to make its researchers and research more visible on the AIT website providing details of their research groups and publications via the AIT Research repository.

7.7.2.2 AIT Research Institutes and Industry Centres

- (i) Bioscience Research Institute: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/bioscience-research-institute/>
- (ii) Materials Research Institute: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/materials-research-institute/>
& its Strategic Plan: https://www.ait.ie/uploads/downloads/MRI_Strategic_Plan.pdf
& its two focused research centres:
 - Applied Polymer Technologies: <http://mri.ait.ie/apt/>
 - Centre for Industrial Services and Design (CISD)
- (iii) Software Research <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/software-research-institute/>
- (iv) COMMAND: <https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/software-research-institute#count-5>

7.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Institute has an extensive range of quality policies and procedures available to view on its website to assist and enhance the academic standards of awards and the quality of its educational provision. The policies and other important governance and support documentation are managed by the Quality office. The Institutes policies and procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they are of an acceptable standard and fit for purpose.

The scheduling of the reviews of policies are managed through a document control record noting their next review date. Exceptionally, policies and procedures are reviewed in the context of case management to ensure that they remain 'fit for purpose' to that originally intended.

The policies specifically reviewed during the reporting period 2019/2020 are outlined in **Part B: Section 1.2**

7.8.1 Evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations

During the reporting period there were a number of new programme evaluations carried out across the Institute. They were initially approved at Institute level through the internal quality process and then a thorough external evaluation was carried out to ensure the programmes were in line with the regulations laid down by QQI. The table below outlines a summary of programme proposals for the academic year 2019/2020. The [external programme evaluation panel reports](#) can be found on the AIT website.

COURSE TITLE	EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM APPROVAL	ACADEMIC STRATEGY & QUALITY COMMITTEE	EXTERNAL PANEL EVALUATION	ACADEMIC COUNCIL APPROVAL
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND HOSPITALITY				
Higher Diploma in Information Technology Level 8	29.04.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND INFORMATICS				
Certificate in Networks Infrastructure with Security Level 6 (Special Purpose Award)-20 credits Springboard-Funded	02.06.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
BSc (Hons) in Digital Construction Management Level 8	19.05.2020	05.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020

COURSE TITLE	EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM APPROVAL	ACADEMIC STRATEGY & QUALITY COMMITTEE	EXTERNAL PANEL EVALUATION	ACADEMIC COUNCIL APPROVAL
FACULTY OF CONTINUING, PROFESSIONAL ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING				
Certificate in Procurement Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 60 credits. Springboard Funded	02.06.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
Certificate in Financial Accounting and Payroll Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 20 credits. Springboard Funded	02.06.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH				
Certificate in Caring for the Deteriorating Adult in the Acute Setting Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 10 credits	16.09.2020	11.09.2019	October 2019 Desk Review	25.09.2020

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

8.1 SELF EVALUATION

The Institute implements a robust, self-evaluative and peer to peer approach to ensure that quality standards, assurances, and areas for improvement are identified for the following:

- the suitability, validity, currency, and consistency in the implementation and operation of the policies and procedures of the Institute to support its operations
- The usage levels of policies
- The consistent and correct implementation of the policies and procedures of the Institute.
- The programme award standards applied post delineation as a designated award body
- The validation and revalidation of its suite of academic programmes and the compilation of the areas noted as conditions and/or recommendations during these validation processes
- Research activity.

This is enabled through evidence-based reporting at discrete stages of the academic year to include:

- Monitoring of student success including their successful retention, progression, and completion of stages of their programme and the achievement levels of their awards
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment activity
- The monitoring of student support services, their usage, and the performance outcomes associated with such usage

The methods used to determine the above include the Academic and Professional Services Governance structures of AIT and include self-evaluation related to the following areas:

Policy evaluations:

- Selection of policies for review within the academic year
- Determination of new policy requirements

- Completion of policy and procedure reviews/evaluations through the Academic Strategy and Quality sub-committee of Academic Council.

Programme Evaluations through:

- Programme boards
- Programmatic reviews
- Module evaluations
- External Examiner reports
- Research Boards
- Professional accreditation of programmes.

Annual Student Surveys

- Through national Student Survey and review of primary research data with feedback to Faculties and other functional units.

COVID-19 experiences:

- Teaching Learning and Assessment experiences reviewed through:
- Student Surveys and
- Staff Surveys

8.2 PERIODIC REVIEWS

8.2.1 Programmatic Reviews

This is a quinquennial quality review process which gives the faculties within AIT an opportunity to conduct a critical self-evaluation and review of their programmes. This review is a core statutory obligation for the Institute under Section 28(2) of the Qualifications, Education and Training Act, 2012. It is a positive, supportive and open process and results in the production of a five-year plan for the faculties which should align with the Institute's Strategic Plan. The self-evaluation process, with inputs from experts and stakeholders (internal and external), involves the production of a self-evaluation report (SER). The self-evaluation comprises a critical evaluation of all aspects of each programme being reviewed – its strategy, learning outcomes, modules, assessment, resources etc. Review of the SER by external peers results in a Programmatic Review Report which includes a set of

conditions and recommendations. The faculties then provide a response to this report and both the report and responses are published on the AIT website. Previous programmatic review reports are available on the [AIT website](#).

The scheduled quinquennial review of all programmes in the following faculties are due in the **2021/2022** reporting period:

- (i) Faculty of Business and Hospitality
- (ii) Faculty of Engineering and Informatics
- (iii) Faculty of Science and Health
- (iv) Faculty of Continuous Professional Distance and Online Learning

The above plans will be cognizant of the Programmatic Review schedule for LIT with an integrated schedule and plan due for consideration post AIT & LIT's designation as a TU from 1st October 2021.

Programmatic Review and TU Designation

The Programmatic Review process is designed to inform future programme portfolio planning decisions and to help optimise resources. With the Technological University consortium plans that commenced in this reporting period, AIT-LIT, as partners to the new Technological University, will collaborate on future programme provision planning in the context of the respective programmatic review schedules and plans.

Both institutions offer over 400 programmes across all levels, eight faculties and 22 departments to over 14,000 students, with a range of entry mechanisms. AIT, with LIT, aim to build on this portfolio and continue to be accountable for the quality of its provisions as a designated awarding body.

The programmatic review process scheduled for conduct in AIT in 2022 will be conducted with the agreed principles of the AIT-LIT consortium underpinning programme provision in the new TU. As outlined in the AIT-LIT TU application, cognizant of scale, variety, complexity, and location, programme provision will be managed from designation as a TU, to align with:

1. The strategic intent, plans and goals of the TU
2. The academic discipline profiles
3. Campus and centre of excellence plans
4. Stakeholder engagement

5. Industry needs.

8.2.2 Institutional Review

QQI has established a policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions. Cyclical Review takes place on a periodic scheduled basis. The last Institutional Review for AIT took place in 2011. The next Institutional review is scheduled to take place in 2022.

Completion Dates	ISER	PV	MRV	Report
Athlone Institute of Technology	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023

The Institutional Review provides AIT with an opportunity to evaluate: (i) the quality of its provision of education, training and research, (ii) the fulfilment of its public service mission as articulated in its strategic plan, mission and vision; (iii) its performance as benchmarked against its HEA Compact; (iv) the effectiveness of its ongoing monitoring and review of its activities, to ensure they are fit for purpose; and (v) through an external process, the effectiveness of AIT's policies, regulations, procedures, processes and activities and to provide external advice on their enhancement, where necessary. It offers assurances to learners that their experience is being monitored and reviewed to ensure AIT academic and research activities are in line with the standards and guidelines that pertain to such activities including discipline standards, award standards, national, and European standards.

The self-evaluation process will take place in Q2 2022. This is a self-reflective and critical evaluation completed by the internal staff members of AIT. The report produced by the Institution, following the self-evaluation process, called the *Institutional Self-Evaluation Review* process (ISER), is the core document that will provide the Review Team with sufficient information and evidence to assess the effectiveness of quality assurance at AIT. be used by the Review Team.

8.2.3 Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report (AQR)

The AQR is an annual report about internal quality assurance that the Institute provides to QQI. Part One provides an overview of internal QA governance, policies, procedures and schedules within AIT. Parts Two to Six give an overview of QA activities, themes, changes, enhancements and impacts for the reporting year. QQI publishes the [Annual Reports](#) on its website.

8.2.4 Academic Strategy and Quality (ASQ) Committee

The Academic Strategy and Quality (ASQ) Committee, appointed by Academic Council, has responsibility for identifying appropriate strategies and developments to facilitate the Institute's achievement of its academic development objectives; and provides advice on the policies, processes, and procedures which impact on the academic standards of education and training which are provided, organised, or procured by the Institute. The committee may establish subcommittees and working parties, some of whose members may be from outside the committee or from outside the Institute, as approved by Academic Council and Governing Body.

8.2.5 Institute Policies and Procedures

Annually, the Institute actively reviews the national and international QA policies and procedures and benchmarks its own policies and procedures against best practice. Any relevant changes are incorporated into the Institute's own regulations and procedures with the approval of Academic Council.

8.2.6 Periodic review of its faculties and professional support units

AIT assures and enhances the quality of its faculties and professional support units through periodic quality reviews. This process is monitored by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar. Specific action plans are targeted annually and mirror those areas reported on via the HEA Compact. The Faculties and professional support units ensure they meet their quality assurance obligations by arranging regular staff meetings. Each Faculty appoints Programme Boards to consider all matters affecting the operation and innovation of each programme within the Faculty. The results from the Student Survey are annually fed back to relevant units for their attention by the Quality Office. Consistent trend data is particularly focused on as part of the reviews initiated by Faculties and/or professional support units post the analysis of the student survey data annually. The case studies outlined in Part B give tangible evidence of such examples of period reviews.

8.2.7 Programme Boards

The conduct of programme boards annually within the academic departments of AIT enables the quality assurance of programmes delivered therein by the activities managed by Programme Boards as noted below:

- Appoint such subcommittees as are deemed necessary for assisting in the administration of the course
- Assess the progress of students and where necessary, propose exclusion on academic grounds in accordance with the appropriate institute regulations
- Review the reports of external examiners and propose appropriate action

- Review student feedback and recommend appropriate action
- Review annually the operation of the programme, consider proposals for its improvement and complete annual reports for tabling at ASQ
- Consider from time to time the need to revise, develop or otherwise substantially alter the course in the light of prevailing circumstances, and prepare appropriate proposals
- Approve minor programme changes and table them for final sanction at ASQ
- Prepare relevant materials for school and institutional review
- Discuss and make recommendations upon, as appropriate, the resource and staff development requirements of the course
- Carry out such duties as agreed in conjunction with other schools, in relation to joint programmes.

8.3 External Examiners

The External Examining of programmes and their related modules forms a central pillar in the quality assurance of the programmes delivered by the Institute. It enables the verification by independent third parties annually that the content of modules, their teaching, and their assessment methods allow for the evidential demonstration and achievement of the learning outcomes to the relevant standard and level being reviewed. Any issues raised by external examiners are returned, via the office of the Registrar who reviews all submissions and highlights aspects for specific attention, via the Faculty and Department management, to relevant academic staff members for identified action and response. To support External Examiners, AIT facilitates an annual workshop for new external examiners in relation to their work and in particular the practices and procedures in AIT. Details of External Examiner procedures and guidelines can be found [here](#).

The following table provides detail in relation to the number of External Examiners appointed by AIT during the academic year 2019/2020 and also to the number of External Examiner reports expected and received for the various departments throughout the Institute:

Faculty	No. of Externs appointed	No. of reports received
Engineering	33	31
Dept of Business	34	28
Dept of Hospitality, Tourism, Leisure	18	18
Dept of Life and Physical	12	12
Dept of Nursing & Healthcare	9	8
Dept of Social Science	11	11
Dept of Sport & Healthcare	4	4
Dept of Lifelong Learning	12	12
Learning & Teaching Unit	2	2
Pass programme	1	1
Total	136	123

The above status indicates that there was a 9.5 % shortfall in the submission of reports by External Examiners. All non-submissions are addressed by the Registrar's office.

New Quality Enhancement Initiative for Programme Assessments

The introduction of a new examination management system in AIT, entitled GURU, planned for phased implementation from September 2020/21, has been selected in order to have a more effective and efficient mechanism for the overall management of External Examiner reports in a timely and secure fashion. This system will also support the monitoring of submissions, trend information, and the response to such information by programme teams. This system therefore will add to the tactical and operational quality assurance practices of AIT and specifically on academic programme enhancements initiatives that can be addressed from the inputs of External Examiners, by highlighting specific areas for attention using annual feedback and trend data.

8.4 How AIT's Internal Quality Assurance System engages with External Quality Assurance

A number of the programmes of AIT are recognized and accredited by professional and regulatory bodies following their reviews in this reporting period. These include:

- CORU
- Engineers Ireland
- Psychological Society of Ireland
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
- Veterinary Council of Ireland

8.5 Annual Student Survey

The annual, Student Survey, is designed to seek students' views on their experience of higher education. Students have a major contribution to make in influencing the design of curricula, and in reviewing and providing feedback on their experience of college. Good student feedback will contribute to students experiencing an education that is relevant and responsive to their personal development and growth as fully engaged citizens within society. AIT invests heavily in ensuring the maximum participation by all qualifying students in the survey, as evidenced by its achievement of the highest response rates nationally consistently each year.

The data from Studentsurvey.ie is analysed at institutional, faculty and programme level in AIT. The information obtained from StudentSurvey.ie is a key output to the quality assurance mechanisms of AIT.

It has done so by:

- Increasing transparency in relation to the student experience
- Enabling direct student input on levels of engagement and satisfaction in AIT
- Identifying good practice that enhances the student experience in AIT
- Assisting AIT to identify issues and challenges affecting the student experience in the Institute
- Serving as a guide for continual enhancement of institutions' teaching and learning and student engagement
- Documenting the experiences of the student population, thus enabling year on year comparisons of key performance indicators
- Providing insight into student opinion on important issues of higher education policy and practice
- Facilitating comparison with other higher education systems internationally.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	14
Awarding bodies	
QA bodies	

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Veterinary Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	07.12.2017
Date of next review	2022

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in General Nursing Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2023

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	HC in Engineering in Civil Engineering HC in Engineering in Electronic and Computer Engineering HC in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering

	<p>BEng in Computer Engineering</p> <p>BEng in Electronics and Wireless Communications</p> <p>BEng in Mechanical Engineering</p> <p>BEng in Mechanical Engineering and Renewable Energy</p> <p>BEng in Mechatronics</p> <p>BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (2 year)</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	01-09-2017 The majority of programmes listed above are accredited until <u>2021</u> .
Date of next review	2021 in most cases

4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) 2. Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI) 3. Certified Public Accountants Ireland (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Details of the programmes accredited by the above three Accrediting Bodies can be found here .
Date of accreditation or last review	Various dates depending on programmes
Date of next review	2020-2024 (depending on which programme) The renewal dates are listed on the AIT website .

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care Level 7</p> <p>BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care (part-time) Level 7</p> <p>BA (Hons) in Social Care practice Level 8</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	

Date of next review	Programmes are currently going through the evaluation process
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9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	
Joint/double/multiple awards	
Collaborative programmes	2 programmes: 1 with Cavan Institute 1 with Gurteen College
Franchise programmes	
Linked providers (DABs only)	3 programmes with Equal Ireland

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	<u>Cavan Institute</u>
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Applied Social Studies in Social Care, Level 6
Date of last review	2013
Date of next review	Due for programmatic review in the Faculty of Science and Health in 2022

2. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	<u>Gurteen College</u>
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Veterinary Nursing Level 7
Date of last review	2011
Date of next review	Due for programmatic review in the Faculty of Science and Health in 2022

9.3 Linked Provider Provision

1. Linked Provider	<u>Equal Ireland</u>
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	
Programme titles and links to publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Certificate in Business Enterprise and Community Development Level 6 • Bachelor of Arts in Business and Community Development Level 7 • Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Enterprise, Leadership and Management Level 8
Date of last review	2015
Date of next review	Currently under programmatic review in the Faculty of Business and Hospitality

9.3 Articulation Agreements

There have been no further articulation agreements or MOUs signed during the academic year 2019-2020. In Quarter 4 of 2019, AIT and LIT made a formal decision to merge and seek designation as a Technological University. Reviews, therefore in the 2019/20, of articulation agreements and Memorandum of Understanding have been postponed in the above context for strategic and tactical considerations. The operability of existing MOUs and articulation agreements will be reviewed in the context of the TU being a designated awarding body. A common approach and template for the review of all existing MOUs and articulation agreements will be finalised by the AIT-LIT TU Consortium working group addressing this theme of access, transfer and progression arrangements with Further Education Providers, Collaborative Partners, Linked Providers and/or for Transnational provision. Articulation agreements are also due for review.

Articulation agreements - Total number	
1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE), Dalian, China
Programme titles and links to publications	<u>Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Accounting Level 8</u>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01-11-2015
Date of next review	Virtual meetings planned during 2020-2021
Detail of the agreement	<p>Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and DUFE signed their first Collaboration Agreement during the Irish Presidential Mission to China in October 2003. Students study the first two years of Accounting curriculum at DUFE and transfer to the final year of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting at AIT. AIT recognises the Accounting curriculum of DUFE. More than 70 students have studied on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting at AIT.</p> <p>Graduates of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting at AIT have the option of studying for the remaining examinations of the Professional Accounting bodies or studying on the Master of Accounting at AIT.</p> <p>AIT receives 3-6 student from DUFE to Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting at AIT each year.</p> <p>Awarding Body: Students receive AIT award when they transfer to AIT: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting Level 8.</p>

2. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	East China University of Technology (ECUT), Nanchang, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Software Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	Date of Last Review: Bachelor of Engineering
Date of next review	Agreement expiry date is 03 December 2022
Detail of the agreement	<p>A Memorandum of Understanding between AIT and ECUT for Software Engineering was first signed in May 2008. Students complete the first three years of study at ECUT and transfer to the final year of the Bachelor of Engineering in Software Engineering at AIT. Athlone Institute of Technology recognises the curriculum taught at ECUT. ECUT received recognition of the programme by the Ministry of Education in China for joint Bachelor degree between AIT and ECUT for Software Engineering. Following the success of this programme, a joint programme in Mechanical Engineering was launched in 2013 with an intake of 100 students.</p> <p>AIT recognises the curriculum in Mechanical Engineering at ECUT allowing the students to transfer to the final year of Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Honours) degree at AIT. The first group of 16 students transferred to AIT in September 2016 and 12-16 students transfer each year to AIT.</p> <p>AIT receives 6-8 students per year for transfer to the Bachelor of Engineering in Software Engineering (Hons) degree at AIT and 6-8 students per year for transfer to the Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Hons) degree at AIT. Students who remain in ECUT, China, only receive the award of Bachelor degree from ECUT. ECUT recognises the final year of study at AIT and awards students who successfully complete all modules at AIT, the Bachelor degree from ECUT.</p> <p>Awarding Body: Students receive AIT award when they transfer to AIT: Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Software Engineering (Level 8) Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering (Level 8).</p>

3. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Jiangnan University, Wuhan, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic and Digital Design Level 8.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	Last Review: 31-01-2015 Last review meeting took place at Jiangnan University, Wuhan in December 2019 Virtual Meetings planned for 2020-2021
Date of next review	2023 In addition, an annual review meeting takes place in Jiangnan University
Detail of the agreement	<p>Athlone Institute of Technology and Jiangnan University received approval from the Ministry of Education in China to commence a joint undergraduate programme for Visual Design Communication with an intake of 100 students in September 2015. The first group of 16 students transferred to AIT in September 2018 and this year there are six students studying at AIT in September 2020. Students complete the first three years of a Design programme in Jiangnan University and have the option to transfer to the final year of the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic and Digital Design (Level 8) programme at AIT. The students who remain in Jiangnan University do not receive the Bachelor degree from AIT.</p> <p>Awarding Body: Students receive AIT award when they transfer to AIT:</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Graphic and Digital Design (Level 8)</p>

4. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Luoyang Institute of Science and Technology (LIST), Luoyang, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Honours) Level 8
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	Date of Last Review: 20 December 2015 Meeting took place in Luoyang in December 2019.
Date of next review	December 2022. Virtual meetings scheduled to take place during 2020- 2021.
Detail of the agreement	<p>LIST and AIT signed an agreement of cooperation in 2012 for the award of Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Honours) Level 8 to students who successfully complete their final two years of studies at AIT. This joint programme in Civil Engineering is approved by the Ministry of Education in China. Students who transfer to Year 4 and then progress to Year 5 at AIT, having achieved learning outcomes receive the award of Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Honours) Level 8 at AIT. Students who remain in China receive their Bachelor degree in Civil Engineering from LIST and do not receive an award from AIT.</p> <p>Faculty from the Department of Civil Engineering at AIT have delivered lectures at LIST to promote the opportunity for Chinese students to transfer to Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering at AIT. AIT has also welcomed visiting Faculty from LIST to AIT and discussions have commenced for collaboration on research projects.</p> <p>The following number of students have transferred from LIST to AIT:</p> <p>Academic year 2018-2019: 5 students Academic year 2019-2020: 7 students Academic year 2020-2021: 11 students</p> <p>Awarding Body: Students receive AIT award when they transfer to AIT: Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering (Level 8).</p> <p>Only students who transfer from LIST to AIT receive the Bachelor degree from AIT.</p>

5. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Wuxi Institute of Technology (WXIT), Wuxi, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering Level 7. Bachelor of Engineering in Automation and Robotics Level 7. Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering Level 7. Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design Level 7.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	Date of Last Review: 05.01.2018 Meeting took place in Wuxi in October 2018 and in Athlone in May 2019.
Date of next review	Virtual meetings scheduled to take place during 2020-2021.
Detail of the agreement	<p>Wuxi Institute of Technology signed an agreement of cooperation in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China in January 2018 to seek approval for joint programmes and the establishment of a joint institute at WXIT. The project was approved and WXIT recruited the first cohort of high school students to four programmes in September 2019 in the following disciplines:</p> <p>Graphic Design, Robotics, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Engineering.</p> <p>Students will have the option of transferring to Year 3 of Level 7 degrees in these disciplines at AIT once they achieve English language results and academic grades.</p> <p>Awarding Body: Students receive AIT award when they transfer to AIT.</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering Level 7. Bachelor of Engineering in Automation and Robotics Level 7. Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering Level 7. Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design Level 7.</p>

[Higher Education Institution]

2021

Annual Quality Report (Athlone Institute of Technology)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **Part B** of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**.

Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR submission were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advice, or to institutional review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks, and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact¹ of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to illustrate IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;

¹ The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

1. QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENTS

1.1 Strategic QA Updates - Strategic Objectives

1.1.1 Designation as a Technological University

The Institute completed its strategic plan in December 2018 for the period 2019-2023. This strategic plan, entitled: “***A Technological University for the Future***”, framed the strategic objectives, priorities, and activities that this report now captures and the associated quality assurance and enhancement initiatives that were implemented, albeit against a backdrop of the immediate impact of COVID-19 on academic operations.

The Strategic Plan reflects the transformational vision for AIT to positively disrupt future ways of learning, working, and living to enable our graduates to contribute positively to their communities and for AIT to build new partnerships that strengthen innovation and create new and exciting research, enterprise, and employment opportunities for the communities it serves. Significant progress in attaining TU status was achieved by AIT through its partnership with LIT in 2019/2020.

A strong quality management ambition underscores AIT’s mission to be a Technological University distinguished by outstanding learner experience, international focus, distinctive regional contribution and high-quality impact of its staff, teaching, applied research and innovation. This is reflected in our commitment to the role AIT will play in the Midlands region and nationally as a TU which is encapsulated in the following commitments:

- AIT is a student-centred institution
- AIT delivers career focused education and research
- AIT provides inclusive access to higher education
- AIT plays a regional, national, and international role.

Application for Technological University

Athlone Institute of Technology confirmed in October 2019 that it was forming a consortium with Limerick Institute of Technology to develop a new technological university (TU) for the Midlands and Mid-West. In November 2019, the Governing Bodies of both AIT and LIT formally approved the official AIT - LIT Consortium, a

key governance step opening the pathway for the project to commence with the establishment of a project structure and team.

The progression plans to achieve designation as a Technological University were evident by the success of AIT and LIT achieving Landscape Funding of €2 million in 2019 and a further award of €5 million in 2020. This level of funding endorsed the Government support for a TU for the Midlands and Mid-West. The AIT-LIT TU Consortium is unique in its geographical reach and regional structure, bordering almost half of Ireland's 26 counties. The TU will transform the availability and accessibility of university provision in its regions, particularly across counties that have up to now had low university participation rates.

Designation as a TU enables AIT to achieve in tandem its own and national strategic priorities including wider access to higher education; the provision of research informed teaching and learning; and to increasing regional development and socio-economic progress.

The TU of the Midlands and Midwest is central to the achievement of the strategic priorities outlined in the National Development Plan, 2040; Project Ireland, 2040; and the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. The five thematic areas set out in the AIT-LIT Consortium plan to guide our TU strategic ambitions regarding the quality of its academic and research activities focused on: (i) the learner experience; (ii) educational provision; (iii) research and innovation; (iv) engagement and equality; and (v) diversity and inclusion.

The TU application process, and the timeline for TU designation, therefore impacted directly and in-directly on the quality assurance and enhancement activities reported on in this report. That timeline included:

- Quarter 4 2019: Formal decision by AIT and LIT to merge and seek designation as a Technological University
- Quarter 1 2020: Establishment of a joint governing body and project team
- Quarter 2 2020: Establishment of inter-institutional working groups, with several working groups addressing the quality assurance and enhancement of policies, processes, and procedures to underpin the activities of the new Technological University, with such commencing in Quarter 3 of 2020.

1.1.2 Work placement

In line with our commitment to deliver career focused education and research, a strategic priority of the Institute is to ensure the provision of a strong talent pipeline that has the knowledge, skill, competencies, and employability potential to respond effectively to both the existing and evolving needs of industry, enterprise, and the public sector both regionally and nationally.

To that end, programme development activity within the institute in 2019/2020 focused on the inclusion of a substantial work-placement module in the design and development of the majority of undergraduate major award programmes validated across the institute. This is to ensure that the student can robustly experience the application of their learning. All faculties of the Institute have now addressed the inclusion of work-placement and work project opportunities for students by restructuring programmes via semesterisation.

COVID-19 resulted in a concerted exceptional effort by Faculty management to ensure that planned work- placements could be concluded, rescheduled, and reconfigured to ensure that students could achieve the intended learning outcomes associated with the placements.

Any impacts were documented and presented through the academic governance structures to ensure that all quality assured standards for the programme were maintained and monitored. This included documenting the ability of the student to achieve the learning outcomes that were originally intended via work-placement via alternative arrangements or the rescheduling of work placements.

1.1.3 Enterprise

In line with our commitment to play a regional, national, and international role, AIT continues to strengthen its links with enterprise across the region and nationally. The AIT-Industry Collaboration group was extended in 2019-20 with Skills Development as a core pillar. In conjunction with the Regional Skills Forum Manager, skills audits, and competencies to fill critical vacancies are identified and captured to inform decision on new programme design and curriculum review.

A transformation of the Institute's offerings in online, blended, and distributed education has taken place catalysed by the formation of the Faculty Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning. The creation of this Faculty has enabled the Institute to respond more effectively and efficiently to a range of programme offerings including Special Purpose Awards and Minor Awards.

In the 2019/2020 period, AIT was awarded €6 million in Springboard+ and HCI funding to deliver a wide range of free or partially funded upskilling opportunities to learners across the Midlands Region. More than 900 places were available to prospective learners looking to upskill, change career or return to employment, with courses distributed across AIT's four facilities: Engineering and Informatics, Science and Health, Business and Hospitality and Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning.

The places were available across all levels of the national framework of qualifications, ranging from certificate (level 6), higher diploma (level 8) and postgraduate diploma (level 9) to graduate conversion diploma (level 9) and master's degree (level 9). The funding will facilitate the delivery of 30 Springboard+ and seven HCI programmes; the HCI funding, which is spread across three years, is specifically for graduates looking to upskill in a new area of work through a postgraduate diploma.

AIT has demonstrated its relevance to address the upskilling opportunities and requirements of the Midlands region during 2019/2020 by engaging with industries and enterprises in the region. AIT's undergraduate and postgraduate course offering, including minor and special purpose awards, are developed in consultation with regional and national stakeholders. This is facilitated through the Midlands Industry and AIT Academic Collaboration Group and ensures that AIT is producing a talent pipeline of graduates equipped with the requisite skills and competencies to meet the growing needs of industry.

The provision of such validated programmes addresses the European Standard and Guidelines (ESG 1.2) for the design and approval of programmes with careful attention given to the curriculum and programme design and content

With the onset of the pandemic, the Faculty of Continuing Professional, Online and Distance Learning, continually improved the programme delivery channels, enabling a greater number of learners to access relevant and timely education while also enjoying the student experience - albeit remotely.

The Institute continues to work with small and medium enterprises in the region and in Quarter 2 of 2020 saw the establishment of an “*Engenuity Midlands Regional Cluster*” made up of 30+ manufacturing SMEs in the Midlands region. Support from the Institute in research, graduate placement, and work-placement was initiated through this venture.

1.1.4 RUN EU

In line with our commitment to play an international role, AIT has been successful, as founding member, in joining a new, forward-thinking education consortium intended to increase collaboration between Europe’s universities. The consortium will form the basis of a new European university comprising multiple international partners. The European Universities Network (RUN EU) is part of an EU-wide ambition to create a centralised European Education Area. It will enable greater staff and student mobility; provide a network of learning and innovation through European Innovation Hubs; and develop Future Advanced Skills Academies (FASAs), Short Advanced Programmes, Structured Professional Doctorates, and Joint Programme Delivery from Level 6 to Level 9 across the network. Students will be able to choose a dynamic path across the network to obtain a degree by combining studies in multiple EU countries.

In addition to promoting and enabling greater mobility of the Institutes staff and students, the network, which is expected to increase the competitiveness of European universities, will be integral to promoting the kinds of future and advanced skills necessary for social transformation across the European Union.

Deans of Faculty and Executive Management from AIT have visited RUN-EU partners during the academic year 2019-20 and the intention was to promote staff visits and student mobility for study and placement. This plan was curtailed due to spread of Covid-19 from March, but AIT members of the RUN project engaged virtually with our RUN-EU partners. Several virtual events were held with international partners.

1.1.5 Research and Development

In line with our commitment to deliver career focused research, AIT aims to maximise the economic and social returns from its research, development, and innovation activities through partnership and knowledge exchange with enterprise, entrepreneurs, community, and other stakeholders. Our three strategic research institutes in Materials research (MRI), Bioscience research (BRI) and Software research (SRI), along with two Enterprise Ireland funded Technology Gateways – Applied Polymer Technologies (APT) and Connected Media Application

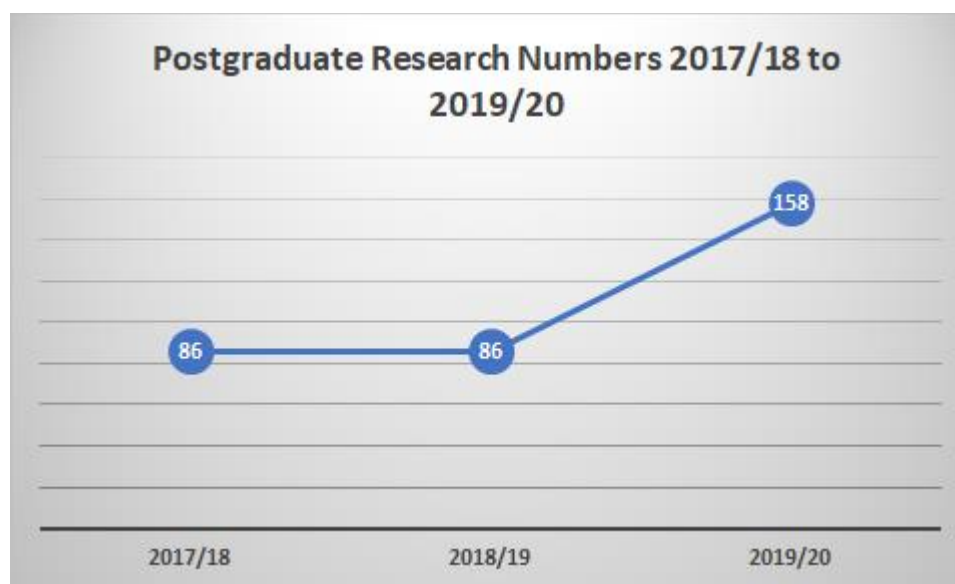
Design and Delivery (COMAND) – advanced their drive for market-informed research in collaboration with industry and academic partners during 2019/2020.

Also, in the reporting period, AIT continued to link industry needs with its core research expertise via market informed collaborative applied R&D, helping a growing range of companies to solve their technical and business problems.

The following summary provides evidence of the external validation of the quality of the research and development activities advanced by AIT in the reporting period:

- AIT has increased the number of projects with enterprises to 167 including via multi-partner R&D centres and R&D projects
- In the KTI Annual Review and Knowledge Transfer Survey 2019, published in 2020, AIT ranked second among all research performing organisations in Ireland for total number of collaborations, innovation voucher and consultancy service agreements with Industry.
- AIT has increased the number of postgraduate students in the reporting period with 158 students: 64 at Level 9 and 94 at Level 10 [from 86 in 2018/19]. These are summarised in the **Figure 1.1.5** below.

Figure: 1.1.5 Postgraduate Research Numbers: Growth Pattern from 2017/18 to 2019/2020



Importantly, the number of Level 10 students has increased from 32 in 2018/19 to 94 in 2019/2020, as summarized below in Table 1.1.5:

Table 1.1.5: Breakdown of Postgraduate Research Student Body by Faculty and Level			
FACULTY	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
LEVEL 10			
Business and Hospitality	0	0	1
Engineering and Informatics	17	23	75
Science and Health	7	9	18
TOTAL	24	32	94
LEVEL 9			
Business and Hospitality	1	1	4
Engineering and Informatics	39	35	41
Science and Health	22	18	19
TOTAL	62	54	64
Overall Total (L9 & L10)	86	86	158

The internal quality assurance of research activity has been enabled by:

- (i) The establishment of a Faculty Research Committee in each of the AIT faculties.
- (ii) The success of AIT in achieving a SALI post for the position and appointment of a Dean of Graduate and Research Studies.

1.1.6 Access to third level education

In line with our commitment to provide inclusive access to higher education, AIT continues to focus on ensuring that our student cohort is reflective of the diversity of Ireland's population in our student profiles. The quality impact of our work in this area is reflected in the performance standards achieved for priorities target groups in the reporting period:

- HEAR: exceeding the target of 35 students (6% of the full-time new entrants) to 54 students
- DARE: exceeding the target of 15 students (5% of the full-time new entrants) to 48 students

- Mature Students: increasing the number of mature students registering through Round A on CAO
- Travelers: increasing the number of registered traveller students

It is also evident in a range of initiatives implemented in the reporting period including:

- Outreach activities through College Connect including the provision of mentoring programmes
- Leading the Traveller Community Needs analysis project as part of our role in the MEND Path 3 Clusters
- DEIS support programmes
- Continuing the Institute's Sanctuary Bursary scheme to support refugee access to third level education including reviewing the impact of the Government support scheme for international protection applicants
- Building on the success of PASS², AIT Inspire, Student Success Advisors and Academic tutors' initiative to enhance success rates (retention and completion) specifically targeting vulnerable groups
- Build on the success of the MEND Path 2 and Path 3 funding to: (i) Inform AIT's response to the future National Access Plans; (ii) develop strategic planning frameworks including partnerships, policies and practices that will support sustained access to AIT by underrepresented groups.

1.2 Contextual Factors which Impacted on Quality Assurance

1.2.1 AIT-LIT TU Application - Impact on Quality Assurance Activities

Due to the development of the AIT-LIT application to be designated as a Technological University, fundamental changes were implemented on the existing Quality Assurance workplan that had been defined for AIT for 2019/2020. During the reporting period, a preliminary review was conducted by AIT and LIT on the record of all governing policies and procedures within the respective institutes.

An outline *Quality Assurance Framework* plan was put in place in the initial phase of the application for designation as a technological university in 2019/2020 by both AIT and LIT. This followed the formal establishment of the AIT-LIT Consortium by the resolution of both

² The Peer Assisted Student Support Scheme (PASS), established in the 2018/19 academic year, fosters cross-year support between students and encourages students to learn co-operatively under the guidance of trained 2nd year students who can be awarded academic credit for their voluntary role).

Governing Bodies in October 2019. The Framework controls the management of any work completed on the respective policies and procedures of both Institutions that govern quality assurance and enhancement activity during the transition phase to TU status. The Framework includes an outline of the QAE system for the TU which is underscored by eight overarching principles including:

1. Academic excellence and student- centred values
2. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom
3. Fostering a quality culture
4. Informed practices and stakeholder engagement
5. Proportional implementation
6. Comprehensive, transparent, and publicly accountable procedures
7. Evidence based decision making
8. Consistency with policy and international effective practice.

1.2.2 COVID-19

The parallel influence of the impact of COVID-19 on the wider activities and plans of the Institute for the reporting period had a serious impact on planned quality assurance and enhancement activities. The alternative academic arrangements resulting from the impact of COVID-19 on academic operations were approved through the quality assurance structures of AIT including approval by the Academic and Strategy Quality Sub-Committee of Academic Council, Academic Council and notice to Governing Body. Such alternative arrangements included a review of the impact of COVID 19 on the conduct of the following:

- Programme delivery in line with the approved programme schedule
- New Programme Validations
- External Examining
- Teaching and learning practices
- Assessment method, including addressing planned terminal examinations on campus
- Work-placements
- Erasmus visits
- On site learning activities
- Research activities

- Student services delivery.

Any changes to existing processes and procedures, which would alter the operability of existing policies, were reviewed by the Registrar's Office, and presented for notice and/or re-approval through the academic governance structures when alternative arrangements were implemented due to the impact of COVID-19. Further details are outlined in Section 1.3.

1.3 Specific Changes to the Quality Assurance System – Policies and Procedures

Details relating to all policies and procedures of AIT can be found under the Quality section of the [AIT website](#).

A summary of changes made to policies and procedures during the reporting period is outlined below:

Policy	Explanation	Date approved
Research Regulations & Governance 3 documents developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AIT Research Governance - Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations - Postgraduate Handbook 	Documents built on Doctoral framework and to international best practice. Submitted to QQI to request extension of Delegated Authority for the Faculty of Engineering & Informatics and new Delegated Authority for the Dept. of Sport & Health Science.	Approved by Academic Council (AC) September 2019
Amendment to QQI Act: The result of the <i>Qualifications and Quality Assurance Amendment Act 2019</i> is to establish the Institutes of Technology as Designated Awarding Bodies, which enables them to be autonomous awarding bodies. In the context of this legislation, the Institute assumed that existing awards approved by QQI in the context of AIT being a delegated awarding body were now considered awards of AIT as a DAB.		Noted by AC September 2019
Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy (addition of appendix 2).	Addition of Appendix 2 to cover all gender related terms which cover in some way the vast nature of human experience.	Approved by AC October 2019

Policy	Explanation	Date approved
AIT became a Designated Awarding Body in January 2020. QQI award standards were formally adopted as an interim measure until our own standards have been developed.		Approved by AC December 2019
Academic Steering Group – Terms of Reference	AIT LIT joint steering group established.	Approved by AC March 2020
COVID 19 Related Establishment of a Sub-committee of Academic Council set up at address Alternative Terminal Assessment due to the lockdown of on campus facilities	Formed in March 2020.	Approved by AC March 2020
COVID 19 Semester 2 exams to take an alternative assessment format during the Summer 2020 terminal examination period due to the impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown of physical campus facilities. Every alternative terminal assessment will be designed, externally reviewed, and listed for examination by alternative method on the Summer 2020 Examination Calendar Need to replace serviced and scheduled online terminal examination format with online alternative terminal assignment format because of National Announcement of 27 th March 2020.	Due to COVID 19 it was agreed that semester 2 exams would be held on-line. Communication issued to all stakeholders. It was agreed that all semester 2 exams will take an alternative assessment route with assessments to be uploaded by students no later than the last day of term (9 th May 2020). This proposal is because of the National Announcement delisting Education as an essential service.	Approved by sub-committee of AC 25 March 2020 Approved by sub-committee of AC 25 March 2020
AIT LIT Academic Strategy Steering Group amendments to policy -Change in membership	In the interest of a more complete representation, it is proposed to remove the Dean of Diversity and	Approved by AC April 2020 (Desk Exercise)

Policy	Explanation	Date approved
	Inclusion and replace that person with a Dean of Faculty.	
<p>COVID 19</p> <p>Addition to Standards, Assessment, & Awards. Section 11.8. to agree general guidelines regarding submission issues for Alternative Terminal Assessment in the Standards Assessment & Award document.</p>	<p>Student can complete a form (Extenuating Circumstances Form) which will allow for COVID-19 being noted as a reason for deferral if the student's medical or personal circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic prevent them from completing their Alternative Terminal Assessment. All Faculties to review such submissions at the Examination Board.</p>	<p>Approved by AC 6th May 2020</p>
<p>Proposed changes to the Standards, Assessment, & Award regulations as they pertain to: (i) Carrying of Credits, (ii) Marginal Fail Compensation as distributed to committee.</p>	<p>To bring regulations entitled Standards, Assessment, & Awards in line with QQI Assessment and Standards and for the equity of treatment of students. The change gives procedural reliability and consistency at the examination boards if the application for marginal fail compensation rules is defined and consistently applied in line with the</p> <p>1. Carrying of Credits:</p> <p>Section L 10.7:</p> <p>This change allows for 1 x 10 credit (existing criteria) or 2 x 5 credit modules (additional proposed criteria) to be carried in non-award years, which allows for equity of treatment of students, to allow carrying credits based</p>	<p>Approved by sub-committee of AC 21 May 2020 & Academic Council 17th June 2020</p>

Policy	Explanation	Date approved
	<p>on the total of credits rather than the number of modules.</p> <p>2. Marginal Fail Compensation: formalized definition of what conditions must be met to allow for the application of marginal fail compensation</p> <p>A new section to Standards, Assessment, & Awards included Section L9.3: Marginal Fail compensation. It reflects and brings AIT's related regulations in line with the QQI Assessment & Standards (Revised 2013) under section 4.4.1: Pass by compensation.</p>	
On Governance of Research Groups, centres, and Institutes	Amendments to policies agreed by sub-committee of Academic Council	Approved by AC 17 June 2020
Lecture Recording policy	Amendments to policy agreed by sub-committee of Academic Council	Approved by AC 17 June 2020
Change of Mark form EXREG3	Amendments to form agreed by sub-committee of Academic Council	Approved by AC 17 June 2020
Amendments to the Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations		
2 minor changes:		
(i) English language Entry Requirements (ii) Minor change in Appendix 3: cross referencing of content in Section 4.3 changed to Appendix 5, Table 2	Amendments to policies agreed by sub-committee of Academic Council	Approved by AC 23 rd October 2019
Revision to English Language Entry Requirements: Duolingo included as English Language Assessment	Amendments to policies agreed by sub-committee of Academic Council	Approved by AC 25 th March 2020

Policy	Explanation	Date approved
Revision of section 1.14.18 in relation to alternative assessment of a viva voce examination due to exceptional circumstances initiated by COVID-19.	Amendments to policies agreed by sub-committee of Academic Council	Approved by AC 25 th March 2020
AIT RPL Policy	Revision to section 1.4.4.3 stating AIT's RPL policy will apply to postgraduate applicants	Approved by AC 25 th March 2020

1.4 Improvements and Enhancements from Internal Quality Improvement Planning, Review and Monitoring of processes

1.4.1 Monitoring of Processes

1.4.1.1 Examination Management System

In the reporting period, AIT issued a tender for a secure, end to end examination management system solution for the management of the Institute's internal and external quality assurance processes for programme/module assessments, which includes the following functional elements:

- Examination Paper Management
- Continuous Assessment Management
- External Examiner Management
- External Examiner Reporting
- Resource Archival.

The key quality assurance benefits associated with the implementation of this system include:

- (i) Overarching Quality Assurance of all activities undertaken in the system by the range of enabled users from academics, faculty administrators, external examiners, and examination office personnel
- (ii) Security Management embedded in the creation and access to all examination and assessment documentation with a full audit trail of the access history by a user

- (iii) The efficiency and effectiveness of external examiner engagement in their quality assurance of assessment items
- (iv) Reporting, including the data interrogation capability and the summative analysis of reports submitted by External Examiners
- (v) Increased quality enhancement by the availability of programme/module quality trend analysis
- (vi) Records management, as all reports are held in one repository perpetually and available for quality assurance purposes internally (for example: to Academic Council) and to external bodies such as professional and accreditation bodies for their review when quality assuring relevant programmes.

1.4.1.2 AIT CAO Information Hub

The **AIT CAO Hub**: this is an example of enhancing the quality of the engagement of prospective students. The CAO Hub was launched in 2019/2020 to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for course and college life related information to prospective students, parents and guidance counsellor including: (i) an interactive Q&A facility; (ii) a student ambassador blog series; (iii) subject specific podcasts, vodcasts, blogs; and (iv) virtual tour of the AIT campus. This initiative is considered central to improving the quality of the prospective student's experience in finding and efficient and effective way of processing a wide range of information to optimise their CAO decision making process.

1.5 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
	<i>As set out through the enablers in the Strategic Plan, which was finalised in September 2019, AITs operational framework captures the following objectives:</i>	
1	Having identified the thematic areas and critical variable AIT now wants to further develop its reporting schedules and critical data to align with decision-making timelines.	<p>The implementation of Power-BI within the Institute has allowed for self-directed analysis of key data to support decision making. A wider implementation and usage of data from primary research, including the Student Survey, will be conducted at Faculty level to guide faculty academic management, with the delineation of access to such primary data by the Quality office, to respective functional and faculty units.</p> <p>The definition of all report requirements, both for internal and external reporting purposes, and their associated schedules, is being addressed in the context of the TU implementation plan, including the annual reporting and monitoring pillar that will form part of the multi-layered cross organizational quality assurance and enhancement system.</p>
2	Building on the existing student dashboards (programmes, CAO and Studentsurvey.ie) we plan to develop a more comprehensive suite of datasets, managed, and mediated by central digital technologies, to ensure improved decision making.	<p>To support the quality of Academic Governance in AIT, Power BI has been made available to Executive Management, and Deans of Faculty in 2020.</p> <p>Various Data Sets are provided to support evidenced based, distributed decision making.</p>

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
		<p>The Data sets include student numbers, enrolment data, trends, numbers by NFQ level, by country/nationality, county, feeder school data, by registration status, mode of registration, withdrawal trends by Faculty and Department and programme. This data assists to inform discussions and decision making at Faculty level.</p> <p>Further examples of this are provided in Section 2.</p> <p>Training in Power BI has been provided with follow up sessions offered and access to support for queries.</p>
3	<p>Implement Power BI as a central data management system, to align Compact, Strategic Plan, Risk Register, Internal Control Framework and Health and Safety, review and exploit digital technologies.</p>	<p>The MIS unit of the Institute commenced work in the 2019/2020 with academic and corporate units on the usage of Power BI to analyse data in the respective functional and academic units of AIT. Cross institutional data analysis and reporting to support core tactical and strategic management decision making was not implemented to the degree envisioned initially in the 2019/2020 period. This was due to one planned and one unplanned event, namely: (i) the focus on the application for TU designation; (ii) COVID-19, which impacted on the time available by the senior management team to initiate planned tactical and operational improvements.</p>

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
4	<p><i>The foundational priority of quality, culture and enhancement from the Strategic Plan sets out to:</i></p> <p>Review pre-clearance procedures to qualify the impact of the process change on strategic dialogue at the Academic Strategy and Quality Committee.</p>	<p>An internal review process is implemented at Faculty level to ensure that all items tabled for consideration at the Academic Quality and Strategy Sub-Committee of Academic Council are relevant to its remit. This has increased the focus on targeted, strategic changes being addressed that align with the strategic plans of the institution. Examples would include programme changes proposed to enable work-placements; international travel (ERASMUS out); professional accreditation; semesterisation; and the alignment of the programme/module knowledge, skill, and competency learning outcomes with graduate attributes.</p> <p>Additionally, new programme proposals are reviewed at an inter and intra-faculty strategic programme portfolio management level.</p>
5	<p><i>Within the research and innovation priority of the Strategic Plan, Priority 1 commits to research excellence and aligns with:</i></p> <p>(i) Systematically implementing the new structured research programme ensuring contemporary and relevant research provision.</p> <p>(ii) Design the governance and structures of the Graduate School, and relationship with the faculties and research institutes, we have now</p>	<p>(i) Systematically implementing the new structured research programme ensuring contemporary and relevant research provision.</p> <p>The Institute has successfully implemented a structured research programmes at Level 10 in Sport, Exercise and Health, with the inclusion of relevant and contemporary research related modules including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Studies Pathway (M) • Research Integrity Across the Disciplines (M) • Writing Skills for Graduate Students (M)

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
	<p>designed and will continue to implement the new structures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Research Paradigms (M) • Advanced Writing for Graduate Students (E) • Dissemination and Research Profile for Doctoral Researchers (E) <p>Core Modules: Students must take four mandatory modules (identified as M above) equating to 20 credits. Elective Modules: Students must take an additional 10 elective credits. These can include the two modules denoted as E above or up to 10 credits from discipline specific modules in AIT (Graduate School Modules and Faculty Modules at Level 9) and may also be completed in other third level institutions.</p> <p>(ii) Design the governance and structures of the Graduate School, and relationship with the faculties and research institutes, we have now designed and will continue to implement the new structures.</p> <p>See 1.3.2</p>
6	<p><i>The Educational Provision priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan prioritises our responsiveness to industry and the development of the talent pipeline. Our aligned objectives are:</i></p> <p>(i) Considering increased competitive provision (Springboard and Human</p>	<p>Re: (i) Review of the Faculty of Professional, Online, Distance & Continuing Learning</p> <p>The Faculty did an initial review of the operational impact of its success with the increased provision of Springboard and HCI programmes in the 2019/20-year vis a vis the 2018/19 year (increased from 472</p>

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
	<p>Capital Initiative), review the function of the Faculty of Professional, Online, Distance & Continuing Learning, to ensure the agility of the Institute's responsiveness.</p> <p>(ii) Development of a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy for AIT in alignment with the AIT Strategic Plan.</p> <p>(iii) Following a review of FE provision and the TU agenda, a portfolio-based review is required to ensure the future position of our academic provision.</p>	<p>students in 2018/19 to 894 in 2019/2020: an increase of 89.5%). Due to the immediate impact of COVID-19, a more detailed review of the processes to support the efficient and effective operation of the Springboard and HCI programmes impacting on faculties, administrative functions, and professional services was noted for continuation in the 2020/2021 year.</p> <p>Re: (ii) Development of a Teaching and Learning Strategy</p> <p>The initiation of the TU application in the reporting period impacted on the planned development of any future strategic plans, including that for Teaching and Learning. Inputs on the relevant inclusions in the Teaching and Learning Strategy for the TU were identified in the AIT-LIT Consortium Application document to include for future development in the 2020/2021 year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The educational philosophy of the TU - The six pillars that would support excellence in Teaching and Learning including: (i) pedagogies of engagement through active and applied learning; (ii) authentic assessment of, for, and as learning; (iii) development of the whole person and work readiness; (iv) technological innovation and digital capacity; (v) research informed

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
		<p>knowledge creation; and (vi) flexible pathways and lifelong learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Curriculum Framework Design <p>Re: (iii) A portfolio-based review is required to ensure the future position of our academic provision.</p> <p>The initiation of the TU application in the reporting period enabled the identification of the initial programme portfolio planning framework that would support all future academic programme provisions for the TU. The academic governance structures of the TU will ensure that all programme proposals are aligned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The strategic intent, plans, annual goals (ii) Academic discipline profiles (iii) Campus and centres of excellence plans (iv) Stakeholder engagement and planned activities (v) Industry needs.

1.6 Governance and Management

1.6.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

The following table summarises both the academic and governance meeting schedule that took place during the reporting period:

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Body	Wednesday, 18 th September 2019
	Wednesday, 23 rd October 2019
	Wednesday, 11 th December 2019
	Wednesday, 05 th February 2020
	Wednesday, 25 th March 2020
	Wednesday, 06 th May 2020
	Wednesday, 17 th June 2020
Academic Council	Friday, 08 th November 2019
	Friday, 13 th December 2019
	Friday, 14 th February 2020
	Friday, 27 th March 2020
	Friday, 15 th May 2020
	Thursday, 18 th June 2020
Academic Strategy & Quality Committee	Wednesday, 11 th September 2019
	Friday, 29 th November 2019
	13 th December 2019

Body	Meeting dates
	Friday, 28 th February 2020
	Friday, 08 th May 2020
	Friday, 05 th June 2020
	Friday, 19 th June 2020
Plagiarism Committee	Monday 13 th January 2020
	Monday, 27 th January 2020
	Wednesday, 20 th May 2020
	Thursday, 04 th June 2020
	Wednesday, 16 th September 2020
Research, Innovation & Enterprise Committee	Tuesday, 05 th November 2019
	Wednesday, 29 th January 2020

1.6.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

AIT is committed to maintaining our academic standards and continually enhancing the quality of our teaching and learning provision and research activity. Our students' voices remain integral to our academic quality assurance and enhancement activities and are a central tenant underpinning our quality assurance strategy. Several structural and management developments were addressed in the reporting period to improve and enhance the quality management remit of the Institute in the reporting period:

1.6.2.1 Structure

A review of resources and staffing requirements saw the addition of two new roles at AIT in 2019/2020. These were:

Role	Appointment Date
Assistant Registrar including Head of Quality	November 2019
Dean of Graduate Studies and Research	Recruitment during the 2019/2020 year with the appointment in September 2020

Assistant Registrar and Head of Quality

In 2019, a review of the functions and roles in the AIT Quality office was undertaken to ensure that the resourcing requirements to support AIT being a designated awarding body, which infers its accountability and ownership of the quality management of the institutes and its academic, professional, and operational affairs lead to the appointment of an Assistant Registrar and the management responsibility for Quality. AIT's TU Consortium Application also incurred additional responsibilities in planning the integration of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement activities to be pursued from 2019 onwards including the agreement with LIT of a Quality Assurance Framework.

As an agile and ambitious Institute, our Quality Office continues to build robust systems, data and operational protocols ensuring the protection of the enrolled learner while leading contemporary and relevant educational provision; evidenced by our continued position as the highest ranked Institute of Technology in the Sunday Times Good University Guide 2021.

Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

The first call for applications to the 'Senior Academic Leadership Initiative' (SALI) was issued by the HEA on 21 June 2019. The Department of Education and Skills allocated funding to support the creation of twenty posts under this initiative. Following independent evaluation by a panel of international experts and the HEA, Athlone Institute of Technology was awarded funding for the post of a Dean of Graduate and Research Studies. The new Dean commenced their appointment in September 2020.

The Dean of the Graduate Studies and Research takes responsibility for the maintenance and development of post-graduate research programmes in conjunction with the Deans of Faculties. This includes the quality assurance of postgraduate research awards and the quality assurance of the regulations, policies and procedures that govern such awards. The role also now includes the management of generic skills training for research students and the implementation of flexible modes of postgraduate programme delivery.

1.7 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.7.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Overview

Programmatic Reviews in all faculties are scheduled for completion in the 2022/23 academic year.

The following period review as completed in the reporting period in line with the review plans notified in the 2018/2019 report:

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion for conducting review	Links to relevant publications
Faculty of Business & Hospitality: MA in Accounting	01.01.2020 to 31.12.2024 ACCA Professional Body Accreditation	ACCA Accreditation link MA Accounting

1.7.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	7	4 Faculties (6 Depts)		N/A	7		
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews	2	1 Faculty (2 Depts)			1	1	
Virtual processes	5	3 Faculties (4 Depts)			5		
Average panel size for each process type*	6						

* Excluding secretary if not a full panel member

³ QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	, or Specified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	5*	5								5	
Secretary	5*		5		5					5	
Academic/Discipline Specific	19	12	7			19				19	
Student Representative											
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	15					15					

*2 desk reviews so no secretary required

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

2.1 Governance and Management of Quality

AIT's Academic Strategy and Quality Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Council, seeks to assure and enhance the quality of its activities in its academic governance role. Responsibility for the quality of activities is supported at institutional, functional, and individual level. How AIT develops, monitors, reviews, and enhances the quality of its activities are informed by national acts, statutory quality guidelines, and international good practice and are appropriately underpinned by AIT policies.

From March 2020, several academic delivery plans have been deployed to respond to three different tiered level of physical restrictions imposed due to Covid 19. Each has altered the volume, location, and nature of the directed learning activity of students both on and off campus. All plans were presented for approval through the academic governance structures of the Institute to quality assurance any exceptional and alternative arrangements that were put in place.

Our Institute has preserved our full academic governance and quality assurance principles despite the change to many aspects of the mode of its academic operations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Institute's quality assurance practices for the 2019–2020 year also draw on external relevant guidance including QQI's Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013), Statutory QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI, 2018), and the Guiding Principles for Alternative Assessments (QQI, March 2020).

2.2 Programmes of Education and Training

2.2.1 New Programmes of Education

The scale of the development of new programmes has been tempered by the progression of AIT & LITs application for TU Status. The application to be designated a Technological University, analysed, drafted, prepared, and collated in parallel during the 2019/2020 reporting period by the senior management team of AIT and LIT, influenced the degree of new programme development initiated. The application for TU designation noted that a strategic programme portfolio management framework would be used by the AIT-LIT Consortium to coordinate the development of new academic undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the immediate period to the TU's appointed date. The following new programme proposals were presented for progression to validation in the 2019/2020 period:

COURSE TITLE	EMT Approval	ASQ Committee Approval	External Panel Visit	Academic Council Approval
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND HOSPITALITY				
Higher Diploma in Information Technology Level 8	29.04.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND INFORMATICS				
Certificate in Networks Infrastructure with Security Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 20 credits Springboard Funded		19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
BSc (Hons) in Digital Construction Management Level 8	19.05.2020	05.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
FACULTY OF CONTINUING, PROFESSIONAL ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING				
Certificate in Procurement Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 60 credits. Springboard Funded	02.06.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
Certificate in Financial Accounting and Payroll Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 20 credits Springboard Funded	02.06.2020	19.06.2020	19.06.2020	25.09.2020
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH				
Certificate in Caring for the Deteriorating Adult in the Acute Setting Level 6 (Special Purpose Award) 10 credits	16.09.2020	11.09.2019	October 2019	25.09.2020

COURSE TITLE	EMT Approval	ASQ Committee Approval	External Panel Visit	Academic Council Approval
BSc (Hons) in Physical Activity and Health Sciences Level 8/ BSc Exercise & Health Science Level 7 (This was a reframing of the Level 8 and Level 7 programme to address semesterisation and to address gaps in the course content, to provide prospective graduate with the most up to date knowledge and competencies that will best position them for employment and/or further study).		28.02.2020	March 2020 Desk Review Exercise	

2.2.2 New Programmes of Training

Department of Social Sciences - Training for Social Care Practice Educators

The Department of Social Science launched its first fully online course for agency supervisors who take social care students on placement. The purpose of the course is to ensure that the governance of placements of the Department's Social Care programmes is fully compliant with CORU, the new regulator for health and social care professionals. Two members of the department (Dr Mairéad Seery and Ms Fiona Walshe) collaborated with two members of faculty of The Open Training College to create learning materials for the course, following best practice guidelines in instructional design and eLearning. These learning materials are now available to all IASCE (Irish Association of Social Care Educators) partners. Further internal collaboration within AIT led to the creation of a new Moodle site for the course in May 2019. This site provided a platform for external participants to complete the programme and for AIT to track completion by participants, to comply with the requirements of CORU. It is innovative in its approach to professional development within Social Care, using technology to respond to the needs of a specific sector. The course - ***Training for Social Care Practice Educators*** - is fully asynchronous (i.e., participants work through learning materials at their own pace) and use a suite of eLearning tools to provide participants with a positive, flexible learning experience. To date, approximately 25 social care professionals have successfully completed the course. Registration for the course is ongoing.

GURU: Examination Management System – Registrar's Office

Formal directed training sessions were organized by the Registrar's Office for different role-based cohorts of users of GURU – the Examination Management System - during the systems phased implementation in AIT in the 2019/2020 year. The training was provided by the system developers (DCU Invent) with widespread take-up of the directed online training offered.

Self-directed training is enabled by user-friendly interfaces, meaningful processes, and combinations of direct training and online training resources provided within each layer of the system. Due to the strength of online training videos, user-friendly interfaces and documentation provided in the usage of the system, only minimal synchronous directed training was required. As a result, only four days of directed, synchronous training was delivered.

The evidence over the reporting year indicates that users of the system have provided very positive feedback after just one semester of usage.

2.3 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

2.3.1 Staff Development

The Institute actively supports the assurance and enhancement of its activities and services provided to all stakeholders by investing in its people. Evidence of this is summarized in the increased investment during 2019/2020 in the academic and professional development of staff across the full spectrum of roles in the Institute. The following table highlights the applications approved by the Professional Development Committee in 2019/2020:

Summary of PDC applications approved in the 2019/20 Academic Year						
Award	Level	Academic	Support*	Management	Research	Grand Total
PhD/Doctorate	10	4		1	1	6
Masters/Postgraduate	9	6	5	1		12
Degree/Specific Purpose Award	8	7	6		2	15
Total		17	11	2	3	33
<i>* Includes Administrative, Technical, Maintenance, Library & Student Services</i>						

Summary of Staff development in Progress in June 2020 - Academic Year 2019/2020						
Award	Level	Academic	Support *	Management	Research	Grand Total
PhD/Doctorate	10	33	1	6	3	43
Masters/Postgraduate Degree/ Special Purpose Award	9	13	10	1	1	25
	8	1	2		1	4
Total		47	13	7	5	72
<i>* Includes Administrative, Technical, Maintenance, Library & Student Services</i>						

2.3.2 Staff Development Initiatives undertaken during the reporting period

Staff Recruitment - Induction Programme

An induction programme for new staff was held on 2nd September 2019 with over 20 new staff in attendance. They were introduced to staff policies & procedures, ESS, QA and academic standards, library services, student resources, counselling facilities, IT systems and facilities available, an overview of faculties and departments, Health & Safety, data protection, strategic planning and teaching and learning.

Employee Awareness Day

The Human Resources Department hosted a highly successful Employee Awareness Day on 30th October 2019. The theme of the event was to develop an internal community culture in AIT where employees feel appreciated, motivated, engaged, and proud of being part of a workplace that feels inclusive. Over 300 staff engaging with HR Department, Library, Healthy Campus, Sports Co and the 10 external companies. One of the actions on the

day was to highlight the level of community involvement by staff members in AIT. HR has identified over 50 charities with which AIT staff are involved, which equates to hundreds of hours of voluntary work per year.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Learning and Teaching Unit continued to engage in a range of enhancement initiatives in 2019-2020. These included bespoke initiatives to improve academic governance, academic practice, and standards, including: (i) Research Supervision; (ii) Accredited & Non-Accredited Developmental Activities; and (iii) COVID-19 Related Training and Guidance.

Its work also focused on an immediate response for the academic community to address their practice in teaching and assessment that was forced online due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of the Teaching and Learning Unit enhancing the academic delivery practices of the academic community of AIT, adopting different delivery methods, are also outlined.

2.4.1 Research Supervision

The Learning and Teaching Unit regularly responds to requests for the development of bespoke technological solutions. The L&T unit was engaged to develop an Individual Study Plan (ISP) for the Level 9/10 Structured Research Programmes in AIT. The use of the ADDIE instructional design model to frame the approach to development allowed for an iterative process, to incorporate feedback and revisions to the ISP developed. The purpose of the ISP is to document the research student's progress and learning throughout their research programme. Following extensive consultation, the Learning and Teaching team led the development of a user-friendly interface that is GDPR compliant. The Microsoft Office 365 application, Microsoft Class Notebook was identified as a suitable platform. This platform was introduced and used successfully in the Faculty of Science & Health by Dr Anne Mulvihill, when she led the TEAM (Technology Enhanced Assessment Methods) project, providing proof of concept. The L&T team developed an Individual Study Plan (ISP) prototype in Microsoft Class Notebook.

The benefits of using Class Notebook included:

- (i) Minimal set up time: AIT staff and registered students already had access to the suite of Office 365 applications, so setup time would be significantly reduced
- (ii) Agile Platform: The Class Notebook platform could be redesigned according to our requirements, reducing the need for a purpose-built platform, thereby greatly reducing costs.

- (iii) With Office 365 online, staff and students could access the resource from any location.
- (iv) Staff and students were already familiar with the MS Office interface, so requirements for training and support would also be reduced.

The ISP was presented to several stakeholder groups within the Institute: The prototype was tested by several research supervisors, specifically in terms of ease of access, navigation, usability, and suitability. Feedback loops were integral to the development process. A workshop to present the ISP was delivered to research supervisors in the Department of Sports Science and Department of Nursing. An instructional video was created for research supervisors, to provide a walkthrough of how to set up the ISP. Additionally, both workshops and individual clinic sessions have been provided to facilitate research supervisors, as they set up each ISP for their student(s). This support will continue to be provided by the Learning and Teaching Unit.

2.4.2 Accredited & Non-Accredited Developmental Activities

The Learning and Teaching Unit continued to provide accredited provision by offering modules for the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment in the 2019/2020 year. A summary of the engagement with this initiative is outlined in the summary table below:

Special Purpose Award/Module	ECTS	Number of Participants
Certificate in Learning and Teaching	15	10
Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning	15	10
Developing Practice in Online Learning, Teaching and Assessment	15	13
Designing the UDL Curriculum	10	1
Total Numbers		34

The Learning and Teaching Unit also provided non-accredited professional development activities in the reporting period which are outlined below:

Date	Outline
3-4 th September 2019	New Teaching Staff Induction
6 th September 2019	Turning Technologies: Class Response System
27 th September 2019	Examination Writing and Plagiarism Workshop
11 th October 2019	Digital Badge Workshop
7 th November 2019	Department of Lifelong Learning: Avoiding Plagiarism Online Workshop
3 rd December 2019	Digital Badge Policy Seminar
3 rd February 2020	Erasmus + Talent Project
26 th February 2020	Investigating Solutions for Teaching Online with Chinese Partners
6 th March 2020	IADT Active Learning Session

2.4.3 COVID-19 related Teaching and Learning initiatives Remote/Online Learning

The closure of the Institute in March 2020 due to Covid-19 was a significant moment for staff and students to come to terms with. After reflecting on the potential impact and consequences for staff and students, the Learning and Teaching Unit commenced initially with email communications and online sessions to support staff in the transition to remote online learning. Initially these were themed around 'staying connected'. This afforded staff the opportunity to meet online and identify ways to connect with their students through a variety of online platforms.

Training Provision

To assist staff in preparation for the academic year 2020 – 2021, the Learning and Teaching Unit's aim was to design and facilitate a range of workshops and training sessions that would assure and enhance the quality of academics teaching and assessment practices for the forthcoming academic year. The unit was proactive in rapidly addressing the training needs of staff and offered a full suite of training to allow them to prepare their teaching and assessment practice for a COVID-19 academic world before September 2020. The focus was to replicate as much as possible the high-quality interactions and engagement which occurs in face-to-face settings with students in a remote/ online environment. Further details on this initiative are outlined in the Section 4: Case Studies.

COVID-19 Moodle Page Created

In addition, the L&T Unit launched a dedicated Learning and Teaching COVID-19 Moodle page. Included was a range of resources relating to alternative assessment and using the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for a variety of assessment types and submissions.

2.5 Supports and Resources for Learners

2.5.1 Laptop Loan for students

For the academic year 2019 -2020 AIT was awarded €272,480 of student devices funding to operate a means-tested laptop loan scheme. The grant funding for the devices will be provided to higher education institutions through the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Laptops are loaned to students to facilitate their academic work. An application process aimed at assisting disadvantaged students will be opened in Mid-September 2020 to registered students who meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme. The scheme is aimed at ensuring disadvantaged students in AIT can access emergency remote learning through a laptop device when studying remotely due to the lockdown of campus facilities imposed due to Covid 19.

2.5.2 Support for International Students

An induction for new international students over four days was delivered in September 2019. Student supports, such as Counselling services, Health service, Careers Office, Academic Writing skills moved to online sessions from March 2020. International students were contacted regularly by phone and Zoom sessions were held during March to June 2020 by International Office staff with support from the Institute nurse. Students were informed of services from local supermarkets, restaurants for online deliveries to their private student accommodation. AIT arranged drop off from local pharmacy if any medication was required. Students availed of AIT online student resources and other services such as Zoom Keep Fit sessions.

2.5.3 Initiatives implemented in the Reporting Period

Right Care Right Place Right Time for Student Sexual Health

AIT, with support from the Sláintecare Integration Fund, launched a comprehensive student sexual health service to meet the needs of its growing student population – 61% of whom are aged 18- 24 and are classified as ‘high risk’ for sexually transmitted infections (STI). This innovative pilot project is delivered directly to students on campus, reducing the substantial medical, non-medical and economic costs associated with STIs. The project is also addressing the general upward trend in STIs, where the biggest risk groups are those aged under 25 and men who have sex with men. The service opened for appointments in late January 2020. This project ensures that students can access comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education and information and will have access to appropriate prevention and promotion services. This will ultimately encourage the development of a healthy sexuality throughout life; enhance people’s lives and relationships; reduce negative outcomes such as STIs and crisis pregnancies and create an environment that supports sexual health and wellbeing. The service

is being delivered in line with the aims of the HSE National Sexual Health Strategy (2015-2020) and the Healthy Ireland Framework (2013-2025)

2.6 Internationalisation

Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) is deeply committed to its internationalisation strategy. Internationalisation is a core theme in AIT's Strategic Plan 2019-23 entitled, 'A Technological University for the region' and we are actively promoting the mobility of students and staff between partner institutions in Europe and indeed on a wider international level. Quantitative and qualitative evidence of this is outlined in this and the subsequent section (Section 2.7: Information and Data Management).

Historically, the Institute has participated in the European Union-funded Erasmus+ programme to promote the transferability of students and staff in Europe and has established a wide range of trans-European contacts. Work on the semesterisation of undergraduate programmes has been completed by Faculties to ensure that opportunities exist for both inbound and outbound ERASMUS engagement by undergraduate students.

Activities such as student and staff mobility and curriculum development projects are now continuing under the current Erasmus+ programme which will conclude in 2021.

2.6.1 RUN-EU

A new EU higher education network involving the selection of eight participating higher education institutions was launched on 12th February 2020, of which AIT is now a member. This Regional University Network in the EU, known as RUN-EU, is intended to increase cooperation between universities and institutes across Europe. The RUN-EU launch event was attended by the Portuguese Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Higher Education, João Sobrinho Teixeira, by the Ambassador Pedro Lourtie, Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the European Union, by the diplomatic representatives from Ireland, Hungary, Finland, the Netherlands, and Austria, and had the participation of some accredited assistants of the European Parliament.

The eight participating colleges include:

- Athlone Institute of Technology (Ireland)
- FH Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (Austria)
- Häme University of Applied Sciences HAMK (Finland),
- Limerick Institute of Technology (Ireland),
- NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands), and
- Polytechnic of Leiria (Portugal),

- Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave (Portugal),
- Széchenyi István University (SZE) (Hungary),

A diverse range of teaching and learning actions will be developed which will provide students with different international programmes (short-term and e-learning). International cooperation projects in research and development will also be implemented. RUN-EU will also promote the economic, social, cultural, and sustainable development of the regions covered by the network, providing the necessary skills so that students, researchers, and regional agents can successfully face the challenges of the future. The members have a regional as opposed to a city focus and have a proven track record in the delivery of future and advanced skills activities in teaching, learning, research, and engagement relevant to societal challenges including future industry, sustainable development, environment and climate change, ageing population, and social inclusion.

The network is deemed by AIT to mark an important step forward in AIT's internationalisation strategy, as it enables forming deep thematic relationships with other higher education institutions across Europe who are also committed to delivering long lasting regional impacts. The RUN EU Initiative will enable AIT and LIT, to leverage international best practice, enable student and staff mobility while facilitating joint research and undergraduate programmes. Partnerships, such as Run-EU, will aid AIT & LIT in achieving their technological education mission and provide new, exciting opportunities for all learners – including studying abroad, the benefits of which have been shown to greatly improve employment prospects, and for staff, teaching abroad boosts professional development and the enhancement of learning new teaching and assessment practices.

2.6.2 International Student Exchange Activity

The Institute is active in receiving and facilitating students outside the EU from countries such as China, Canada, Brazil, Malaysia, Nigeria, Ghana, and India. Undoubtedly, the cultural and intellectual enrichment derivable from a genuinely articulated European or international experience will contribute to the holistic formation of graduates and to their employability. Details of the number of International Students who attended AIT in the 2019/2020 period are outlined in **Section 2.7: Information and Data Management**.

The exchange of staff between partner institutions also contributes greatly to the European/international dimension of AIT and benefits both staff and students. The main / core activities of the International Office include:

- Enhancing and developing international student and staff mobility and reviewing existing relationships with international partner universities

- Assessing opportunities for international collaboration and establishing relationships with appropriate international partners
- Promotion of AIT and its courses to students in international markets
- Management of applications and monitoring of incoming international students
- Management and monitoring of AIT students undertaking a period of study at partner university or international placement
- Promotion of opportunities available overseas to Institute staff and students with particular emphasis on EU programmes
- Administration and co-ordination of Institute EU projects (e.g., Erasmus+)
- Reporting (financial and qualitative) of EU-funded programmes to the Higher Education Authority and ensuring compliance with EU regulations
- Management of joint programmes with partner universities in Asia
- Providing advice to international students on services available to them on registering at AIT and liaising with Students Resources, Counselling, Careers Office, Chaplaincy, Health Centre, and Students' Union when students require additional support. Some of these services of relevance to international students are outlined below.

Athlone Institute of Technology tendered for representative office in India in January 2020 and following this process, One Step Global was the successful tenderer. The office opened in September 2020. International Office staff connected virtually in February 2020 with partner universities, educational consultants, agents, and international students after the spread of Covid-19 to Europe. The fact that AIT opened the representative office in India was timely as AIT remains connected with its priority international markets of China, India, Malaysia, and Nigeria. AIT has two staff based internationally, one in China, one in Malaysia and now has a representative office in India. Our internationalisation strategy is embedded in AIT's Strategic Plan and the Institute is well placed to attract high calibre international students and researchers to our campus during 2021-22. There are several programmes which are approved by the Ministry of Education in China. Students receive the award when they come to AIT.

2.7 Information and Data Management

Data gathered in the 2019/2020 period included the provision of information to relevant internal stakeholders to inform a spectrum of academic decision making. This included the following analyses:

1. **Faculty & Department Profiles**
 - a. Faculty Trends to 2019/2020
 - b. Department Profile
 - c. Mode of Delivery
2. **Enrolments Profiles**
 - a. Discipline, Programme Level, and Gender Entry Profile
 - b. Postgraduate
 - c. Springboard/ICT
3. **Student Performance**
 - a. Withdrawals
 - b. Examination
 - c. Student Experience
4. **International Profiles**

2.7.1 Faculty Analysis and Trends to 2019/2020

Faculty Trends to 2019/20

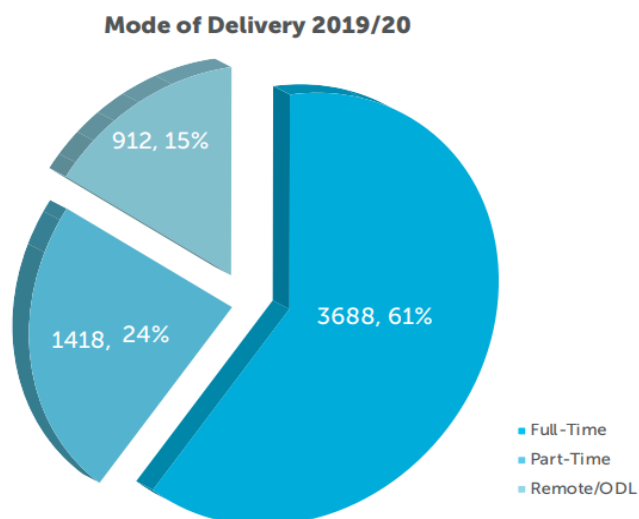
Student numbers by department 2016/17 to 2019/20 (including exam only)

DEPARTMENT	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Accounting and Business Computing	568	529	574	633
Business and Management Studies	673	613	659	714
Civil Engineering and Construction	117	127	148	171
Lifelong Learning	415	623	626	660
Design	112	109	134	134
Electronic Computer Software	534	497	425	674
Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	351	377	338	316
Social Sciences	580	611	618	588
Life and Physical Science	485	498	550	579
Sport and Health Sciences	341	372	355	359
Mechanical and Polymer	244	262	334	435
Nursing and Health Care	367	415	463	479
Trades	174	192	263	276
TOTAL STUDENTS AS PER MARCH	4961	5225	5487	6018

2.7.2 Department Analysis Profiles - 2019/2020

Department	Full-Time	Part-Time	Online & Distance Learning	INSERVICE	Total	FT%	PT%	ODL%
Accounting & Business Computing	207	243	158	25	633	33%	42%	25%
Business & Management Studies	565	70	79	-	714	79%	10%	11%
Civil Engineering and Construction	94	31	46	-	171	55%	18%	27%
Electronics & Informatics	423	59	192	-	674	63%	9%	28%
Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure	229	87	-	-	316	72%	28%	0%
Life and Physical Sciences	477	102	-	-	579	82%	18%	0%
Lifelong Learning	-	379	281	-	660	0%	57%	43%
Mechanical, Polymer & Design	300	63	72	-	435	69%	14%	17%
Design	132	2	-	-	134	99%	1%	-
Nursing and Healthcare	366	29	84	-	479	76%	6%	18%
Social Sciences	552	36	-	-	588	94%	6%	0%
Sport and Health Sciences	343	16	-	-	359	96%	4%	0%
Trades	-	276	-	-	276	0%	100%	0%
Grand Total	3688	1393	912	25	6018	61%	24%	15%

2.7.3 Mode of Delivery Analysis - 2019/2020



2.7.4 Enrolment Analysis & Profiles - 2019/2020: Discipline, Programme Level, Residency



AIT Enrolment at a Glance...

Faculty

00	A	B	E	H	S
----	---	---	---	---	---

Enrolled

Y	N
---	---

HCI

N	201100	201200	201300	201400	201500	201600	201700	201800	201900	202000
---	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

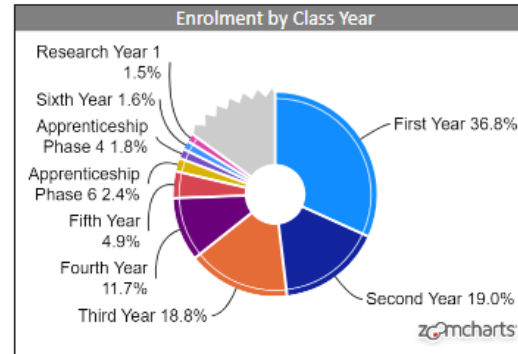
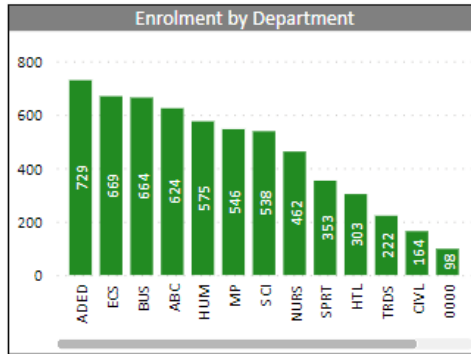
Total Enrolment
5960

Springboard

Research / Taught

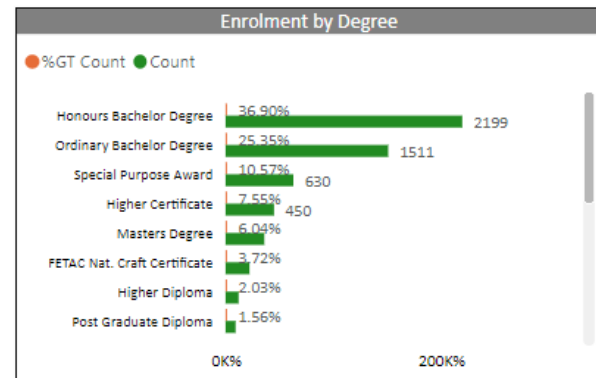
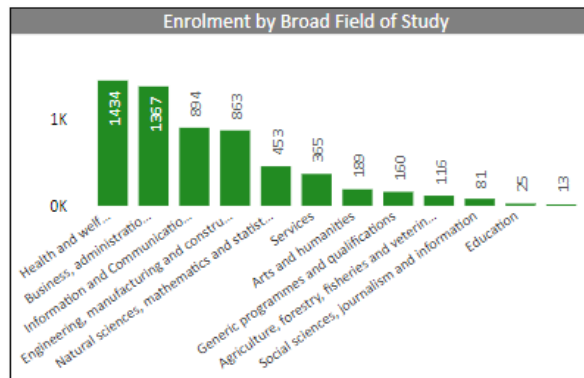
Y	N	R	T
---	---	---	---

Level1	%CT Count	Count
PostGrad	10.70%	638
F	3.86%	230
P	6.85%	408
UnderGrad	89.30%	5322
	0.02%	1
F	59.13%	3524
P	30.15%	1797
Total	100.00%	5960



Residency	F	M
EU Resident	46.51%	43.20%
F	30.30%	23.71%
P	16.21%	19.48%
Non-EU Resident	4.13%	5.74%
F	3.88%	5.07%
P	0.25%	0.67%
Unknown	0.15%	0.25%
F		0.02%
P	0.15%	0.23%
Total	50.79%	49.19%

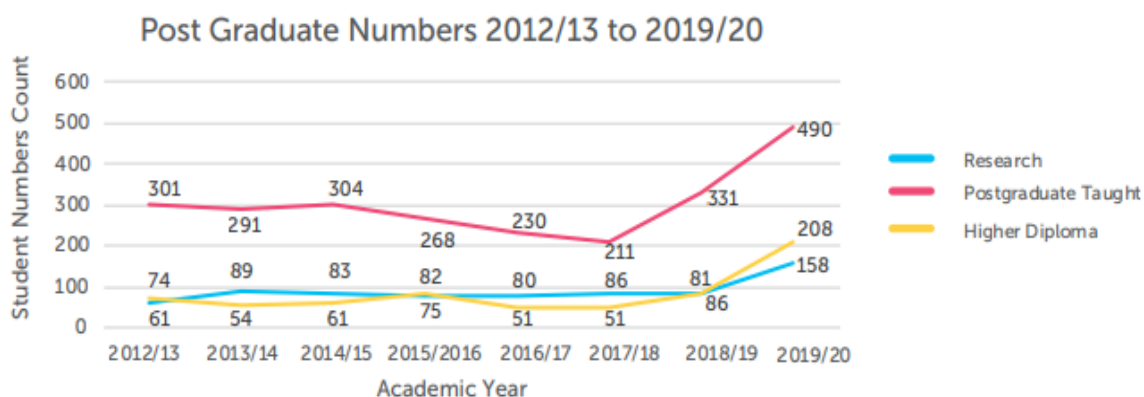
NFQ Level	F	M	N	Total
00	1	5		6
06	487	651		1138
07	845	722		1567
08	1326	1110	1	2437
09	205	320		525
10	38	53		91
9B	14	8		22
CE	66	22		88
PS	45	41		86
Total	3027	2932	1	5960



2.7.5 Enrolment Analysis & Profiles - 2019/2020: Postgraduate Profiles

Postgraduate Analysis

Faculty	March 2013 2012/13	March 2014 2013/14	March 2015 2014/15	March 2016 2015/16	March 2017 2016/17	March 2018 2017/18	March 2019 2018/19	March 2020 2019/20
Research								
Business & Hospitality	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	5
Engineering & Informatics	29	54	53	49	53	56	58	116
Science & Health	30	34	29	26	27	29	27	37
Research Total	61	89	83	75	80	86	86	158
Postgraduate Taught (Master's, PG Diploma & PG Cert)								
Business & Hospitality	72	80	101	84	99	91	221	210
Engineering & Informatics	81	124	130	85	83	52	45	173
Science & Health	124	69	69	99	48	68	58	51
Lifelong Learning	24	18	4	0	0	0	7	56
Postgraduate Taught Total	301	291	304	268	230	211	331	490
Higher Diploma								
Business & Hospitality	74	47	52	68	40	29	65	170
Engineering & Informatics	0	0	0	0	11	22	16	38
Science & Health	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	0
Lifelong Learning	0	0	9	7	0	0	0	0
Higher Diploma Total	74	54	61	82	51	51	81	208
Total Postgraduate	436	434	448	425	361	348	498	856



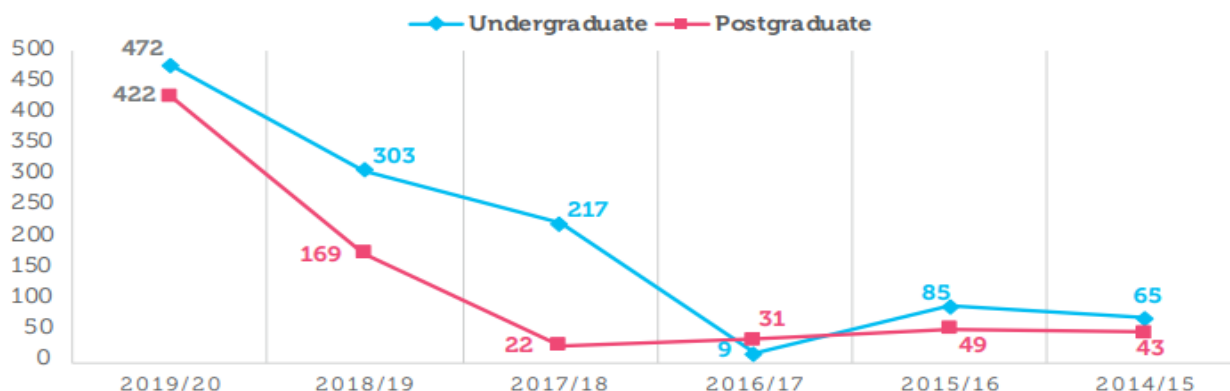
2.7.6 Enrolment Analysis & Profiles - 2019/2020: Springboard/ICT

Springboard

Department	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Accounting Business Computing	160	153	-	10	33	17
Business Management Studies	79	-	-	-	-	-
Civil, Construction Engineering	43	32	-	19	46	33
Electronics, Computer and Software Engineering	178	16	22	11	-	-
Hospitality and Tourism	54	12	-	-	-	-
Lifelong Learning	352	245	217	-	23	30
Mechanical, Polymer and Design	28	14	-	-	15	12
Trades	-	-	-	-	17	16
Total Springboard & ICT at March SRS	894	472	239	40	134	108

Springboard/ICT Initiatives	Number of programmes	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Undergraduate	14	65	85	9	217	303	472
Postgraduate	13	43	49	31	22	169	422
Total	27	108	134	40	239	472	894
% change on previous year	-	-	24%	-70%	498%	97%	89%
Numbers change on previous year	-	108	26	-94	199	233	422

SPRINGBOARD/ICT STUDENT NUMBERS TRENDING 2014/15 - 2019/20



2.7.7 Student Performance: Withdrawal Analysis & Profiles - 2019/2020:

The table below is a synopsis of the review of the student completed withdrawal forms in the reporting period, in comparison to the previous year.

Reason Provided for Withdrawal	2018/19	2019/20	% Of total 19/20
Apprenticeship	1	1	0.5%
Did not like course/not suited	45	36	19.7%
Employment	26	13	7.1%
Financial Reasons	13	9	4.9%
Medical	21	15	8.2%
Not Declared	38	38	20.8%
Other	36	68	37.2%
Other IT/University	10	2	1.1%
Other Third Level College	1	1	0.5%
PLC/NCVA - training course	0	0	0.0%
To Repeat Leaving Certificate	0	0	0.0%
Total Withdrawals	191	183	

The 20% who selected 'Did not like course/not suited' is the highest selected specific reason for withdrawal. It would suggest career guidance weaknesses and/or not enough research done by the student. This historically has been the highest reason provided. It is the intention that the planned appointment of a student success resource in the immediate will allow for an analysis on these and other factors which are impeding students in progressing in their programme of study. A withdrawal report is provided to the senior Faculty and Department management that breaks down at the withdrawal patterns at programme level including reasons for withdrawal and dates, which is critical for attrition reviews and ensuring appropriate focus is given where needed at programme level. Also, in the reporting period, AIT observed high numbers of Springboard withdrawal with no reason given. It is intended that more analysis of the withdrawal of Springboard students will be completed also as this is a rising cohort of entrants to third level. The nature of the programmes, many being of short duration with smaller number of credits may be resulting in the lower commitment to completion, also tempered by the level of programme entry. The top 5 programmes recording withdrawals were Springboard as outlined below:



AIT Withdrawal Trend

201100	201200	201300	201400	201500	201600	201700	201800	201900	202000
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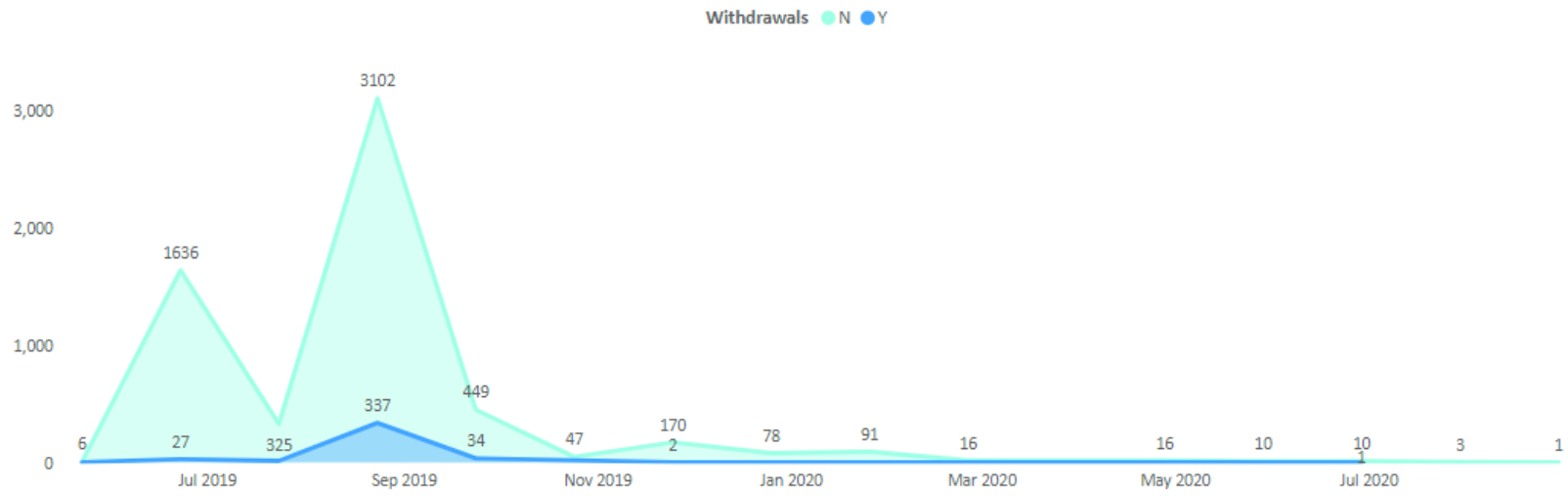
Level
All

Mode
All

Stage
All

Springboard
All

HCI
All



POS	Count of Withdrew
AL_BSMTL_6	29
AL_BLEAD_8	22
AL_KDATA_8	21
AL_BLSCM_6	17
AL_CBIMC_8	14

Class Level	F	M
First Year	168	169
Second Year	9	14
Fourth Year	10	9

Gender	A	B	E	S
F	78	48	28	43
M	55	55	95	15

County Desc	Count of Withdrew
Westmeath	104
Offaly	52
Roscommon	43
Galway	41
Longford	32
Dublin	31

2.7.8 Student Performance: Examination Results 2019/2020]

Performance Indicator				
	2019/2020		Comparison with 2018/2019	
	Number	%	Number	%
Academic Standing Pass	5676	86	5052	83
Absent	138	2	79	1.3
Deferral	85	1.3	71	1.2
Exemptions Granted	482	7.3	682	11.3
Fail	122	1.8	76	1.3
Incomplete	86	1.3	68	1.1
Withdrew	32 ^{Note 1}	0.5	28 ^{Note 1}	0.5
Totals	6621		6056	
4				

2.7.9 Student Performance: Student Experience 2019/2020

A total of 44,707 students nationally responded to the 2020 studentsurvey.ie (formerly known as ISSE), representing a national response rate of 31%. AIT's response rate of 68%, achieved via a strong partnership approach between the Quality Office, Academic Staff, and the Students' Union, continues to be the highest across all HEIs, by a considerable margin. In 2019, there was an increase in participation of 3.4% on 2018, with a total of 1802 (1779 in 2018) first and final year responses. The trend continued in 2020 with a total of 1,192 undergraduate students from first and final years participating in the survey.

AIT has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the importance of the Student Survey initiative through the levels of engagement recorded. AIT recorded a participation rate of 68% in the Student Survey for 2019/2020. This and previous participation levels reflect a significant commitment from several bodies with the

⁴ Does Not included those enrolled-on Springboard Programmes who accounted for largest cohort of withdrawals: See section 2.7.7. Withdrawals above based at withdrawals noted on SRS returns in November 2019.

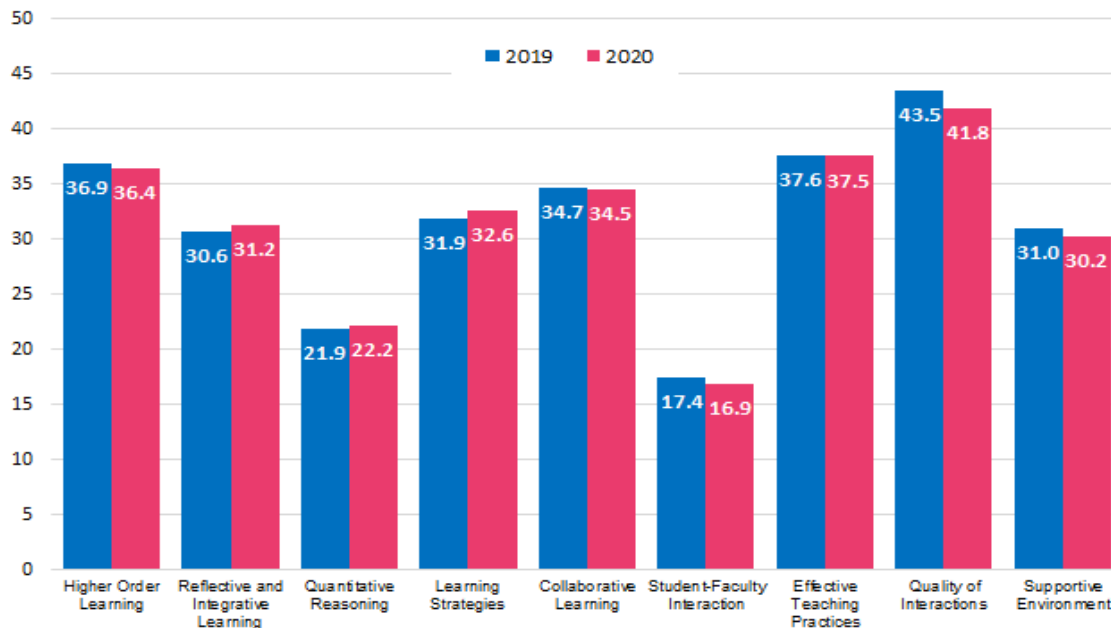
Institute, including the Students’ Union and especially from the student body itself which clearly values this opportunity to have their voices heard.

A summary of the engagement levels of eligible students in the survey is summarized in the Table below:

Year	National Response Rate	AIT Response Rate
2018	28%	65%
2019	35%	68.5%
2020	31%	68%

The results for AIT continue to be positive with 85.9% of students choosing good/excellent when asked about their educational experience at AIT. This is very positive showing that students value the interactions with their lecturers, the quality of educational provision; teaching and opportunities afforded to them. Students in AIT have shown appreciation that they have a platform to have their voices heard.

The survey is composed of 67 questions, grouped by the engagement ‘indicator’ to which they relate. The indicators are Higher Order Learning, Reflective and integrative learning, Quantitative reasoning, Learning strategies, Collaborative learning, Student-faculty interaction, and Effective teaching practices.



AIT Student Survey comparison between 2019 and 2020

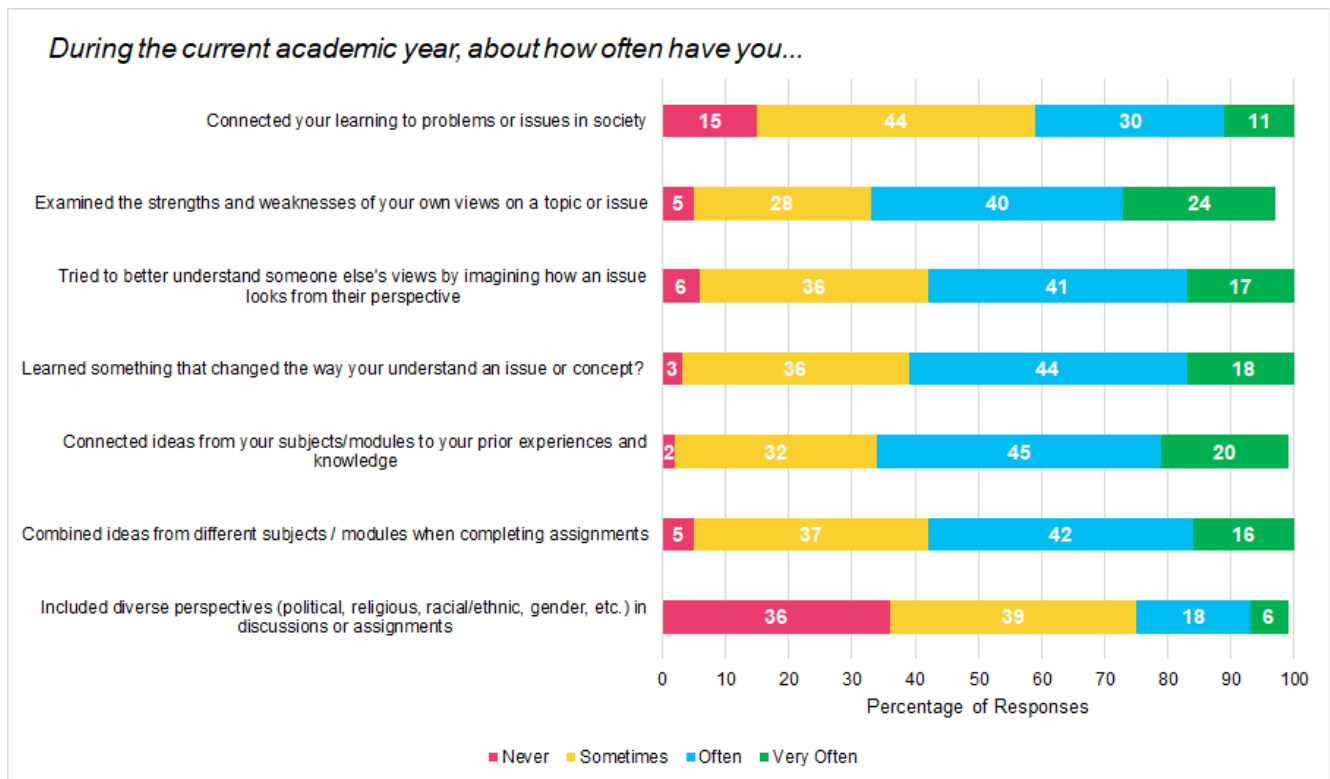
The resulting data from the Student Survey is very valuable and it is used Institute wide at Faculty and programme board level. Areas for improvement are highlighted by students who participate in the Student Survey, and this is continually being acted upon throughout the Institute.

The link to the National Report for 2020 can be found [here](#).

The responses to the indicator Reflective and Integrative Learning have shown an increase in responses for 2020. This data is displayed below.

Reflective and Integrative Learning

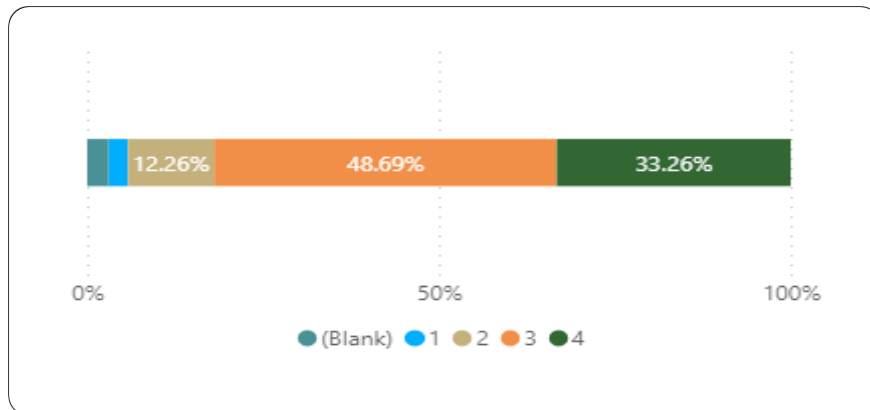
These questions explore the extent to which students relate their own understanding and experiences to the learning content being used.



Students in AIT have consistently rated the quality of their educational experience very highly. For the 2019/2020, the surveyed students were asked to reflect on two non-indicator questions and the data is displayed

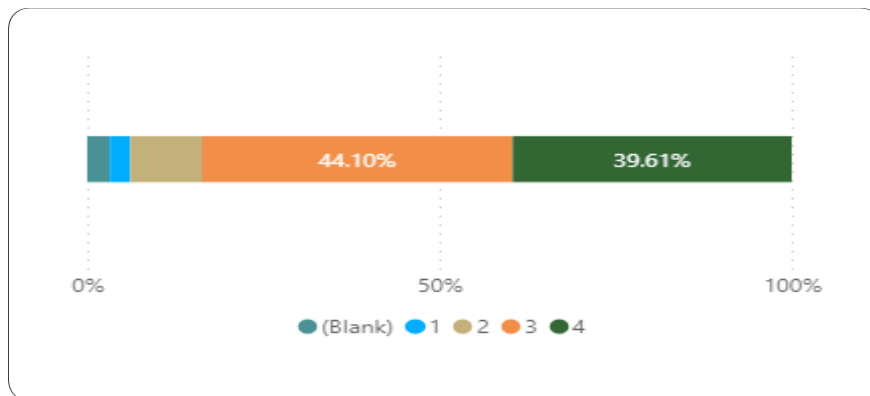
below. The first question indicates that 81.95% of the respondents evaluated their experience very positively. The second question indicates that 83.71% of students would attend AIT again.

How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?



1=Poor; 2=Fair; 3=Good; 4=Excellent

If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?



1=Definitely No; 2=Probably No; 3=Probably Yes; 4=Definitely yes

2.7.10 International Analysis and Profiles - 2019/2020

Internationalisation 2018/2019					
	Full-Time	Part-Time	ODL	In Service	Total
International – EU	73	5	1	-	79
International – Non-EU	339	17	2	-	358
Erasmus Incoming (EU and Non-EU)	124	0	-	-	124
Other Exchange (EU and Non-EU)	1	0	-	-	1
Total	537	22	3	-	562
% International	15%	2%	-	-	11%

Internationalisation 2019/2020					
	Full-Time	Part-Time	ODL	In Service	Total
International – EU	51	-	2	-	53
International – Non-EU	393	32	1	-	426
Erasmus Incoming (EU and Non-EU)	109	-	-	-	109
Other Exchange (EU and Non-EU)	5	1	-	-	6
Total	558	33	3	-	594
% International	10%	3%	-	-	10%

2.8 Equality and Diversity

AIT is committed to equality and diversity amongst staff, students, and stakeholders. AIT has a vice-president with responsibility for Equality Diversity and Inclusiveness - John McKenna. The current work of this office at present is to assist with the application for a Bronze Athena SWAN award for AIT, and to support all gender and equality related initiatives, policy management, and implementation of events in AIT.

2.8.1 Equality and Diversity Steering Committee

An Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Steering Committee was established in November 2019 to oversee and provide guidance and direction for the achievement of equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives across the Institute. It will report directly to Governing Body and it is chaired by the President.

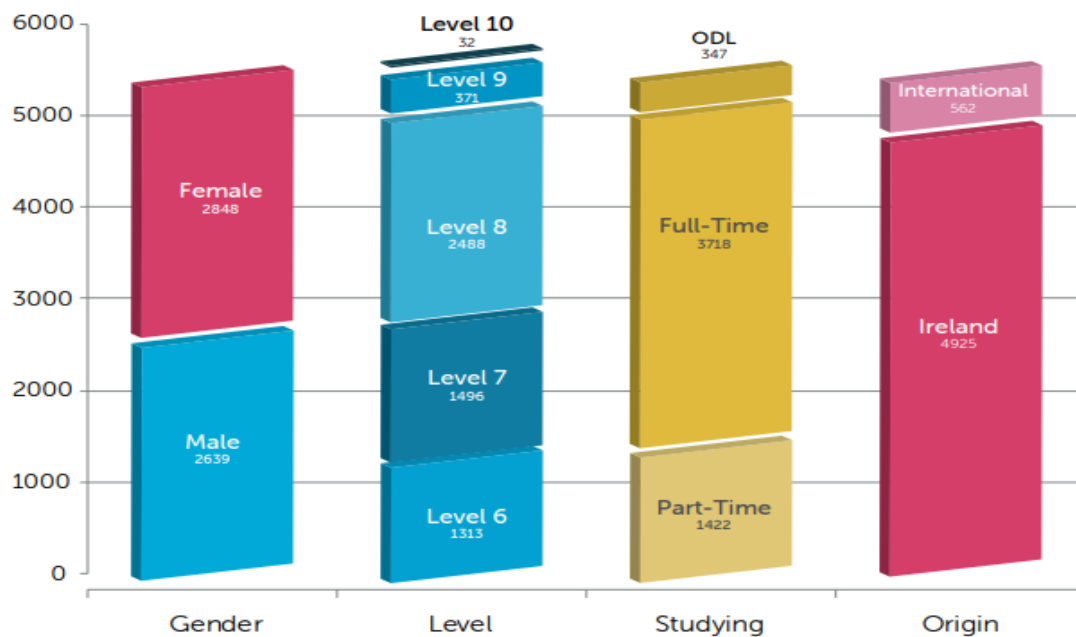
2.8.2 Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace

AIT have partnered with Legal Island to roll out an eLearning course which will give all colleagues an understanding of Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. The course is designed to help staff understand the value of Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace and it also explains the legal obligation not to engage in any inappropriate conduct or conversation. Content is based on real life scenarios, and it is also CPD accredited. The course covers - Unconscious Bias Stereotyping Harassment Diversity at work Dignity at work and Types of Discrimination. The mandatory eLearning course was offered to AIT staff from 21st October to 21st November 2019.

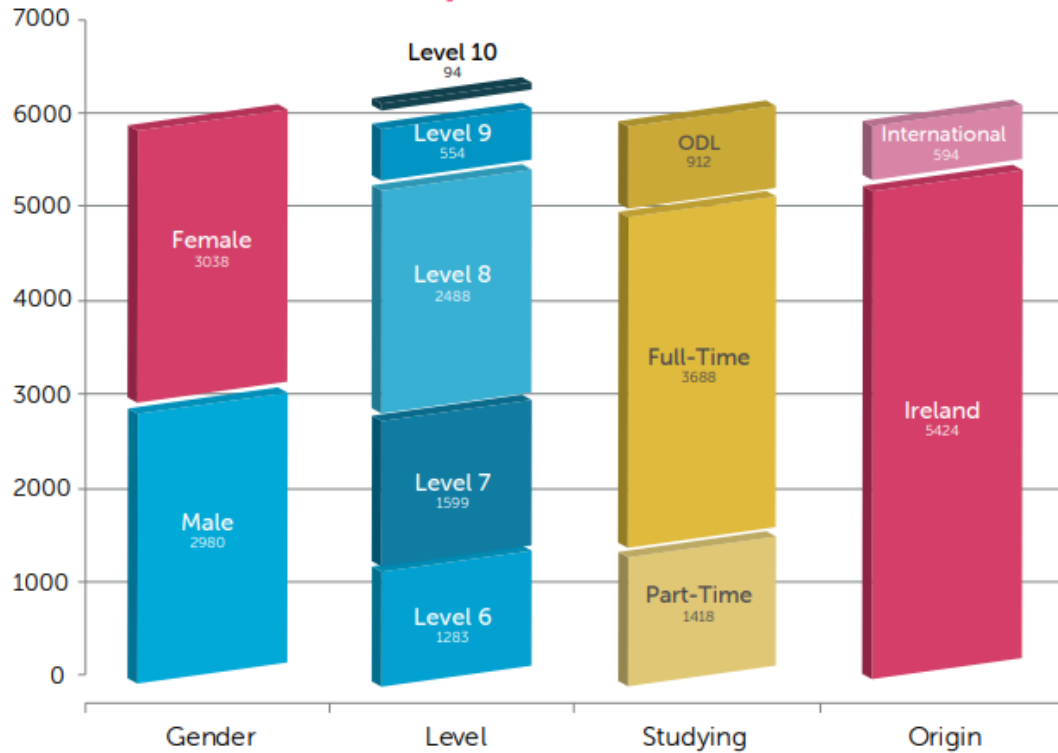
2.8.3 Diversity of the Student Population

2.8.3.1 Gender, Level, Mode of Study, and International Student Profile

PROFILE OF STUDENTS 2018/2019

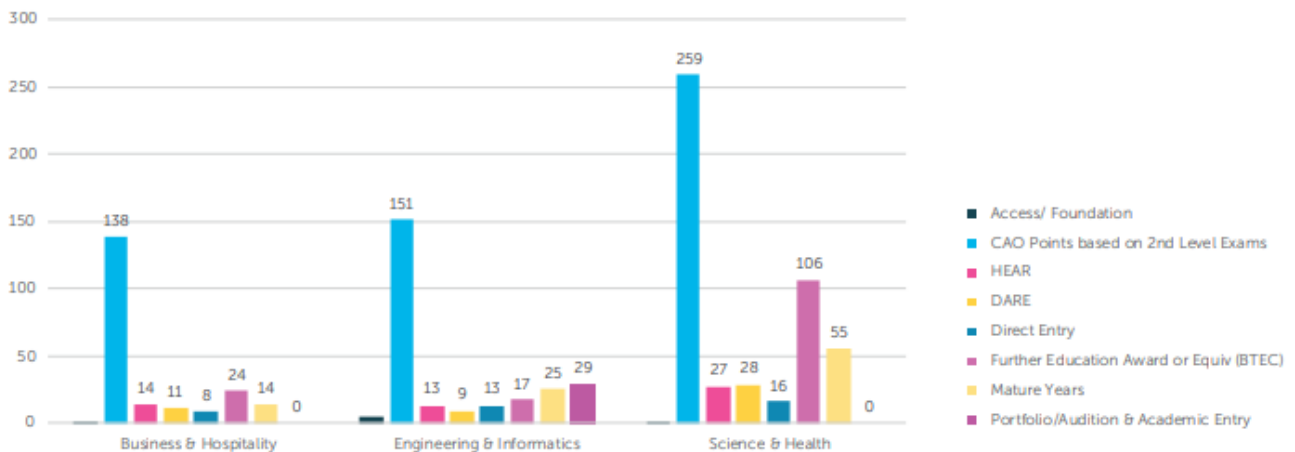


PROFILE OF STUDENTS 2019/2020

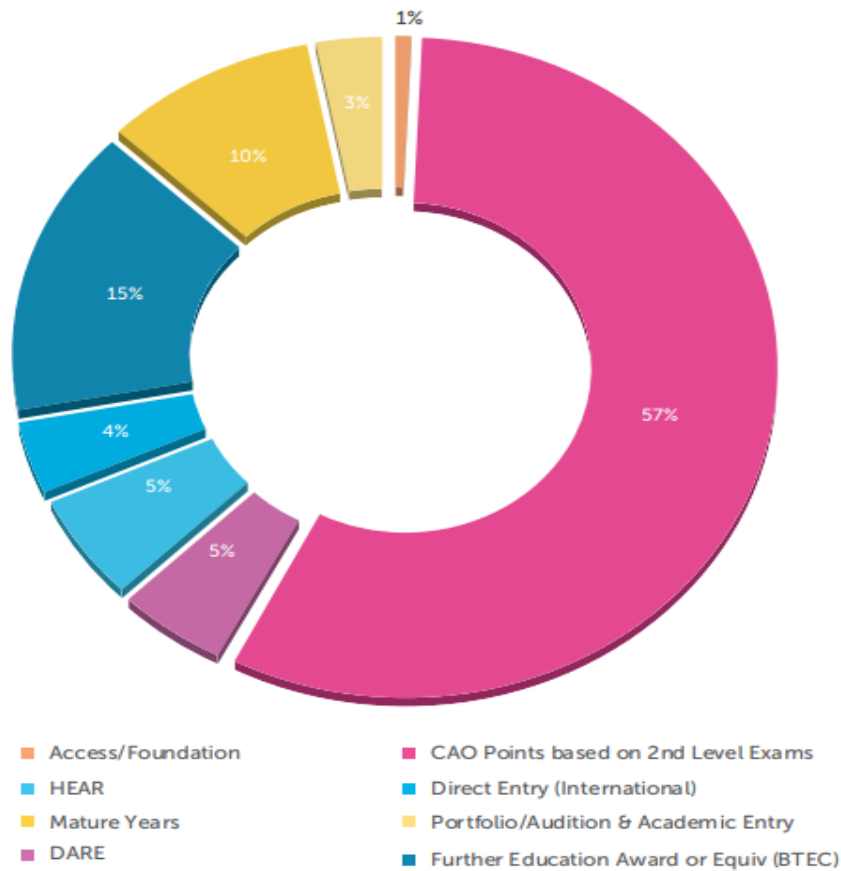


2.8.3.2 Entry Student Profile

Student Cohort by Entry Basis for Full-Time New Entrants for 2019/20 Academic Year



Entry Basis for AIT Academic Year 2019-20 as per 1st March 2020 SRS Data



2.9 Public Information and Communication

The AIT website is the primary repository for the publication of public information. The Institute believes in the provision of timely, accurate, relevant, and accessible information to both external and internal stakeholders. An overview of the range of this publication information is outlined in the table below, including publications that are relevant to the reporting period:

INFORMATION TYPE	ELEMENTS	WEBSITE LINK
President Reports	Multi-Annual	President Reports
Annual Report	Annual	Annual Reports
AIT's Strategic Plan	Four years	AIT Strategic Plan 2019-2023
Governance: Corporate	Governing Body:	

INFORMATION TYPE	ELEMENTS	WEBSITE LINK
	Code of Conduct	AIT Code of Conduct Governing Body 01.01 .2018 .pdf
	Code of Governance	THEA Code of Governance 01.01 .2018 .pdf (ait.ie)
	Membership	Membership of Governing Body 2019-2020
Governance: Academic	Quality Office	Quality Information
	Teaching and Learning	KeyLearningActivities.pdf (ait.ie)
Equality and Diversity	About EDI in AIT	About EDI in AIT Athlone Institute of Technology
	Athena Swan	Athena Swan Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Related Policies	EDI Policy approved GB 13.5 .2020 (1) .pdf (ait.ie)
	College of Sanctuary	College of Sanctuary Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
Structure	Membership of Executive Management Team	Executive Management Team - EMT Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
Faculty Information	Faculty of Business and Hospitality	Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Faculty of Engineering and Informatics	Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Faculty of Science and Health	Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Faculty of Continuing Professional, Distance and Online Learning	Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
GDPR Information	Student Privacy Notice	Student Privacy Notice Agreement Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Data Protection News and Information	DATA PROTECTION NEWS AND INFORMATION Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Access Requests and Breach Notices	Access Requests and Breach Reporting Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Policy Documents	POLICY DOCUMENTS Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)

INFORMATION TYPE	ELEMENTS	WEBSITE LINK
	Student Data	Student Data Journey Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
Graduate Alumni		Graduate Alumni Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
International Information	International Student Information	International Students Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
Research, Innovation and Enterprise	Innovation and Enterprise Information	Research & Innovation Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Research Institutes and Industry Centres:	Research & Innovation Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	- Bioscience Research Centre	Bioscience Research Institute Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	- Materials Research Centre	Materials Research Institute Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	- Software Research Institute	Software Research Institute Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Postgraduate Research Opportunities	Postgraduate Research Opportunities Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Research Funding Opportunities	Research Funding Opportunities Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
Student Information	Current Students	Current Students Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Future Students	Future Students Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
Student Supports	Student Support information	Student Supports Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Disability and Learning Supports	Disability & Learning Support Service Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Disability access to AIT	DARE – Disability Access Route to Education Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Learning Supports	Learning Support Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Examination Supports	Exam Supports Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)
	Resource Centre	Student Resource Centre Team Athlone Institute of Technology (ait.ie)

2.10 Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

In 2019, the Graduate School was established, as well as revised academic regulations for postgraduate research. The Institute appointed a Dean of Graduate School and Research in 2020.

2.10.1 Quality Assurance for Research under the Structured Research Programmes

The AIT Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations document provides a common point of reference for all staff and postgraduate research candidates in the Institute and relevant funding agencies.

These academic regulations will apply to all postgraduate studies undertaken by research and thesis mode at AIT. Quality Assurance for research practices in AIT is also influenced by the series of booklets produced by the Irish Universities Quality Board on 'Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education'.

2.10.2 The new research Governance under the new Structured Research Programmes

The Academic Council has the academic governance and oversight of research policies, procedures, and regulations. The overall responsibility for the upkeep and development of the research regulations lies with the Graduate School with internal governance within the office of the Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar.

2.11 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review (ASQ)

Schedule A included in **PART B** provides a detailed overview of the self-evaluation, monitoring and review of academic activities conducted by AIT during the reporting period. Any changes required to academic operations, programme implementations, or proposals for new programme, identified from such self-evaluations, monitoring and reviews are presented at the *Academic Strategy and Quality Sub-Committee* for approval. The outline provided in Schedule A is based on a summary of the minutes held for the seven ASQ meetings held in the 2019/2020 academic year. ASQ is chaired by the Registrar. To ensure the full and effective operation of ASQ, the TOR were reviewed at the beginning of the academic year 2019/2020.

Programme Evaluations

Existing validated programmes were re-evaluated, monitored, and reviewed by Programme Teams, within their Department and Faculties during 2019/2020. This self-evaluation resulted in a range of proposed changes to validated programmes, for several quality enhancement purposes. Any changes proposed were evaluated by the Programme Board before submission to the Academic Strategy and Quality Sub-Committee of Academic Council. The operation of ASQ means that all proposed changes are firstly desk reviewed by ASQ members with any queries, suggestions, or objections to proposals sought being firstly addressed by the proposing Department and Faculty in advance of the ASQ meeting. Accordingly, only proposals that have been fully reviewed by the ASQ membership individually and collectively are only considered at the scheduled ASQ meetings. The minutes of the respective meetings notes any additional requirements to be addressed by the proposing team in advance of the proposal being accepted.

The self-evaluation methods included:

- Module evaluations
- Programme board meetings
- Meetings with enrolled programme learners who provided module and stage feedback
- Reviews by Heads of Department on the operation of the approved programme schedule
- Inputs from academics on improvements to be made to newly implemented programmes where operational matters were identified

The range of proposed changes included:

- Changes to module assessment methods
- Changes to timing of module delivery between semesters of Stage at the equivalent NFQ Level
- Syllabus changes
- Module learning outcome revisions
- Changes to module structures based on the implementation of semesterisation
 - o Note: Schedule A details the substantial range of changes proposed due to semesterisation that were presented at the ASQ meetings in May and June 2020.

Other outcomes arising from self-evaluations conducted and addressed by ASQ in the reporting period included:

- (i) Several new programme proposals to meet: (a) the strategic academic programme portfolio plans of faculties; (b) to respond to regional and national need (Springboard & HCI programmes)
- (ii) The implementation of exit awards for validate Ab-Initio awards to support students wishing to exit their planned programme of study at a preceding NFQ level
- (iii) To respond to professional accreditation requirements
- (iv) To address some operational matters that arose due to COVID-19 impacting on academic delivery

2.13 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

2.13.1 AIT Membership of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

Several academic and professional staff from the Institute are currently members of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), participating in the development of national initiatives that aim to increase awareness of the importance of academic integrity across the higher education sector in Ireland.

NAIN's work is ongoing, supporting both students and staff, and is focused on preventing academic fraud and misconduct through the development of a positive culture of academic integrity in higher education. The table below outlines the membership from AIT and the working groups to which each is affiliated.

WORKING GROUP 1	WORKING GROUP 2	WORKING GROUP 3
Frances O'Connell, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. Louise Higgins, Admissions Officer	Catherine O'Donoghue, Learning and Teaching Unit. Cora McCormack, Quality Officer	Orla Thornton, Director of Marketing and Communications

The Registrar of AIT is a Co-Chair of Working Group 1 of NAIN and has been directly involved in the development of a planned national publication related to Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms. This publication is intended to assist HEIs in the management of academic misconduct and critically in the development of a culture of good academic conduct amongst students and researchers.

2.13.2 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

In AIT continues to develop a strong institute-wide culture of academic integrity and awareness, keeping academic integrity central to all learning, teaching, assessment, and research activities. As well as support for lecturers and students from both the Library and Academic Writing Centre, during the past year AIT took part in the inaugural International Academic Integrity Day. This was part of a series of national and local events, aimed at increasing awareness of academic integrity for both staff and students.

Case Study 5 in Section 4 provides a detailed overview of work initiated by the Learning and Teaching unit of AIT in the reporting period that was targeted in addressing the academic integrity of the assessments completed by students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Student Training

In addition to accessing national events via online platforms, at a local Institutional level, students were invited to partake in a workshop offered by the Academic Writing Centre, focusing on the need for well-planned writing to support academic integrity. An Institute-wide quiz was held for the students aimed at creating a greater familiarity with some of the terms used when discussing academic integrity, as well as asking students to reflect on their own understanding of the topic.

Staff Initiatives

Staff events have focused on upskilling with workshops led by the Learning and Teaching Unit on recognising plagiarism and identifying tools to use and ways to support students in avoiding plagiarism in their work. A resource pack, developed by the Learning and Teaching Unit, was shared with staff to use in class to further enhance student understanding of academic integrity, with a strong focus on developing skills to avoid plagiarism.

Policy Review

A copy of the [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy](#) can be found on the AIT website. The policy and associated procedures apply to all enrolled learners in AIT engaged in academic work which contributes to an award of credits. Where academic misconduct is detected, it is the policy of the Institute that it be dealt with fairly, consistently and in accordance with the principles of natural justice, which ensure that a person receives a fair and unbiased hearing before a decision is made that will negatively affect them.

In the context of the AIT membership of the National Academic Integrity Network, a review of the policy has been initiated in the reporting period with the establishment of a working group to review the policy in tandem with relevant outputs, guidance, and initiatives associated with NAIN that could be relevant to the existing policy and its remit.

Plagiarism Committee

The committee met on four occasions during the reporting period. Cases presented were fully investigated and relevant penalties were applied. The Chair of the Plagiarism also provided an update to the Registrars Offices of initiatives that would be relevant to address common areas that contributed to academic misconduct by students. Such trend data is informing the review of the Academic Integrity and Plagiarism policy due for completion in the 2020-2021 period.

Research Ethics

A review of the Research Ethics regulations and procedures associated with research activity has been initiated and is due for completion in the 2020-2021 year. This evolved from the development of the Research Regulations of the Institute under the auspices of the Graduate Research Office.

Technologies

TURNITIN is widely used by the academic community in monitoring the assessment work completed and submitted by students. Assessment work is submitted to Moodle which enables the review of submissions via this application. As a result, there is strong evidence amongst the student community that the detection of plagiarism is very active and widespread across the Institute, with cases detected presented at the Plagiarism committee.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	In response to the New Strategic Plan 2019-2023, each functional area is required to have a Strategic Plan	<p>The Institute Library developed its own <u>Strategic Plan</u>, which aligns with the overall AIT Strategic Plan: A Technological University for the Region 2020-2023.</p> <p>The Human Resources Department developed a <u>Strategic Plan</u> for its functional area.</p> <p>The Materials Research Institute <u>Strategic Plan</u> was developed in consultation with research and academic staff. The Strategic Plan specifies the polymer and materials research activities to deliver the growth ambition for polymeric materials research in AIT.</p> <p>The Strategic Plans for other functional areas are now being developed in the context of the TU. For example, the planned Quality Assurance Framework</p>

		governing all activities of the TU will include an alignment matrix for the respective functional and thematic strategies that will support the new Strategic Plan for the TU.
2	All Collaboration/Articulation Agreements which are due for renewal will be reviewed in the context of Educational Provision Priority 3 (Academic Partnerships) and new Agreements signed	There have been no further articulation agreements or MOUs signed during the academic year 2019-2020. Equally, the review of articulation and MOU agreements was postponed in the context of the creation of the AIT-LIT TU consortium as the period for their operation would be limited. All MOUs and collaborative agreements will be reviewed in the context of the Institution being a designated awarding body with any linked providers being quality reviewed as a delegated awarding body.
3	In line with our Equality Diversity and Inclusion theme of our Strategic Plan all policies and procedures will be reviewed	The following policies are currently undergoing review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional EDI Action Plan • Gender identity and Expression policy • Institute Policy for Equality Diversity and Inclusion.
4	The establishment of the Quality Office and all associated structures and resources	An Assistant Registrar including Head of Quality was appointed in November 2019. The resources of the Quality Office have been reviewed in the context of the establishment of a Quality Officer role.
5	The establishment of a Central Data Centre within the Quality Office, which will collate and manage reports such as CAO, ISSE and Attrition	The establishment of a Head of Quality was the first element to support the initiation of this task. Due to changes in the assignment of the Assistant Registrar during the reporting period the progress on this item has been delayed. An internal analysis of where best to situate and structure an MIS function for AIT and the TU has been

		initiated, including the location of a Central Data Centre and the work it will complete independently and in tandem with the Quality Office.
6	To establish a centralised work placement office and digital system to manage and administer all work placement activities aligned with the academic departments.	<p>Placement is managed in a federated way throughout the Institute. A centralised placements administrative support office has been established and piloted to provide support to several programmes including Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care, Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care (P/T), Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Care Practice, Bachelor of Arts in Early Years Care and Education and most recently includes the addition of the Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing in 2019. An extensive review and scoping exercise were initiated with regards to a placement management system. Bids were invited from external providers and the system, InPlace, was selected. It is intended that InPlace would be adapted as the primary system for managing placement activities and associated administration for the Institute following completion of the pilot.</p> <p>The impact of the COVID-10 pandemic curtailed the plans to move the administration of more programme placements to the centralised office. The disruption to the operation of placements meant that existing localised arrangements within faculties were best placed to deal with the operation of placements so any planned transitions were stalled.</p>
7	Accreditation of AIT Social Care programmes by CORU	The Department of Social Science have compiled documentation outlining the changes, arising from the impact of COVID-19, on the operation of social care programmes due to the move to remote emergency teaching and learning and the

		<p>opportunity for students to complete planned placements in line with the stages and durations set out in the programmes approved programme schedules.</p> <p>The programme team are addressing the presentation of documentation to CORU for the accreditation of the Social Care programmes. This will be considered by CORU in advance of their panel visit which will now be re-scheduled to the 2021-2022 year.</p>
8	<p>Following Upgrade of the Academic Module Manager System, to AMM3, publishing a synopsis version of all programmes to the AIT website.</p>	<p>Due to the impact of the initiation of a review of the AIT website, subsequently subsumed as part of the TU project, this project was deferred. The planned programme reviews to be conducted in 2022 will incorporate the delineation of programme data that will be extracted from Module Manager 3 to the TU website.</p>
9	<p>Continuing to build research capacity and scale in line with the Institutes areas of research excellence and evolving research strengths.</p>	<p>Our three strategic research institutes in Materials research (MRI), Bioscience research (BRI) and Software research (SRI), along with two Enterprise Ireland funded Technology Gateways – Applied Polymer Technologies (APT) and Connected Media Application Design and Delivery (COMAND) - drive market-informed research in collaboration with industry and academic partners. AIT has established a cross-faculty Graduate School with associated quality structures. It continues to grow our postgraduate seed funding initiatives which have significantly contributed to AIT's institutional research profile and to the AIT-LIT Technological University agenda.</p> <p>A Disruptive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Academy will be developed within the Faculty of Business and Hospitality which will act as a nexus for student training in innovative concept and design to enable a pipeline of student research output to SME, new start-up, or larger industry technology transfer. This Academy will link with</p>

		the Research Institutes, Technology Gateways and MIRC as a bridge and enable transition of applied research to potential spin-out entities.
10	In line with the Strategic Plan, establish Thematic Reviews across the Institute in advance of Programmatic Review, to include work placement, student success, digital learning and access progression and transfer routes from apprenticeship to Level 10.	<p>Thematic reviews have been initiated in 2019/2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Work placement: The analysis of programmes within the Faculty of Science and Health and The Faculty of Engineering and Informatics has now enabled the inclusion of work-placements on most of the undergraduate programmes of the Institute. (ii) Digital Learning: a detailed analysis of a suitable teaching and learning platform to support the ongoing expansion of providing online and distance learning opportunities to full time; part-time, and distance learners was initiated in 2019/2020. A due diligence (iii) Student Success: The Institute has designated that the Student Success agenda will be led by a senior academic in the Institute. This will include the management of all data related to analysing and notifying to relevant internal stakeholders the follow data sets: Completion; Retention; Attrition; Academic Performance; and Withdrawal. The appointment of this lead is planned for the 2020/2021 year. <p>The implementation of this initiative will be aligned with the activity outlined in 5 above.</p>

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| <p>(iv) Access, Transfer and Progression Routes: the following initiatives were implemented during the reporting period to advance this thematic area:</p> <p>(a) A review of the existing RPL Policy in AIT was initiated with a wider project plan put in place to develop an application handbook to guide applications in this area.</p> <p>The Registrar also became a member of the National RPL Steering Group thereby enabling the outcomes from the work therein to feed into the reforms on this thematic area in the immediate in AIT.</p> <p>(b) Review of existing programmes to ensure that exit routes were embedded in validated programmes to allow ongoing progression for students wishing to complete their originally planned programme of study earlier</p> <p>(c) All new programme proposals now include a requirement to identify the Access, Transfer and Progression opportunities for students including the development of any Add-On programmes at higher levels on the NFQ from the 'parent' programme.</p> <p>(d) Apprenticeship Progression: The progression of craft & new generation apprentices will be reviewed in further detail in 2020/2021 in the context of the expansion of areas of craft apprenticeships and in parallel with the programmatic reviews which will commence in 2022. This later element is required to ensure that the access, transfer, and progression opportunities</p> |
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		for all categories of apprentices are reviewed at faculty, department, and programme level.
11	Upgrading to latest version of Exam Scheduler	Work was commissioned in May 2020 and through the Exams office and Banner support office the implementation of relevant software will be rolled out, following initial testing of the product. This will then be followed by several online training workshops planned at the beginning of the academic year 2020/2021. This upgrade will allow for multi-user functionality increasing the scope of the examination office to allow for multiple schedulers.
12	Implementation of GURU Academic systems package	The Guru system was piloted in the Faculty of Continuing Professional Online and Distance Learning during the academic year 2019/2020. The success of the pilot will inform the wider rollout across the Institute in 2019/2020. Further details on this are outlined in Section 2.2.2 <i>New Programmes of Training</i> . This training is planned to assure the quality of the usage of the system by the range of internal and external users including External Examiners.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Faculty of Business and Hospitality – Thematic Review	January 2021	2015
Faculty of Science and Health – Nursing Department The Higher Certificate in Dental Nursing: Re-accreditation	March 2021	2015

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Due to the impact of the progression of AIT-LIT TU Consortium plans both the AIT Institutional Review and the AIT scheduled Programmatic Review plans for all faculties have been reframed in the context of the planned TU appointment date. As a designated awarding body to Level 10 on the NFAQ, the academic governance structures of the TU will ensure that its programme offerings are aligned to:

- The National Framework of Qualifications
- The Academic Award Standards of the TU
- Valid and reliable programme and module learning outcomes
- Relevant teaching, learning and assessment strategies and methodologies
- The academic and/or professional accreditation quality standards

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

These case studies have been chosen to reflect a range of quality enhancement related initiatives and activities undertaken by AIT that reflect national thematic areas, inter-institutional initiatives, and internal quality assurance and enhancement activity during the reporting period. There are a number that are included to depict AIT's varied response across its functions and academic activities to address proactively and successfully a delimiting impact of the emergency situation arising from COVID-19 on academic delivery and academic governance in the 2019/2020 academic year.

CASE STUDY 1: Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework

This case study is an example of a cross institutional, developmental initiative to address a national thematic area of concern in Higher Education, that is, student mental health and well-being thereby directly addressing the pertaining rates of suicide amongst third level students.

Students' mental health has a direct influence on their ability to fully engage in their academic or research programme and may lead to a continuum of negative outcomes if not addressed including non-attendance, non-engagement; illness; non-completion of their programme and in extreme circumstances, suicide, or attempted suicide.

The work of Treasa Fox, a counselling psychologist and head of AIT's student counselling service, was central to the development of Ireland's first student mental health and suicide prevention framework. The national framework, designed to improve third-level mental health services, was launched by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris in the reporting period.

The new national framework helps higher education institutes identify where further improvements for student mental health are needed, provide good practice guidance and resources, and help standardise approaches across the country. The project, supported by the HEA Transformation and Innovation Fund, was developed in collaboration with students, mental health specialists and academics under the aegis of the SynthSCS project team, which was led by Treasa Fox, a counselling psychologist at Athlone Institute of Technology and SynthSCS project lead who worked on the 3Set work package. 3Set is a collaborative higher education project led by Trinity College Dublin and supported by University College Dublin and Athlone Institute of Technology, aimed at addressing increasing demand for student mental health services in higher education.

The framework is also key to identifying gaps in suicide prevention in higher education, thereby improving student mental health services nationally. It emphasizes that to effectively address higher education student mental health needs and prevent suicides, HEIs must adopt a whole system approach. The work of the project team has noted that mental health and suicide prevention among students is not the responsibility of any one unit or department; it is a whole-of-campus responsibility. During the reporting period, the SynthSCS project team has been investigating student mental health interventions and suicide prevention on campuses, innovative inter-agency collaborations, and international best practice guidance with the view to collating and categorising information and resources for use across Ireland's higher education institutions. The implementation of the framework is particularly timely in view of the added pressure experienced by third level students due to emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CASE STUDY 2: The AIT Academic Writing Centre

This case study relates to a specific initiative by AIT to improve the ability of learners to engage in the full range of their assessments and improve the quality of their assessment submissions by a range of developmental activities implemented by AIT Academic Writing Centre (AWC). The work of this centre was critically important to ensuring that students stayed engaged in the completion of their course work, their assignments, and could adopt to new forms of online assessment methods implemented due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 by the enhanced and bespoke quality service offered by the AWC.

The AWC at AIT was established in 2015. The centre's aim is to promote excellence in academic writing, through individual support, small group sessions, large group classes, seminars, and class presentations. Academic writing is an important part of the support provided for all learners at AIT where there is strong emphasis on a supportive learning environment. It is important that the support offered is tailored to individual needs, catering for students across all years of study and across all disciplines. Some students prefer a one-to-one approach with a lecturer or tutor; others benefit from learning in small or large groups; other students enjoy attending one of the workshops designed to meet the demands of the students. The centre is co-ordinated by the Academic Writing Tutor, supported by AIT lecturers who provide writing support. Students across all faculties and across all years of study engage with the AWC. In the academic year, 2019/2020, almost 1,800 students availed of writing support. Most of this support was provided face-to-face through drop-in sessions to classes, seminars

and presentations and individual support to students who dropped into the writing centre which is located centrally on campus.

Since Covid-19 impacted on the delivery of all programmes in March 2020, most of the writing support has been provided online, through Microsoft Teams and Zoom. All the individual sessions were booked online and delivered through Microsoft Teams and Zoom. The class bookings, seminars and presentations have all been delivered through Microsoft Teams and Zoom, where breakout rooms have been a focus in terms of encouraging the engagement lost through the lack of face-to-face activity in the classroom.

Collaboration

Collaboration between the centre and lecturers and students is vital to ensure that the service remains efficient and effective. The AWC works closely with lecturers who are teaching across the Institute, to ensure writing packages specific to the various disciplines are delivered. There is a good link with class representatives, as they are aware of the difficulties experienced by their classmates when it comes to academic writing.

The main areas where support is requested and provided by the AWC include grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, essay structure, planning assignments, literature review, language, referencing and citing, paraphrasing, critical analysis, reflective writing, tackling an assignment, time management, and writer's block. In recent times, due to Covid-19, there has been an increase in requests relating to time management, as many learners are juggling additional caring and work-related duties with their studies. In addition, many learners are writing more essays than in the past as in many instances such assignments are proctored end of year examinations.

Inclusivity is at the heart of the ethos of the AWC in AIT as students across programmes and at various stages of their studies seek and receive general and bespoke support. Some students require writing support in the early stages of their first-year studies, while other students don't engage with the centre until they have a substantial piece of writing i.e., a dissertation to tackle. Some students are competent in referencing and literature reviews, but may need assistance with grammar, punctuation, or the basics of structuring an academic essay. Others have difficulty grasping referencing but are strong on essay structure and sentence construction.

All support provided by the AWC is free of charge and available to all registered students. In some cases, students, who may have been detached from the education system for several years or who are leading busy

lives, are struggling to get started with an assignment. The AWC team offer tips on valuable aspects of the writing process; there is emphasis on constructive feedback, in a positive and engaging environment.

Data from 2019/2020 academic year on the usage of the AWC

Demand for support from the Academic Writing Centre soared in the aftermath of the move to online delivery in March 2020. Chief among the factors for this was that many programmes focused less on end of year terminal assessments and more on written assignments. Support was provided through a combination of email, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and phone. During the 2019/2020 academic year, students from all years of their undergraduate studies availed of support from the centre, in addition to postgraduate and PhD students and learners taking programmes part time with the Faculty of Continuing Professional Distance/Online Learning. In terms of Faculty breakdown, 51% of attendees at the writing centre were studying programmes in the Faculty of Science & Health; 30% were from Business & Hospitality; 8.5% were from Engineering and Informatics; and 10.5% of learners were taking programmes with the Faculty of Continuing Professional Distance/Online Learning or Access programmes or Apprenticeship programmes. Social Care was the largest subject area for requests for writing support, while there was also an increase in the numbers of PhD students requiring support from the writing centre.

The AWC is an invaluable facility at AIT. Feedback from lecturers across programmes and learners has been overwhelmingly positive. The fact that support is tailored to the needs of the individual learner, or groups in the case of academic writing support to specific discipline classes, is a huge advantage. The option for learners to drop into a seminar online or popping into a Zoom session with a quick question on academic writing or setting up an individual, small group or large group appointment with the Academic Writing Tutor means there is excellent support ubiquitously available for all writing requirements.

CASE STUDY 3: College Introduction Day – Student Support Services

This case study relates to a quality enhancement initiative introduced by the Student Resource Centre of AIT to improve the nature and method of support provided to prospective students during their initial cycle of interaction in AIT using an evidence-based approach.

College Introduction Day, piloted in AIT, is one small layer in the multifaceted approach to engage potential students in their initial interaction with AIT under the remit of the Student Resource Centre. The impetus for a non-traditional College Introduction Day (CID) pilot, stemmed from the findings of desk-based research initiated under the Pathways Strand 3 (MEND College Connect Programme). This revealed that while there are several non-traditional routes into higher education, the communication of this information and the supports to encourage entry for specific groups is often difficult to access and understand. The aim of the project was to encourage people from groups more commonly underrepresented in higher education, to think about college as being a possibility in their future. Two groups on two separate days were invited on campus: 46 mature students from Athlone Training Centre with 4 staff members, and 47 young people with 9 staff from 3 youth training centres.

Name of Primary Organisation / Event	Names of other Organisations (2)	Number of Organisations engaged with	Number of Support Workers engaged with.	Type of Engagement	Total No of Target Group Individuals engaged with**
AIT College Introduction Day	Kilbeggan YouthReach, Ballymahon YouthReach & Athlone Community Training Centre	3	9	Regional Workshop	56
AIT College Introduction Day	Athlone Training Centre ATB	1	4	Regional Workshop	50

The objectives of the one-day CID programme delivered included:

- The development the young people’s team working and problem-solving skills.
- Encouraging young school leavers to continue their educational path to training and education.
- The provision of both current information on programmes of study that would suit the participants needs and to direct them and guide them in the usage of channels of information related to AIT academic offerings that they could be readily access into the future.
- To demystify the college environment, the campus, the life of a college student, and the positive role of the Institution staff, both professional and academic, in the life of the enrolled student.

Three youth groups from the Westmeath region attended the one-day programme including: Kilbeggan YouthReach; Ballymahon YouthReach; and, Athlone Training Centre ATB, which focused on three core activities:

Section 1 Team Building Activity

The team building activity is related to the concept of adventure education. Adventure education research has focused on the development of resilience. The activities undertaken are to promote team building, introducing participants to new people and new environments.

Section 2 The Institute Restaurant Experience

There is considerable research on social eating, one aspect of which is social bonding. This activity is an important part of the day as it provides the participants with an opportunity to join in with everyday institute life in a relaxed and informal way.

Section 3 Problem-solving workshop

The College Introduction Day workshop used social stories to allow participants to explore the barriers and supports for people hoping to progress into third level education.

Conclusion

This event was a success, with 88% of attendees indicating that the day increased their knowledge about how college life works. The facilitators found that the groups had a good knowledge of college and related issues. Overall, 94% of students said that they enjoyed the visit to AIT. 52% said the name of the programme gave them an idea of what to expect in terms of their studies if they enrolled on that programme and 48% said it did not. This information is critical for AIT in reviewing how the naming convention in its prospectus of programmes should be considered from the stake-holders perspective.

CASE STUDY 4: Responding to the Pandemic – AIT’s Learning and Teaching Unit: March 2020 to June 2020

This case study is an example of AIT’s Institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It outlines how AIT responded emergency situation by a rapid, cross-institutional adaption of the teaching, learning and assessment practices supported by the quality assured initiatives analysed, designed, and implemented by the AIT Learning and Teaching Unit in the reporting period.

Introduction

The closure of the Institute on 12 March 2020 due to Covid-19 was a significant moment for both staff and students in AIT. Reflecting on the first week of the closure reminds us of the sense of shock that accompanied

this decision. However, as the days passed it became apparent that colleagues keenly felt the loss of the support and engagement with each other. It was at this point that the Learning and Teaching Unit (L&T) team came together to provide a response that would ameliorate the potential impact and consequences for staff and students.

This agile and dynamic intervention has been widely acknowledged both inside and outside of the Institute. Indeed, it has been recognised that units or centres that support learning and teaching were no longer perceived as just support units but as crucial, critical, and central to the mission of a higher education institute. The L&T Unit rose to this challenge to assist with enabling academic staff to provide a continued academic provision for students and to develop supports to address the short-, medium- and long-term effects of Covid-19 on learning, teaching, and assessment.

It should be noted, however, that engagement by AIT staff in non-accredited and accredited offerings with the L&T Unit prior to Covid-19 enabled the swift transition to remote, emergency online delivery. This engagement had been underpinned by the appropriate use of technology in pedagogic approaches for learning, teaching and assessment and provided a critical mass of knowledge, skills, and competence. Since the introduction of the L&T Unit in 2006, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle has continually evolved as a key enabler for learning through the efforts of the unit. This is evidenced by the extent to which its use is embedded across AIT, by all faculties and professional support staff.

Staying connected March – April 2020

Initially the L&T Unit responses were themed around **‘staying connected’**, commencing with email communications and online sessions to support staff in the transition to emergency remote online learning and teaching. This afforded staff the opportunity to meet online and identify ways to connect with each other and their students through a variety of online platforms. Although this appeared to be an intuitive response, as educational developers, and learning technologists the L&T team was very aware of the significance of developing “social presence” in the online environment. Key considerations included the need to:

- Reduce the sense of isolation
- Support staff new to this way of working fully in the online environment
- Support and develop a sense of professional online identity
- Offer targeted, just in time training sessions themed around use technologies and alternative assessment methods.

In particular, the L&T team was keen to use technologies that allowed colleagues to see each other during the restricted lockdown period. These efforts focused on supporting dialogue and providing a safe online environment for social interaction where colleagues could voice concerns and share experiences. This approach was designed to model practices which teaching, and support staff could then replicate with their students. In addition, to this interaction and practice sharing, the L&T Unit launched a dedicated Learning and Teaching Covid 19 Moodle page which was populated with key resources, including suggestions for the re-design of the planned terminal Summer 2020 examination papers that could not take place on campus due to lock-down and the development of alternative terminal assessments, to be mediated by academic staff through the VLE.

Targeted supports provided by the L&T Unit May-June 2020

To ensure continuity of provision with a focus on replication of the quality of the student learning and assessment experience, and critically student retention during the immediate phase of lockdown, scenario planning working groups were created. The Learning and Teaching Unit collaborated with a working group on the design, distribution and evaluation of a staff survey, culminating in the compilation of a report titled 'Capturing the Experience of Staff: remote emergency delivery period 2020: This evidence-base of findings from the survey informed subsequent decisions in relation to all aspects of remote/online delivery in the context of Covid-19.

Key findings from the survey

One hundred and eighty-four academic staff responded to the survey. Key findings from the report indicated that there were low levels of experience in remote online teaching amongst respondents. While lecturers expressed disappointment at the lack of feedback from students in the initial lockdown, the platform Zoom was identified by several respondents as being particularly good for video. Furthermore, it allowed lecturers to continue their provision of project supervision, to give feedback, and to see their students' reactions.

"Zoom was excellent...Great for creating a sense of community as you can see all participants (in a smaller class) via video." (Academic Staff) p.10.

"I actually found Zoom meetings with screen sharing with students to be easier and more productive than traditional in person meetings." (Academic Staff) p.11.

"Zoom meetings worked reasonably well for one-to-one project supervision, using the screen sharing feature to go through feedback on thesis." (Academic Staff) p.11.

However, concerns were raised in the Institute regarding GDPR and other limitations associated with the free version of Zoom. In response, the Learning and Teaching Unit team, utilising their expertise in online learning

and experience in the professional development of staff, conducted a rigorous analysis of a range of platforms for remote teaching widely used in Higher Education (HE). This included the licenced version of Zoom for HE. A due diligence study was initiated to review a range of online ‘meeting’ platforms being adopted for teaching and learning purposes and included a range of categorised variables to interrogate and assess each platform. These carefully selected criteria included focusing on the ease of use and affordances for replicating practices for engagement in the online environment against the traditional classroom environment such as the ‘chalk and talk’ practices. The outputs of the due diligence review were presented to the Executive Management Team for approval in June 2020 and Zoom for Higher Education was selected as the platform for 2020-2021 to enable AIT to address its academic delivery programme of work tactically and proactively for the next academic year against the ongoing influence of COVID-19 on teaching, learning and assessment practices.

In addition, the Learning and Teaching Unit team recommended the purchase of a selection of software and hardware options which would improve the remote online learning and teaching experience for students and staff and enhance student engagement. Informed by its research, the L&T team also devised and published a guide to the AIT digital ecosystem, titled *‘Tips and Tools for Remote Learning, Teaching and Assessment’* based on an adapted version of the ABC Learning Design Model. This guide focused on the use of AIT-specific digital technologies organised along a continuum of student engagement levels. Once the online platforms for 2020-2021 had been agreed, a range of appropriate supports was designed and facilitated by the L&T Unit. These activities were aimed at preparing staff for remote/online delivery in 2020-2021. A key element was the inclusion of strategies for engagement, which sought to replicate the quality of the face-to-face student experience which is synonymous with AIT. Academic and professional support staff from across the Institute engaged with the L&T Unit training programme. **Table 1** below illustrates the level of engagement by staff in the workshops offered pre. the Summer 2020 break to enable the academic staff to be prepared for 2020/2021.

TABLE 1: AIT STAFF ENGAGEMENT IN TRAINING FOR REMOTE / ONLINE DELIVERY, JUNE 2020	
Theme/Session	Number of Participants
How do I teach with Zoom?	302
How do I review my module for Blended Learning?	85
How do I use Web Version of Turning Technologies?	37
How do I Use Desktop Version of Turning Technologies?	20

TABLE 1: AIT STAFF ENGAGEMENT IN TRAINING FOR REMOTE / ONLINE DELIVERY, JUNE 2020	
How do I design Asynchronous Lesson Plan?	40
How can I Use H5P in Moodle?	39
Zoom Trials - License Holders Training and All staff	261
How do I use MS Teams?	33
Learning Activity Management System (LAMS Pilot for Team Based Learning (TBL)	14
Total	831
AIT number of academic staff in 2019/2020 equated to 385.	

Conclusion

The actions discussed above represent the initial response by the Learning and Teaching Unit to the pandemic and the efforts to support staff were widely acknowledged and welcomed. Although the Institute was committed to offering as much face-to-face contact as possible in the academic year 2020-2021, it was recognised that ongoing support from the Learning and Teaching Unit would be needed to facilitate a blended approach. This allows AIT to maintain a quality learning, teaching and assessment experiences for staff and students.

CASE STUDY 5: AIT Academic Integrity Resource Pack: A Staff and Student Resource

This case study highlights the exceptional work implemented by AIT to ensure the academic integrity and quality assurance of the range of assessments completed by students during the initial phase of the outbreak of the pandemic.



AIT Academic Resource Pack

Academic Integrity is at the heart of all learning and teaching activities, and in the academic year 2019/2020, it has continued to hold a strong focus within Athlone Institute of Technology including through its academic governance structures. Several AIT staff have been engaged on the National Academic Integrity Network since its inception in 2019. The application of the principles of academic integrity are considered by AIT with two key stakeholders in mind: us and the learner. We recognise in AIT that a strong and lived academic integrity culture is based on the behaviour of both the enrolled learner and the enrolling higher education institution. Accordingly, we address the application of academic integrity with our enrolled learners to ensure that they act with academic integrity based on the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility⁵. From the institutional perspective, academic integrity is nurtured through academic leadership which embeds the principles of academic integrity in its teaching, learning and assessment policies and practices.

⁵ <https://academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Fundamental-Values-2014.pdf>

The Learning and Teaching Unit has worked collaboratively with other units to emphasise the importance of academic integrity in the teaching, learning and assessment practices adopted during COVID-19. This increased activity was initiated to parallel the work of the National Academic Integrity Network in addressing the evolving thematic area of academic misconduct and specifically contract cheating in higher education during 2019/2020. This was supplemented by AIT in giving greater attention and awareness of strategies to prevent plagiarism to the academic community through structured training, events, and an information portal. The evidence from the cases investigated by the Plagiarism Committee of AIT also allows for a 'double loop learning' approach to address and define remedial and/or preventative actions that could limit the nature and number of cases addressed by the committee into the future.

The Learning and Teaching Unit has been proactive in searching for ways to support our lecturers to develop further the students' skill set in academic integrity and strengthen the AIT culture of academic integrity. In January 2018, two members of the unit attended a workshop offered by the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) titled 'Preventing Plagiarism'. Facilitated by a lecturer in Education and Programme Leader at the UCL Institute of Education, London, this workshop offered an insight into how a whole Institute initiative could be started through a student-focused workshop.

With permission, and using the SRHE workshop as a model, the Learning and Teaching team subsequently created an *Academic Integrity Resource Pack* specific to the needs of the AIT community, with a strong focus on avoiding plagiarism. A set of teaching notes and digital resources were developed, alongside an array of teaching activities designed to build strong skills in academic integrity. These included identifying types of plagiarism, paraphrasing skills, and proofreading activities. An emphasis on interpreting a Turnitin™ report was also integrated to encourage students to use the report as a learning tool to help improve the quality of their own writing. In addition, links were provided to useful sites on the internet and the AIT Library referencing guides, which are an invaluable tool for our students.

During 2019/2020, workshops, using the resource pack, were offered as pilot sessions to staff groups on several occasions. The workshops were evaluated. Based on feedback, the content was refined further. This resulted in a professional development workshop on recognising plagiarism being devised for academic staff to complement the resource pack aimed at the student population. The developers adapted the interactive teaching activities, initially designed for face-to-face teaching, for use in the online environment. This

development proved invaluable particularly with the impact of Covid-19 and the move to remote/online delivery.

Having students contribute to the design of the resource pack was considered essential by the developers. Therefore, a student-focused workshop was also offered as a pilot session to post-graduate students, and the content was subsequently adjusted based on their feedback.

The launch of the Academic Integrity Pack was planned for future incorporation into the programme of events and activities to support the conduct of the Academic Integrity Week in AIT in October 2020, with the event designed to target staff teaching transition type modules in first year. It is intended that these materials will be used throughout the Institute community to build academic skills as we continue to build a strong culture of academic integrity in AIT.

CASE STUDY 6: The Transformation of a Nurse-Led Student Health Service at AIT in a single Semester amidst a Global Pandemic

This case study is an example of AIT's Institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AIT Student Health Service is a nurse-led service providing clinical care to approximately 6,000 students on campus. Each year, more than 4,000 consultations are provided to students who avail of a 'sit and wait' easy to access service. All students are seen on the same day of acute illness.

Our service provides physical and psychological nursing and medical care on campus as well as supportive measures to assist students in ways that keep them committed to their studies. Our service relates to physical (acute or chronic), psychological, social, and relational issues as well as sexual health concerns. We take great pride in providing high quality care in a confidential, non-judgemental manner while regularly providing supportive advice, a friendly face and listening ear which can have a nurturing effect on our students at a time of affliction.

January 2020

A response to news of a 'contagious virus' circulating in China was initiated on return to campus early in 2020. Specific advice was sought from colleagues in public health ahead of the planned return of international students

who had travelled to various areas of China over Christmas. Little was known about this novel virus at that point as it was prior to the formulation of care pathways and infection control guidelines. Proactive work was undertaken with local public health colleagues in the Midlands to compile interim advice sheets for students, arrange translation of information and initiate the formation of a Coronavirus Response Team within the Institute. Travel advisories for staff and students were expeditiously implemented and by the last week of January, an information campaign had been introduced across the campus about the importance of hygiene, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette.

February 2020

By early February, the student health service had pivoted to conduct risk assessments on all patients prior to attendance. Our service was concurrently faced with a significant mumps outbreak in addition to the burden of usual seasonal illness. This coupled with the challenge of managing the fears and expectations of patients, academic colleagues and the public resulted in long working hours and the rapid requirement for the complete reorganisation of our service.

The role of the Institute nurse expanded swiftly to incorporate attending Coronavirus Response Team meetings, communicating with public health colleagues, and checking the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC) website for the latest information, updates, and algorithms of care. Towards the end of February, we had in place an approved HSE protocol for the isolation and treatment of suspected cases, if they were to arise.

An out of hours response was provided to international students who were becoming symptomatic following recent travel to affected areas and the first patient was referred to the then, new National Ambulance Service community testing pathway. Additional care responses were developed often supporting international students without family or friends in Ireland by telephoning them to monitor their condition throughout the night and dropping healthy hampers of food provisions and medication to their accommodation with advice sheets on self-isolation.

March 2020

The landscape of student health had dramatically altered by the end of the first week of March. Our Student Health Service stopped permitting walk-in patients, instead performing a telephone risk assessment prior to attendance. Additional precautions were implemented for those who had respiratory symptoms.

The campus atmosphere was now filled with a sense of tension, fear, and concern. Vulnerable students and staff were being advised to avoid mass gatherings and were receiving guidance on how to protect themselves.

On March 12th, 2020, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced that schools and colleges would close because of the newly named Covid-19 pandemic. Staff and students were given just a few hours to vacate our places of work and study. The Student Health Service tried to adapt, adjust and transition to implement yet another new pathway of care in student health.

April & May 2020

Telehealth platforms were swiftly introduced within hours to provide remote telephone and video consultation access to students. An electronic prescription service was provided in tandem with a postal contraception service. Student information and support campaigns were developed and rolled out. Continuity of care for students was maintained despite the challenge novel remote working and study presented.

Conclusion

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic required an immediate, unprecedented, and urgent reformation of the student health service on campus, yet continuing to assure the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the health service provided. Operations were swiftly reorganised to a 'by appointment' service in tandem with the swift development of new Covid and non-Covid pathways of assessment and care for students. Telehealth platforms were rapidly introduced to ensure equitable access to our service for all students. A high-quality nurse-led service was maintained as students adapted to a radically altered lifestyle, physical distancing, remote learning, and the fears Covid-19 brought for everyone.

CASE STUDY 7: Digital Supports for Research Students

This case study is a further example of AIT's Institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic for research students.

In early 2020, with challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdowns and limited access to campus, AIT developed more digital support for research students, including transitioning to remote supervisor meetings, virtual examinations, and the provision of online seminars.

A key challenge was addressing the examination of the thesis through an online format. The following regulations were proposed and approved via the Academic Governance structures of AIT to assure the academic quality of the revised practices, procedures, and policies due to revised operations.

Online viva (Regulations)

The Viva Voce process is such that the Graduate School can, in exceptional circumstances, hold an alternative format for the use of the assessment instrument. The Graduate School, in consultation with the Registrar, agreed several options. The format of the examination is the responsibility of the examiners. Taking the wishes of the candidate into account, the supervisor(s) may attend the viva voce examination with the agreement of the Examination Panel. When the supervisor(s) is not in attendance at the viva voce examination, s/he must be available for consultation, if required. A proposal was approved to enable the primary conduct mechanism of the Viva Voce via MS Teams or Zoom. In practice, several Viva Voce examinations took place using Zoom, a software package that all AIT staff and students have access to and were supported by the Graduate School and respective faculties.

In addition to students finishing their post graduate programmes including taught masters and research programmes, AIT continued to intake new post-graduate students with major intakes in March 2020 and planned for September 2000. In planning such intakes, it was understood that most of these students would have had little access to the physical campus in this time, so several of the normal functions supporting them moved online. These were reviewed through a scenario planning framework from April to June 2020 to ensure that all functions, processes, and activities that impacted directly or indirectly on postgraduate students were repurposed if impacted in their original format by COVID-19. Any changes were identified and presented at the Research

Induction

Induction 2020 was held online and was supported by several offices in AIT. Induction was well attended and recorded for any new postgraduates that joined after October 5th. Sessions included an overview of the structured programme and regulations, as well as information about the library, IT Services, the Students' Union, and other support services at AIT.

Postgraduate Talk Series

The PG Talk Series takes place every Friday morning for postgraduates with AIT academic staff with a lineup of both internal and external speakers. The series in the reporting period addressed topics to support researchers

in developing their research career and research projects. To date there have been lively, informative sessions on Communicating Science, Grant Writing, Plan S and Open Access, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and a Publishing Strategy, as well as a talk from Professor Luke O’Neill on his research career journey.

Posterfest

This was an opportunity for research students to share posters of their research, along with a flash presentation. It was held in June, with a prize presentation for each Faculty and overall winner announced in September.

Further supports

In acknowledgement of new and unforeseen challenges, and in the light of limited contact, the Graduate School created and supported several ways for research students to have any arising issues addressed. The Dean of the Graduate School set up a weekly office hour on Zoom for research students. The Students’ Union worked with the research students to nominate representatives. The Graduate School set up a monthly meeting with the postgraduate representatives to create an open forum to address challenges and extend pastoral care.

Conclusions

The targeted interventions by the Graduate Research School were proactively designed, post the immediate outbreak of COVID-19 and campus lockdowns, to ensure the non-attrition of research students; to maintain their active engagement in their programme of research; to assure the quality of their research learning and outputs, and the achievement of their intended research outcomes leading to their award. The conferring of 8 PhDs in at the Graduation Ceremony conducted remotely in November 2020, in line with the initial intended rate of completion of PhDs, was testament to the efforts of AIT and the Graduate Studies Research team to ensure the achievement of the academic standards and research outcomes envisaged for our postgraduate students despite the pandemic.

CASE STUDY 8: Library Student Ambassadors as Peer-to-Peer Student Supports

Case Study Time period: September 2019-June 2020.

This case study is an example of improving the role of peer-to-peer support that can be provided by the AIT student community and perpetuating the student voice in designing and implementing bespoke initiatives to improve student engagement in learning activities outside of the classroom environment. It is a good example

of an enhancement initiative that would align with the European Standard Guidelines for the provision of authentic learning opportunities to enable the achievement of the intended programme learning outcomes that the student is enrolled on. It does so by supporting students in their self-directed learning using the module resources provided in the library environment.

Introduction: Why does the library need Student Ambassadors?

'Library Anxiety' is real, and it can have a detrimental impact on student success and on the transition to third level. It can be the result of:

- Lack of exposure to previous library environment such as public libraries or school libraries which can lead to unfamiliarity with what libraries are for or how to engage with them – some students think you need to pay to rent library books
- Discomfort with asking for help or identifying a lack of knowledge about something which can be a barrier to learners asking questions or for help – students from different cultural backgrounds sometimes think of asking for help as sign of weakness
- Lack of confidence with academic information formats and trying new sources which can lead to weak engagement with curriculum assignments and learning resources – students can get disheartened if they know they are struggling with something that their peers seem to understand
- Concern about identifying gaps in their knowledge to 'staff' when students confuse library staff with their academic lecturing staff – sometimes students think asking library staff for help reflects badly on their curriculum engagement when library staff are neutral and only there to support
- Students being overwhelmed with all the new courses, systems, passwords, and assignments that are part of transitioning to college leading to them not considering the information skills they need until later in the semester or even later years – students can be embarrassed asking for help with seemingly 'basic' library tasks when they are beyond Semester 1 in First Year or in later years.

Drawing on library experience and learnings from student engagement, Joanne Gillivan as Outreach Librarian, established the Library Student Ambassador Initiative for September 2019 to ensure student voices are represented to learners as routes for them to ask questions and seek supports if they are more comfortable talking to peers.

Recruiting Library Student Ambassadors – what skills are we looking for?

Students who volunteer to be Library Student Ambassadors commit to being positive advocates among their

fellow students for the value of good information skills for college and for life! To be eligible to apply to be a Library Student Ambassadors, students must:

- Have completed at least first year successfully as a student in AIT
- Be able to take direction and attend training from the library team to understand how to demonstrate, direct and encourage student learners in positive peer conversations
- Be a confident public speaker or be keen to get better at public speaking
- Be comfortable in co-creating promotional videos/social content relevant to students
- Having failed a year or had other academic difficulties does not preclude students from applying successfully overcoming such challenges is inspiring to other students.

What do Library Ambassadors do?

Library Student Ambassadors have the following responsibilities and duties:

- Assist new students in their first semester by providing them with support and guidance including the basics of using the library and facilities such as how to find and borrow books, use the library catalogue, use the photocopying facilities, use online services, Library IT etc
- Provide directional assistance to new students for library subject supports including online guides, skills sessions for information literacy and specialist Faculty level supports from the library team
- Advise new students on the library code of conduct and user behaviour relating to noise, mobile phone usage, eating in the library and promoting library environments for positive study and learning
- Refer students to other support services such as IT, Academic Writing Centre, Institute Tutors, Careers, Students' Union, and other student support resources
- Take part in Library promotions such as promo videos, pop-up libraries, induction etc.

How does peer-to-peer support happen?

Starting with the newly designed *Library Induction Fair*, the Student Ambassadors took up positions throughout the library space to meet and greet students as they entered and circulated through their induction stands. They encouraged interaction and offered advice. They also hosted the final stand where students connected with library social media. Throughout September, the Ambassadors held peer-to-peer clinics to give students opportunities to drop in with questions, queries or for advice. During library pop-ups and events throughout the year, the Library Ambassadors team shared hosting with library staff to offer a student's peer-to-peer advice from experience which resonated with students. This is particularly relevant at Faculty and Department level engagement as the Ambassadors could relate to their discipline.

What was the benefit of AIT Library Student Ambassadors?

- Getting advice from fellow students who have recent lived experience of transitioning to third level or started getting used to an academic library is an important aspect of information skills acquisition for student learners
- Having trained student voices who can accurately and comfortably direct students or give them confidence with a library or information task is a significant added support channel for learners which can also feedback into library planning at Faculty or module level
- Ava, a Library Student Ambassador:
“As an AIT Library Ambassador, I’ve gotten great insight into what goes on behind the scenes in every service... As a student I’ve benefited from all the services available in AIT Library and it shows in my grades. As an Ambassador I can pass on that information to new students and help them to get as comfortable with all of the supports and services available to them as I am.”
- Students Union President Áine Daly:
“Transitioning to college can be a huge change for so many students. Having fellow students’ voices who are knowledgeable and approachable can provide an important way to connect students to library resources and skills they need.”

Conclusion

The library prides itself in the strength of its relationship with the Students’ Union and the Institute’s consistently strong performance in Studentsurvey.ie. The Library Student Ambassador Initiative represents another important element of our capacity to reach students who are non-traditional library users. Library Student Ambassadors can support student success in academic studies and student confidence as information users in their professional careers.

CASE STUDY 9: Introducing Digital Badges to Recognise Non-Accredited Learning

This case study is an example of addressing cross-institutionally a thematic area of recognising learning, both accredited and non-accredited. The ability to engage in non-accredited learning through digital badging can contribute to the level, capability, and interest of the student to engage in their accredited learning. It is therefore a novel example of a learning enhancement initiative introduced by AIT in the reporting period.

Introduction of Digital Badges as recognition for unaccredited Learning in Athlone Institute of Technology

The emergence of digital badges to offer micro-credentials in higher education is a relatively new phenomenon (Dowling-Hetherington & Glowatz, 2017). A key advantage of digital badges is that they incorporate meta-data associated with the award, can be time bound and are easily transferred to professional networks and job applications. A digital badge can provide motivation, status recognition and evidence of achievement (Gibson et al., 2015). A recent paper on micro-credentials outlined a system that looked at both accredited and non-accredited credentials (Beirne, Nic Giolla Mhichil and Browne, 2020). The authors also note the confusion that can be caused by lack of understanding and awareness caused by the multitude of synonyms used in relation Badging/digital badging and micro-credentials.

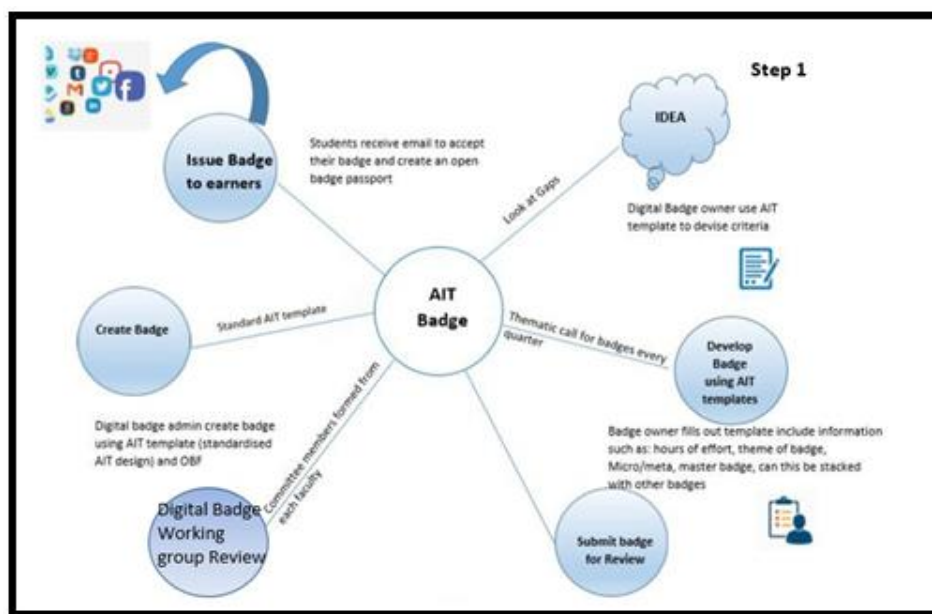
Athlone Institute of Technology was keen to have a quality assured means of acknowledging learning that happens outside of classrooms that is non-accredited and would not normally be visible. However, AIT was very aware that providing unregulated digital badges had many pitfalls and wanted to ensure that it had a system in place to protect the AIT brand and ensure that a digital badge from AIT was quality assured and was something to be valued by the recipient. With support from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, a campaign to introduce digital badges in a systematic, controlled, and quality assured manner was established in early 2020.

This work initially started in 2019, with the delivery of targeted workshops aimed at education on digital badges and how they are created to the academic community. This was followed by a 4-hour workshop on digital badges, facilitated by Dr Wayne Gibbons from GMIT. A recognised expert in digital badges, Dr Gibbons offered insights into the impact of badging in terms of student motivation, and as a means of recognising and celebrating achievement. Subsequently, Tom O'Mara, Head of Digital Education in University College Cork (UCC) presented an overview of the UCC approach to digital badges quality assurance and application process used in UCC. Several AIT staff including academics, management and professional support staff attended this session indicating the level of interest across the campus.

On foot of these workshops the Digital Badge Working Group was formed with the aim of focusing on an institutional approach to embedding digital badges as part of the quality assurance and enhancement processes in AIT. The working group consisted of staff from each Faculty who met for the first time in May 2020. In line with the methodology adopted in UCC, terms of reference were specifically devised to:

- Develop a strategy for AIT badges

- Design guidance documents for AIT digital badge
- Approve the development and issuance of AIT badges
- Effectively manage and govern the use of AIT badges and to make any recommendations or provide feedback to badge proposers as required.



Proposed AIT Digital Badge Approval Process

It was agreed that digital badge guideline documents would be drawn up for approval by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee in September 2020. The diagram above outlines the potential badge approval process. The final phase of the Learning Enhancement Project in semester 1, 2020-2021 will see a call for applications to be reviewed for approval by the working group. It is hoped that the first round of digital Badges can be issued before the end of December 2020.

Conclusion

The initial interest in this project and subsequent applications have demonstrated that already there is a strong interest in Digital Badges across all faculties and functional areas in the Institute. This highlights the value seen in the Institute in the role of digital badges as a way of recognising non-accredited learning.

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CASE STUDY 10: Enhancing Students' Online Collaboration and Engagement using Team Based Learning

The following case study highlights how AIT's Team Based Learning (TBL) enhancement initiative (which commenced in January 2020) has assisted AIT to meet one of its key strategic objectives: ***the personal, professional, and academic development of staff***. This Learning Enhancement Initiative (LEI) was funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Team Based Learning (TBL) is a student-centred approach to learning whereby students collaborate in the same diverse, self-managed teams throughout a module. TBL uses a special sequence of individual work, group work and immediate feedback to create a motivational framework in which students increasingly hold each other accountable for coming to class prepared and ready to contribute to discussion and problem-solving exercises.

What's Different about TBL?

TBL contrasts with other collaborative learning approaches (such as problem-based learning) as students engage with learning activities created and curated by Faculty prior to class (the problems do not precede the content). In-class time is then devoted to the mastering of content and completion of problem-based application exercises which require students to apply their critical thinking skills. This enhancement initiative sought to establish the expertise, technology and support required to help faculty (who teach face to face and/or online) to nurture the type of highly engaging student learning experience that is associated with the TBL approach.

Identifying Best Practice

In January 2020 the LEI team was established and conducted a literature review investigating best practice in both face-to-face and online TBL. To learn more about TBL in practice, members of the LEI team visited the University of Bradford where several programmes are delivered primarily through TBL and engaged with other institutes such as Brunel University. The AIT TBL enhancement initiative leads also attended several workshops facilitated by TBL experts to learn more about how this approach could be tailored within AIT programmes.

Cascading expertise throughout AIT

Two members of the TBL LEI team are taking part in a mentorship programme offered by the European Team Based Learning Collaborative (ETBLC) and will become TBL *Consultant Trainers*. This will enable them to deliver accredited TBL training within AIT and beyond.

Resources and Technology

A “TBL 101” workshop was developed and has been completed by one cohort of lecturers in March 2020. The team have also developed an in-house repository within the Institute’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which contains resources, guides, papers, case studies and TBL templates for staff.

A review of technologies was conducted to ascertain how best to integrate Online TBL within AIT’s current technological infrastructure. With the onset of Covid-19, this became critical. The Learning Activity Management System (LAMS) in conjunction with Zoom for Higher Education was selected as a tool to support online TBL. LAMS is Open-Source software that has sharable bespoke TBL templates which can be used to create a seamless experience for students and staff. Training was received by the TBL LEI team and lecturers who sought to use the TBL approach in their teaching. Lecturers worked in conjunction with representatives of LAMS to tailor the technology to best suit the TBL approach within their disciplines.



Sharable learning sequence created within LAMS

An interdisciplinary TBL Community of Practice (CoP) was established consisting of staff from several faculties within the Institute. This group had planned to meet face-to-face to discuss and share ideas and experience of

using TBL in practice. However, the Covid19 crisis meant that this was then moved online. A CoP page for staff was created within the VLE where lecturers could practice and troubleshoot, together, with the new LAMS technology. By sharing curriculum design problems and creative TBL solutions from their disciplines, Faculty and their students benefitted from the diverse perspectives that such inter-faculty collaboration brings.

As 2019/2020 ended, the community of practice and representatives from LAMS, the Learning and Teaching Unit, Data Protection Officer as well as Computer Services staff were working together to ensure that the technology, support, and expertise were in place to successfully roll out TBL to both onsite and remote learners.

Conclusion

By the end of June lecturers in the CoP were well placed to “hit the ground running” to facilitate online collaborative learning using TBL. Approximately 200 students across modules as diverse as Programming, Positive Psychology, Research Methods, Computer Applications and Management were due to engage with the TBL approach in 2020/2021. A research project investigating the impact of online TBL with students and staff is planned, with dissemination of findings in the new year. This, coupled with the sharing of regular formative evaluation of TBL from staff and students, can further inform how we facilitate TBL in a stimulating and engaging manner.

The TBL Community of Practice will continue to meet to support each other during TBL delivery. We hope to further grow the CoP with a series of events, including training certified by the European Team Based Learning Collaborative (ETBLC), online TBL 101 workshops, the development of a 10-credit Special Purpose Award focused on TBL Implementation in addition to digital badging for TBL-related continuous professional development activity.

This Learning Enhancement Initiative has facilitated the Institute to put the structures, cultures and knowledge in place which ultimately results in active student-centred learning and teaching strategies being embedded within our programmes. This can help to ensure that students will have enhanced critical thinking and employability skills upon completion of their time at AIT. Critically, in line with the European Standard Guidelines, it is an example of an authentic learning opportunity that enables the student to achieve the intended learning outcomes, particularly skill and competence related learning outcomes.

CASE STUDY 11: AIT's Institutional Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Providing Practical Support to Academic Staff

This case study is a further example of AIT's Institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic and providing practical immediate support to academic staff.

A Staff Guide to Emergency Remote Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Following the closure of the institute in March 2020 due to Covid 19, the Learning and Teaching team in AIT recognised the need for a dedicated space with relevant and timely resources, to supplement the workshops, clinics, and email support they provided to help academic staff transition to online teaching and assessment. Using the team's significant experience in educational design, resources were either created or sourced from the wider Learning and Teaching community and categorised under the according to key activities during the remote assessment period from April-June 2020.

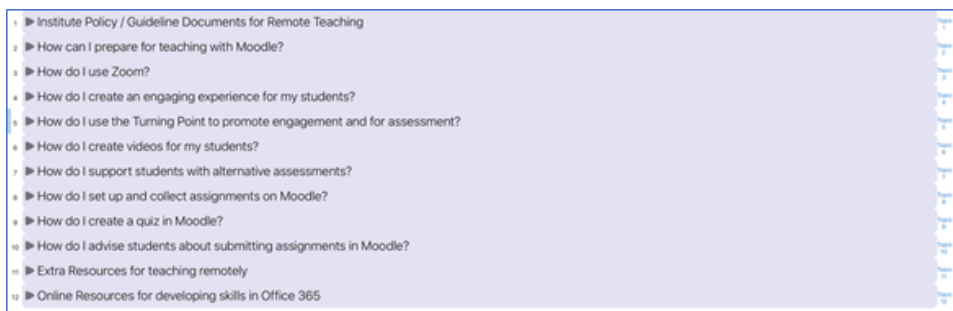
It was decided to build this resource on the Institute's virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle, given the ease of access and staff familiarity with the platform. In addition, following an extensive survey of staff use of the VLE, Farrelly et al. (2018) concluded that the extent and nature of VLE use of by academic staff is the key to the enhancement of the student learning experience on the VLE. The L&T team wanted to build on this and encourage staff to engage with Moodle as much as possible, to further their own knowledge of the VLE and maximise its potential for their own online remote teaching and assessment practice.

A Moodle block, using the graphic below, was positioned on the user dashboard and was visible at every login. This linked to the resource page directly, minimising the number of clicks for staff to access the information they needed.



Covid-19-page logo

The page was available to all staff and students and the approach involved devising “How to” sections with relevant resources. Guides for staff and students were also created in a variety of formats relating to alternative assessment and how to use the VLE for a variety of assessment types and submissions. This was of particular significance for staff as the traditional means of end of semester examination was no longer possible.



How to sections on the Covid 19 Learning, Teaching & Assessment Resource Page

The page continues to be updated by the Learning and Teaching team, to reflect current needs of the staff in AIT. Data related to the usage of the Covid-19 page are included in the table below. It is interesting to note that students are also enrolling this course page*.

	Number of views by user
Number of staff enrolled on the Covid 19 page	240
Number of students enrolled on the Covid 19 page*	140
Resources relating to the use of Zoom for teaching	Viewed 563 times by 523 users
Resources relating to the use of Moodle for teaching	Viewed 297 times by 199 users
Resources relating to assessments	Viewed 115 times by 77 users
Moodle Assignments	Viewed 62 times by 37 users
Turning Point Classroom Response/Polling	Viewed 51 times by 38 users
Creating videos for students	Viewed 29 times by 21 users
Institute Policy / Guideline documents	Viewed 59 times by 47 users

Usage of the Learning and Teaching Unit Covid-19-page July-October 2020

Reference

Farrelly, T., Raftery, D., & Harding, N. (2018). Exploring lecturer engagement with the VLE: findings from a multi-college staff survey. *Irish Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 3(2), 11. <https://doi.org/10.22554/ijtel.v3i2.41>

SCHEDULE A

11th September 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council
Registrar Office: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Agenda Item: (i) Reconstitution of the Institute Committee structure (2019-2022) (ii) Overview of DAB - new QQI Act coming into effect from January 2020.

11th September 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health			
Department: Department of Nursing & Healthcare			
Programme	Proposal	Reason for Change/Proposal	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Higher Certificate in Pharmacy Technician Higher Certificate in Dental Nursing	Module Amendment Request: To replace the 10 credit 'Chemistry' module [CHEM06011] which is currently being delivered with two, 5-credit 'Chemistry for Healthcare 1 & 2' modules [CHEM06015 & CHEM06016]	Semesterised and specifically designed modules and standalone examinations will more effectively meet the students' needs	Accepted
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in General Nursing Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing	Revision of Programme Regulations: To revise the current regulations for the BSc (Hons) in General and Psychiatric Year 4 Nursing programmes.	To facilitate the scheduling of a supplemental exam board outside of the normal Autumn Exam Board window as students, due to rostering in the HSE would not have completed their planned placements.	Not Accepted
Certificate in Caring for the Deteriorating Adult in the Acute Setting	New Programme Proposal: Special Purpose Award: Certificate in Caring for the Deteriorating Adult in the Acute Setting (10 Credits)	It meets the demand from Clinical Partners and nurses working in clinical areas other than Acute Medicine and Emergency Care	Accepted

11th September 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health			
Department: Department of Life and Physical Sciences			
Programme	Proposal for Module	Reason for Change/Proposal	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
BSc (Hons) in Microbiology	Module Amendment Request: To replace Module MBIO06010 Biology for Microbiology with Module BIOL06006 Biology	Streamlining of the delivery of same module to students taught Biology on Stage 1 of several programmes	Accepted

29th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Registrar Office: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar			
Agenda Items:			
1. Impacts on Quality Management Activities and Tasks planned in 2019/2020:			
(i) Technological University (TU)			
(ii) Exchange of Academic Programmes between AIT and LIT			
Endorsement of LIT approved programmes under a faculty review (academic alignment and resources).			
(iii) Designated Awarding Bodies (DAB): implications for Quality Management			
2. Quality Enhancements:			
(i) AIT Learning Enhancement Initiatives funded through the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement in Higher Education 2019: Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding 2019			
(ii) Results from Irish Survey of Student Engagement: Update and Actions			
3. Academic Governance			
Review of Terms of Reference of Academic Strategy and Quality Sub-Committee			

29 th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality			
Department: Business and Management			
Programme	Proposal	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	Creation of an Exit Award: Bachelor of Business in Business and Law	To enable students', receive an exit award after successful completion of Stage 3 of the designed programme. No change to content, structure, or programme content for Stage 1-3.	Accepted

29 th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics			
Department: Computer and Software Engineering			
Programme	Proposal	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Software Design (Game Development)	Creation of an Exit Award: Bachelor of Science in Software Design (Game Development)	To enable students', receive an exit award after successful completion of Stage 3 of the designed programme. No change to content, structure, or programme content for Stage 1-3.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Software Design (Cloud Computing)	Creation of an Exit Award: Bachelor of Science in Software Design (Cloud Computing)	To enable students', receive an exit award after successful completion of Stage 3 of the designed programme. No change to content, structure, or programme content for Stage 1-3.	Accepted

29 th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Computer and Software Engineering					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal to change module:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
BSc. (Hons) in Quantity Surveying	3	Industry Placement WBL07001	Part of Term to be changed to reflect Year-long versus Semester 2 subject	Presentation of results correctly at Examination Boards	Accepted
Certificate in Augmented Reality	1	Introduction to Immersive Experience Game Technology SWTW06024	To move from Semester 1 to Semester 2	For Resourcing reason	Accepted

29 th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Computer and Software Engineering					
Postgraduate Certificate in Cloud Computing	1	Microservices Architecture SFTW09053 Container Design and Development SFT09061	The module has been swapped for resourcing purposes	For Resourcing reason	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Software Design	4	Data Mining and Machine Learning 4 SFT08060	The subject was created in error and is a replica of Module Code SFT08025	Incorrect code for correct module associated with the APS	Accepted

29 th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics			
Department: Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design			
Programme	Proposal	Reason for Proposal	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Master of Science by Research	<p>New Programme Proposal</p> <p>Application for recognition of Engineering Education as an area of research to fulfil the requirements of Master of Science by Research</p> <p>This detailed proposal is for Engineering Education as a research topic for suitably qualified applicants to undertake the structured research programme currently offered by AIT. Participants of the programme would undertake and comply with the structured Masters by Research. See https://www.ait.ie/contact/staff/quality/postgraduate-research.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Engineering Education is a growing field of research internationally; with some of the lead institutes of Engineering Education in the world being Purdue University and Virginia Tech. in the USA and KTH in Stockholm, Sweden. These Universities have dedicated colleges of Engineering Education and members of the programme design team have established links with academics in these institutes and have engaged with them through activities within the Technology Education Research Group based in AIT. Engineering Education is an emerging field of research in an Irish context. This proposed Engineering Education masters by research programme would be the first of its kind in Ireland. The programme aims to support participants in conducting discipline-based education research on Engineering learning with a view to closing the gap on research and practice in a manner that considers the needs of learners, defining effective teaching, investigating why such teaching is effective and in turn having a significant positive effect on the quality of provision in AIT and beyond. Industry can also call upon the graduates of such a programme to utilize their engineering capabilities to contribute to continuous improvement planning, upskilling, Enhanced quality assurance and human resource planning.</p>	Accepted

29 th November 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Continuing Professional, Online and Distance Learning					
Department: Flexible Learning					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal to change programme:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
BSc. In Quality and Lean Management	3	Project Management MGMT07043	Change assessment outline for module: Project 60% & Assignment 40% to Continuous Assessment 40% & Final Exam 60%	Error in set up of Assessment Profile for Module	Accepted

13 th December 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Social Sciences					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal to change programme:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology	1	Introduction/History of Psychology (10 credits)	De-couple the original 10 credit module into 2 x 5 credit modules: Introduction to Psychology (5 credits) History of Psychology (5 credit)	Agreed at Programme Board meeting in November 2019 Clearer understanding by student of discreet elements in both respective modules To support PSI Accreditation	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology	1	Introduction to Psychology History of Psychology	Introduction to Psychology Assessment strategy change requested to ASQ for this module was to assess by: 100% Final Examination History of Psychology Assessment strategy change requested for this module was to assess by: 40% MCQ 60% in-class test	Agreed at Programme Board meeting in November 2019 In class test scores To support PSI Accreditation	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology	2	Health Psychology	Assessment strategy request for this module was to assess by: 100% Individual Project	Agreed at Programme Board meeting in November 2019. Feedback from students To support PSI Accreditation	Accepted

13 th December 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality			
Programme	Proposal	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Certificate in Learning and Teaching Level 9 15 Credits	To revise the assessment strategy following consultation with the External Examiner. Number of assessments to be reduced from 4 to 3	The programme board in consultation with the external examiner recognised the need to refine the assessment strategy to incorporate evaluation of teaching using student feedback. In addition, the reflective essay included some duplication of effort by the student. The revised assessment strategy will provide enhanced opportunities to reflect on and adapt practice, informed by student feedback	Accepted

13 th December 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science and Health					
Department: Department of Nursing and Healthcare					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal to change programme:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Higher Certificate in Science in Dental Nursing	1 and 2	Modules: Clinical Dentistry I, II, III and IV Codes respectively: Dent06031 Dent06032 Dent06033 Dent06034	Change legal requirements Clinical Dentistry I/II/III/IV module legal requirements should read as follows: The dental nursing students must demonstrate competency in dental nursing skills prior to presenting for final OSCE /proficiency test. All students must meet the requirements of Clinical Dentistry I/II/III/IV in relation to their attendance, continuous assessments, and final exam, to progress to Clinical Dentistry II/III/IV or to qualify with a Higher Certificate in Science in Dental Nursing.	Students who do not attend the clinical dentistry labs/clinics are lacking dental nursing skill(s) competency and proficiency. This is a Health and Safety risk while on placement and as they progressed through the programme within AIT. Ultimately, they would not be considered fit for professional dental nursing practice. This change will ensure that the dental nursing students meet the required levels of competency as they progress, and that AIT meets the necessary professional standards in dental nursing practice.	Accepted

13 th December 2019 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics			
Department: Department of Computer and Software Engineering			
Programme	Proposal	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Postgraduate Certificate in Augmented and Virtual Reality	<p>Change to Entry Criteria to Programme:</p> <p>The Dept propose that the entry criteria for the Postgraduate Certificate in Augmented and Virtual Reality be changed to an Honours level 8 in a technology focused discipline. The refocusing of the entry criteria has the potential to open learning opportunities for highly qualified candidates and improve the viability of the Postgraduate Certificate in Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality which is currently on offer through Springboard.</p> <p>The programme team believe that any potential applicant meeting the new entry requirements will not be disadvantaged when pursuing their selected programme of study.</p>	<p>The Faculty of Engineering and Informatics has recently developed 4 MSc programmes, delivered using a blended learning approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSc in Software Design with Cybersecurity MSc in Software Design with Cloud Native Computing MSc in Software Design with Artificial Intelligence MSc in Software Design with Virtual and Augmented Reality <p>Each MSc programme (90 credits) has offerings at Postgraduate Diploma Level (60 credits) and embedded Special Purpose Awards (30 credits). Now the entry criteria for all programmes are an honours level 8 in software design or a cognate discipline. The SPA in Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality contains 4 modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) User Experience (ii) Quality of Experience (iii) Immersive Experience Application Development (v) Immersive Experience and Game Technology <p>The modules apply the considerable ongoing research of the Truly Immersive and Interactive Multimedia Experiences (TIIMEx) research group in the area immersive experience. While the modules are technology oriented, they do not require explicit software engineering expertise and unlike most of the newly developed programmes, do not require pre-existing knowledge of coding. The entry requirement for an honours level 8 in software design or a cognate discipline is limiting the potential benefit of the programme to potential candidates. Some of these candidates have significant expertise in AR and VR.</p>	Accepted

28th February 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Science and Health			
Department: Department of Sport and Health Sciences			
Programme	Proposal for programme changes:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Level 8 B.Sc. (Hons) Physical Activity and Health Science	This submission provides a justification for proposed changes across the four years of the programme and across the three years of the programme, which is an embedded programme in the Level 8 provision. Both courses aim to produce graduates with the appropriate skillsets to work in the expanding area of exercise is medicine.	To date, graduates working in these areas in Ireland are primarily sport scientists, nutritionists, or health promotion graduates. Each of these disciplines bring s expertise to the field of exercise is medicine, yet most do not have the breadth of knowledge necessary to combine all required elements of successful interventions, namely a knowledge of physical activity for health, an understanding of the role of nutrition in health and an understanding of psychology of behaviour change.	Accepted
Level 7 B.Sc. Exercise and Health Science			
Existing Year 1		Proposed Year 1	
Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2
Chemistry (10) – Year Long		Chemistry for Sport and Health 1	Chemistry for Sport and Health 2
Physical Activity for Health across the Lifespan (10) – Year Long		Physical Activity for Health	Physical Activity and Exercise Leadership
Fundamentals of Health Science and Human Nutrition I	Introduction to Psychology and Sociology of Health	Fundamentals of Health Science and Human Nutrition I	Introduction to Psychology
LDHE	Cell Biology	LDHE	Quantitative Methods for Health Science
Quantitative Methods for Health Science	Health and Wellness	Cell Biology	Health and Wellness
Human Physiology 1	Human Physiology 2	Human Physiology 1	Human Physiology 2
Existing Year 2		Proposed Year 2	
Semester 3	Semester 4	Semester 3	Semester 4
Physical Activity Policy, Guidelines, and the Future (10) – Year Long		Physical Activity Applications	Physical Activity and Health Policy
Evidence Based Learning (10) – Year Long		Nutrition for Health across the Lifespan	Nutrition for Health and Disease Prevention
Nutrition for Health (10) – Year Long		Evidence Based Learning	Sports Biochemistry and Exercise Metabolism
Fundamentals of Sport and Exercise Science 1	Fundamentals of Sport and Exercise Science 2	Fundamentals of Sport and Exercise Science 1	Fundamentals of Sport and Exercise Science 2
Introduction to Health Promotion	Applied Human Physiology	Introduction to Health Promotion	Applied Human Physiology
Sports Biochemistry and Exercise Metabolism	Statistics for Sport and Health Science	Introduction to Sociological Perspectives	Statistics for Sport and Health Science

(All modules 5 credits unless specified); All modules highlighted in yellow represent changed/new modules.

Existing Year 3	
Semester 5	Semester 6
Public Health and Community Nutrition	Professional Work Experience Placement (30)
Health Psychology and Sociology	
Epidemiology in Public Health	
Physical Activity and Health Research Methods	
Clinical Populations 1	
Public Health and Community Nutrition	
Existing Year 4	
Semester 7	Semester 8
Research Project (20) – Year Long	
Physical Activity and Nutrition in Health Promotion for Population Health (10) – Year Long	
Physical Activity and Nutrition Education in Public Health (10) – Year Long	
Psychology of Motivation and Health Risk Behaviour Change	Biostatistics in Human Health
Clinical Populations 2	Interventions for Physical Activity and Health Promotion

Proposed Year 3	
Semester 5	Semester 6
Health Promotion for Special Populations	Professional Work Experience Placement (30)
Health Psychology and Sociology	
Epidemiology in Public Health	
Research Methods for Sport and Health Sciences	
Clinical Populations 1	
Youth Physical Activity	
Proposed Year 4	
Semester 7	Semester 8
Research Project (20) – Year Long	
Public Health and Nutrition Education	Exercise Instruction for Special Populations
Assessment of Physical Behaviours	Exercise Consultation
Psychology of Motivation and Health Risk Behaviour Change	Biostatistics in Human Health
Clinical Populations 2	Interventions for Physical Activity and Health Promotion

(All modules 5 credits unless specified); All modules highlighted in yellow represent changed/new modules.

28 th February 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Change	Reason for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
B. Eng. (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering	3	Integrated Energy Systems 4 ENRG 08001	Amend the split of CA/Project from 50/50 to 40CA and 60 Project	The project requires a higher weighting as it is spanning 12 weeks.	Accepted

28 th February 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Civil Engineering and Trades					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Change	Reason for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management	5	Dissertation	Move the dissertation from Sem 1 to Sem 2; no change to the syllabus or mark breakdown	Resource provision	Accepted

28 th February 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality					
Department: Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies					
Programme	Module + Code	Proposal for programme changes:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ	
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Culinary Entrepreneurship	Product Optimisation and Innovation CULN 08006	The Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies proposes to replace all 10 credit modules which are yearlong with 2 x 5 credit modules fully semesterised and examined within the semester. The changes do not involve any changes to programme learning outcomes.	The rationale for the changes is: To ensure consistency of semesterised delivery across the department. All FT programmes will now have fully semesterised modules in all stages. To remove any inward or outward mobility restrictions in relation to international opportunities. Module Manager is updated with module learning outcomes, revised credit volumes and mapped assessment to ensure continuity for academic year 2020 onwards.	Accepted	
Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts	Advanced Culinary Techniques (CULN07022) Pastry and Baking Practice 3 (CULN07008)				
Higher Certificate in Business in Sport and Recreation	Accounting 1 (ACCT06036)				
Higher Certificate in Arts in Bar Supervision	Restaurant & Culinary Mgmt. (FBA06001)				
Higher Certificate in Arts in Culinary Arts	Culinary Practice 2 (CULN06011) Pastry and Baking Practice (CULN06038)				
Bachelor of Arts in Hotel and Leisure Management	Restaurant & Culinary Skills (HOSP06009) Restaurant & Culinary Mgmt. (FBA06001)				

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality					
Department: Department of Accounting and Business Computing					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for module changes:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
MSc in Data Analytics	5	Statistics for Data Analytics	Change from 100% to 50% CA and 50% Final Exam.	It would benefit students more to have a final exam	Accepted
MSc in Data Analytics MSc in Data Analytics (online)	5	Research Methods	Change Research Methods to Pass/Fail grading	The output of this module is a completed proposal for the research to be conducted in the student's thesis. Multiple rounds of feedback are sometimes required to ensure that the required standard is met, and the student can proceed with their thesis.	Accepted
Master of Accounting	5	Strategic Management Accounting	Minor changes to syllabus to regain ACCA Exemptions	To regain ACCA exemptions.	Accepted
Master of Accounting	5	Financial Reporting & Corporate Governance	No additional content proposed. However, provision of more detail in syllabus content is required.	Change required to meet expectations of professional bodies to which application for exemptions is being made	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality					
Department: Department of Business and Management					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Tort Law I (5) LAW06024	To add an additional 1-hour tutorial to the module	As Legal Skills 1 will be delivered solely in Semester 2 the extra tutorial will aid the early development of key skills and contribute to improved student retention.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Contract Law I (5) LAW06027	To add an additional 1-hour tutorial to the module	As Legal Skills will be delivered solely in Semester 2 the extra tutorial will aid the early development of key skills and contribute to improved student retention.	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality					
Department: Department of Business and Management					
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Legal Skills I (5) LAW06030	Will now be delivered in Semester 2	To move from a year-long module assessed in Y2 to be fully delivered in S2.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Computer Applications (5) BUS06139	Move from Year 2 Semester 2 to Year 1 Semester 2 f	Students will benefit from these key skills at an earlier stage in the programme.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Business Maths (5) QUAN06010	Change module Business Maths & Stats to Business Maths and move from Year 2 Semester 2 to Year 1 Semester 1	Students will benefit from these key skills at an earlier stage in the programme. Additionally, this will align the module to be taught with other business programmes	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Financial Accounting 1A (5) ACCT06045	Move to Year 2 Semester 1	To facilitate the provision of key skills such as Business Maths and Computing at an earlier stage in the programme	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	1	Financial Accounting 1B (5) ACCT06009	Move to Year 2 Semester 2	To facilitate the provision of key skills such as Business Maths and Computing at an earlier stage in the programme	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	2	Fundamentals of Marketing (5) MKTG06021	Change Introduction to Marketing to Fundamentals of Marketing and move from Semester 1 to Semester 2.	To align with Fundamentals of Marketing in other programmes. Content of both modules is the same.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	2	Constitutional Law II (5) LAW07034	Move module to Year 3 semester 2 from Year 2 Semester 2.	To facilitate students who elect to go on an Erasmus exchange.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	3	Computer Applications for Legal Studies (5) COMP06054	To replace IT and Computer Applications (10 Credit) with Computer Applications for Legal Studies (5 credit). Delivery to take place in Year 2 Semester 2.	To provide more relevant and contemporary computer application skills to students.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	3	Business Modelling and Enterprise (10) BUS 07032	Move from Semester 1 to Semester 2 of Year 3.	Module incorrectly showing in Semester 5. This should be Semester 6.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	3	Evidence Law (5) Elective LAW07030	New elective module to be added to Year 3 Semester 3	To achieve Professional Body accreditation from the Honourable Society of King's Inns.	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality					
Department: Department of Business and Management					
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	4	Administrative Law (10) Elective LAW08078	New elective module to be added to Year 4 Semester 1	To achieve Professional Body accreditation from the Honourable Society of King's Inns.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	4	Jurisprudence (10) elective LAW08076	New elective module to be added to Year 4 Semester 2	To achieve Professional Body accreditation from the Honourable Society of King's Inns.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	4	Strategic Implementation (5) MGMT 08010	To replace Strategic Management (10) with Strategic Implementation (5) and introduce a new research module for 5 credits	Strategic Implementation (5 credit) provides a better alignment of material following on from Strategic Analysis (5 credit) in 1 st semester and provides scope to introduce new research project module in the final semester	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business and Law	4	Research Project (5) RES08034	To be added to Year 4 Semester 2. This new module is to replace in part the existing 10 credit Strategic Management module.	This module provides an opportunity to consolidate existing learning and provides a research focus to final year undergraduate students who may wish to progress to further research at level 9.	Accepted
Master of Business	5	Research Methods BUS 09009	To reduce the number of assessments from three to two by integrating the schedule of work into the research proposal. To change the research proposal grade from 70% to 80%. The article critique would then change to 20%	Rather than treating the schedule of work as a separate assessment, the schedule or timeline would traditionally form part of a research proposal to be considered an aspect of resource considerations and timeline. The work output for the proposal/schedule is more substantial than the article critique.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business (Hons) add on Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business Psychology	4	Applied Strategic Marketing MKTG08019	Change title from Strategic Marketing to Applied Strategic Marketing and change the weighting from 15% Project, 15% practical and 70% final to 20% Project, 20% Practical and 60% Final exam	To better reflect the teaching strategy and the engagement of International Students and group work dynamic and the emphasis on the applied nature of the content	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Civil Engineering and Trades					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes	Reason for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
HC in Engineering in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (new)	2	Engineering Mathematics 2.1 MATH06038 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments	Mathematics is often described as the module that underpins the other modules in the programme – a more focused and consistent student approach should benefit student learning in other modules. There is no change to time allocated to assessment just the focus.	Accepted
HC in Engineering in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (new)	2	Engineering Mathematics 2.2 MATH06037 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments	As above	Accepted
BEng in Civil Engineering BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (new)	3	Engineering Mathematics 3.1 MATH07015 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments	As above	Accepted
BEng in Civil Engineering BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (new)	3	Engineering Mathematics 3.2 MATH07014 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments	As above	Accepted
BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (Add-on) BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (ab-initio) (new)	4	Engineering Mathematics 4.1 MATH08013 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments	As above	Accepted
BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (Add-on) BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering (ab-initio) (new)	4	Mathematic Modelling for Engineers MATH08012 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments	As above	Accepted
BSc in Quantity Surveying	1	Mathematics 1.1 MATH06033	Amend the assessment strategy from 30% CA/70% Final	As above	Accepted

		5 credits	to 100% CA 4 X 25% assessments		
BSc in Quantity Surveying	4	Building Information Management 4.1 CONS08055 5 credits	Amend the assessment strategy replace the 70% Final Exam with a 70% Practical aligned with British Research Establishment Digital Badge for BIM Associated Graduates.	Align with BRE BIM Associate Graduate and help in accreditation process.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management	5	Dissertation CONS08057 10 credits	Move the Dissertation from Semester 1 to Semester 2 – no change to Syllabus or mark breakdown	The resources required for the Dissertation supervision were not available at the beginning of the Semester 1 hence the submission was moved to Semester 2 allowing the students the allocated amount of time for supervision and submission.	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Computer and Software Engineering					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal	Reason for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Level 7 BSc in Network Management BSc in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure Level 8 BSc Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure BSc (Hons) Network Management and Cloud Infrastructure	2 2	Network & IT Infrastructure 2 NETW06011 5 credits	Rename the Module Network & IT Infrastructure 2 to Network Infrastructure 2 NETW06016 and amend the assessment strategy to 100% CA/Practical no final exam Previous CA 50/Final 50 Now CA 50/Practical 50	Name change to reflect the content, syllabus update for CISCO alignment to their updated syllabus. Assessment strategy is more appropriate to this type of applied module.	Accepted
Level 7 BSc in Network Management BSc in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure Level 8	3	Network Security NETW07009 10 credits	Current Yearlong 10 credit module to be split into 2 X 5 credit module. Network Security 3.1 NETW07011 Network Security 3.2 NETW07014	As part of the semestrisation project for 2020. Assessments more practical in focus as per the syllabus	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Computer and Software Engineering					
BSc (Hons) in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure BSc (Hons) Network Management and Cloud Infrastructure	3		Content aligned to CISCO and amendment to assessment splits		
BSc (Hons) in Software Design with VR & Gaming BSc (Hons) in Software Design with Cloud Computing	4	Computer Graphics 4 SFTW08027 5 credits	Renaming subject Computer Graphics 4 to Data Visualisation 4 MM CODE SFTW08065 Update syllabus to keep up to date with market	To keep the course up to date and in line with offerings of other institutes	Accepted
SPA Data Analysis & Visualisation Springboard	1	Data and Analytical Tools COMP06050 5 Credits	Change of assessment strategy to make the subject 100% CA remove the 30% Final Exam	Changing to 100% is more suited to the practical nature of the learning outcomes	Accepted
SPA Data Analysis & Visualisation Springboard	1	An Introduction to Data Analysis in the Real World ANLY06010 10 credits	Change of assessment strategy to make the subject 100% CA remove the 30% Final Exam	Changing to 100% is more suited to the practical nature of the learning outcomes	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May /September intakes)	Phase 2	Maths & Core Science (Phase 2) ESCI 06011 10 credits	Maths and Core Science 10 credit to be split into 2 X 5 Credit subjects Maths for Engineering (MATH06059) X 5 credits and Core Science for Engineering (ESCI06016) X 5 credits Remove Statistics from Phase 2 Maths & include in Maths & Core Science (Phase 4)	Following Industry review post first full run of the programme these changes will enhance the basic skills for this apprenticeship for Maths and Core Science as separate subjects. The Maths modules needed to be more focused to deal with the mathematical requirements of the other modules on the programme. This led to proposal of giving the phase 2 maths its own 5 credit module as in the previous module students were avoiding the maths questions in the exam assessments.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May /September intakes)	Phase 2	Polymer Processing (Phase 2) POLY06015 10 credits	Reduce teaching/lab hours from 12 hours to 8 hours	Technical support has helped reduce the hours for set up. Agreed with consortium partners too many contact hours for 10 credits.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May /September intakes)	2	Polymer Processing (Phase 4) POLY06016 10 credits	Reduce teaching/lab hours from 12 hours to 8 hours	Technical support has helped reduce the hours for set up. Agreed with consortium partners too many contact hours for 10 credits.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May /September intakes)	Phase 4 Year 2	Automation and Control Phase 4 CONT06002 5 credits	Remove two Learning Outcomes	Duplication as these LO's are examined in Phase 6	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May /September intakes)	Phase 4 Year 2	Applied Computer Applications (Phase 4) ENGE06045 5 credits	Rename this module to Project Management ENGE06070 Move from Phase 4 to Phase 5	The syllabus for Applied Computer Applications was primarily Project Management but the module title did not reflect this. This move allows other small moves within the programme. Timing in Phase 5 is better as it	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design					
				aligns with the other Project related modules in Phases 6 and 7	
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May/September Intake)	Phase 4 (Year 3 and Year 4)	Maths & Engineering Science (Phase 4) ESCI06010 5 credits	Update of Syllabus to remove one area of core science and add in Statistics from Phase 2	In line with changes for this programme post review with consortium.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May/September Intake)	Phase 5	Project (Phase 5) POLY06017 5 credits	Move from Phase 5 to Phase 6 Now Project (Phase 6) POLY07016	This moves with the others relating to project will give greater continuity across the three project focused modules, leaving the students much better prepared to execute the implementation of the project in Phase 7.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May/September Intake)	Phase 6	Automation & Control (Phase 6) CONT07005 5 credits	Remove two Learning Outcomes	LO's removed & syllabus adjusted to avoid duplication with Phase 4	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May/September Intake)	Phase 6	Mould Design & CAD (Phase 6) ENGE07043 5 Credits	Move module from Phase 6 to Phase 4 Mould Design & CAD (Phase 4) ENGE06071 There is an amendment on the assessment strategy final exam at 25% replaced by end of semester practical at 25%	To allow other changes to the Project subjects. Mould Design and CAD a key subject needed earlier in the programme. The change of assessment is more appropriate for a practical subject and will test the LO's better.	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Polymer Processing Technology (May/September Intake)	Phase 6 Year 3	Polymer Processing Phase 6 POLY07013 10 credits	Reduce teaching/lab hours from 12 hours to 8 hours	Technical support has helped reduce the hours for set up. Agreed with consortium partners too many contact hours for 10 credits.	Accepted
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic Design Year 4 Add-on	4	Theory to Practice DESN08030 10 credits	Clarify assessment requirement Removal of duplicate LO's	Confusion among Int'l students on assessment requirements as the wording was not clear.	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design					
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic Design (Year 4) ab-initio	4				
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic Design Year 4 Add-on	4	Theory to Showcase DESN08031 10 credits	Course is 100% CA Proposed to amend the split of course work from 30% Assignments 70% Design Solution to 40% Assignments 60% Design Solution in line with the weightings of the syllabus	To bring the breakdown of the weighting in-line with the module briefs/syllabus and to provide a more accurate reflection of workload. Rewritten text is to provide clarification for the learner. Also, to remove duplication in Learning outcomes.	Accepted
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic Design (Year 4)	4				
SPA in Robotics and Automation (Springboard)	1	Electric & Pneumatic Technology AUTO06004 5 credits	Removal of LO 2 "Solve well defined motor & power supply problems" (Note New code AUTO06008 to be removed and subversion created of AUTO06004 content is correct)	This change is part of a small number of changes to improve the structure of the overall course following an initial cohort completing the programme.	Accepted
SPA in Robotics and Automation (Springboard)	1	Integrated Automation AUTO06002 5 credits	Removal of duplicate content PLC fault finding has been removed from this also present in other module, Automated System Fault Finding (ASFF).	This change is part of a small number of changes to improve the structure of the overall course following an initial cohort completing the programme.	Accepted
SPA in Robotics and Automation (Springboard)	1	Control & Instrumentation CONT06003 5 credits	Electronic Fundamentals added to the programme syllabus. Amendment to assessment remove 50% final exam in favour of 50% practical exam Now CA 50% (no change) Practical 50% Replacing final exam	Electronic Fundamentals added as gap in basic knowledge. This programme attracts a diverse range of learners, and the applied nature of the course lends itself to assessment focussed on CA and Practical Work rather than a final written exam.	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Animation and Illustration	3	Placement ANIL07022 30 credits	Amend the subject grading to Pass/Fail rather than Percentage Numerical	It was a mistake on the original submission	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics					
Department: Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design					
BA (Hons) in Animation and Illustration	3	Studio Production ANIL07021 30 credits	Amend the subject grading to Pass/Fail rather than Percentage Numerical	It was a mistake on the original submission. This module was added as no placements were sourced in 2018/2019 (All design programmes moved to engineering in September 2018)	Accepted
BEng (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering	4	Integrated Energy Systems ENRG 08001 5 credits	Amend the Split of CA/Project from 50 CA/50 Project to 40 CA and 60 Project	The project requires a higher weighting as it is spanning the 12 weeks. This change had been proposed & agreed in Programme Board in Sem 1 2018/2019 but had been missed for ASQ	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Nursing & Healthcare					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Higher Certificate in Science (Pharmacy Technician) & Higher Certificate in Science (Dental Nursing)	1	Chemistry for Healthcare 1 (CHEM06024) & Chemistry for Healthcare 2 (CHEM06025)	Change in delivery of practicals from science laboratory practical every week to science laboratory practical/computer laboratory practical on alternating weeks	Science laboratory resource constraints. Opportunity to introduce digital resources for chemistry practicals	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Life and Physical Sciences					
Reasons for Proposed Changes: Semesterisation; Alignment with current Teaching, Learning and assessment strategies					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Impacted Modules due to Proposal	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ	
BSc (Hons) in Microbiology	4	Computational Biology and Bioinformatics BINF08004	BIN08005- Bioinformatics BINF08006 – Comp Biology	Accepted	
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biotechnology Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology Bachelor of Science in Forensic Toxicology	2	Gene Technology	SCI06017 - Gene Technology 2.1 SCI06018 - Gene Technology 2.2	Accepted	

8th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health				
Department: Department of Life and Physical Sciences				
Reasons for Proposed Changes: Semesterisation; Alignment with current Teaching, Learning and assessment strategies				
Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences (Drug Development & Analysis) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Sciences Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Toxicology and Analytical Science Higher Certificate in Science in Applied Science				
BSc in Veterinary Nursing BSc in Veterinary Nursing	2	Companion Animal Husbandry	VETN06030 - Companion Animal Husbandry 1.1 VETN06032 - Companion Animal Husbandry 1.2	Accepted
BSc in Veterinary Nursing	2	Veterinary Pharmacology	PHMC06006 - Veterinary Pharmacology 2.1 PHMC06005 - Veterinary Pharmacology 2.2	Accepted
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Bio veterinary Science Bachelor of Science in Bio veterinary Science (Exit award Level 7)	1	Bio veterinary Anatomy and Physiology	VETN06037 - Bio veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 1.1 VETN06036 - Bio veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 1.2	Accepted
BSc (Ord) in Veterinary Nursing	2	Large Animal Husbandry	VETN06035 - Large Animal Husbandry 2.1 VETN06025 - Large Animal Husbandry 2.2	Accepted
Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology; BSc (Hons) in Biotechnology (ab initio)	3	Environmental Biotechnology	BIOT07006 - Environmental Biotechnology 3.1 BIOT07007 - Environmental Biotechnology 3.2	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Bio veterinary Science	4	Toxicity Testing Methods	TOX108009 - Toxicity testing methods 4.1 TOX10810 - Toxicity testing methods 4.2	Accepted But review the Learning Outcomes
BSc in Veterinary Nursing BSc in Veterinary Nursing	1	Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology	VETN06023 - Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 1.1 VETN06028 - Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 1.2	Accepted
BSc (Hon) in Biotechnology BSc in Biotechnology	2	Biochemistry	BCHM06009 – Biochemistry 2.1 BCHM06010 – Biochemistry 2.2	Accepted

8th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health				
Department: Department of Life and Physical Sciences				
Reasons for Proposed Changes: Semesterisation; Alignment with current Teaching, Learning and assessment strategies				
BSc in Forensic Toxicology BSc in Pharmaceutical Sciences (Drug Development & Analysis) BSc (Hon) in Bio veterinary Science BSc (Hon) in Pharmaceutical Sciences BSc in Bio veterinary Science BSc (Hon) in Toxicology and Analytical Science Higher Cert in Science in Applied Science				
BSc in Forensic Toxicology BSc (Hons) in Toxicology and Analytical Sc		Genetic Toxicology	TOXI07021 - Genetic Toxicology 3.1 TOXI07020 - Genetic Toxicology 3.2	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Microbiology		Microbial Biochemistry	BCHM06011 - Microbial Biochemistry 2.1 BCHM06012 - Microbial Biochemistry 2.2	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Social Science					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes:	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	3	Management Theory & Practice MGMT07002	Change to the current assessment of C.A. (40%) and Final Examination (60%), to C.A. (100%).	The recommendation from the External Examiner is that an alternative to the examination might result in better engagement and outcomes for students from the module.	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	4	Social Care Management MGMT08033	This is a 10-credit module, currently the 100% exam is their only assessment and puts all the weighting on the exam. The proposal is to change the breakdown to a 40% which involves a group problem-solving case study, and 60% final exam.	This realignment is due to the fact, that they now have two assessments as opposed to previously when they had one assessment a 100% final exam for a 10-credit module.	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	4	Professional Practice with Older People 4.2 SOCI08044	This module – ‘Professional Practice with Older People’ is a common module with both programmes, the BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care and the BA in Social Care Practice in year 4 semester 2.	As there is common delivery the module attached to the BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care needs to be amended to the BA in Social Care Practice year 4 module	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Early Years Care & Education	4	All modules	Currently, this programme is set up with year-long modules. The proposal is to depart from this year-long model to a more traditional model – by assigning 3 stand-alone 10 credit modules to each semester.	The changes are in response to guidance from the Registrar to transfer year-long modules into semesterised modules consistent with our other programmes in the Department of Social Sciences.	External Desk Review Exercise to be carried out In view of the nature of the changes proposed
BA in Early Years Care & Education/BA (Hons) in Early Years Care & Education	2	Applied Curriculum in the EY and Play & Physical Skills	Amalgamate 2x5 credit modules into 1x10 credit module.	Rewording of Learning Outcomes	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Social Care Practice	3	Introduction to Management MGMT07006	A change to the assessment strategy from a Final Examination (100%) to C.A. (100%).	An alternative to the examination will offer better engagement and outcomes for students from the module.	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Social Science					
BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology	2	Sport & Exercise Psychology SPRT06023	Proposal is to add an additional module to the programme as an elective offering.	The reason for adding an additional elective is to give students a wider choice.	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Social Care Practice 2	2	Social Policy Perspectives SOCI06048	<u>Assessment Strategy</u> needs to be changed from 'The assessment will include a presentation and written essay' to 'The assessment will be a written essay'.	This module was changed during the CORU process.	Accepted
BA (Hons) in Social Care Practice 2 BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care		Placement Preparation Modules	Amend attendance requirement to 100%	This was left at 80% in error on the approved syllabus.	Accepted
BA (Hons)	1	Developing Academic Practice and Autonomy/ Group Dynamics and Collaborative Practice	The request is to change the description of the assessment type of <u>one</u> of the assessments. Currently, the practical / oral assessment is described as "a cross-modular assessment with Group Dynamics and Collaborative Practice". Instead, it is proposed to rename the assessment "Oral assessment".	The rationale for the change is to allow this module to be used more flexibly across other programmes.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology	2	Atypical Development PSYC07026	Initial assessment 'Change Mid-semester' to 'End of Semester Exam' Repeat strategy Change to Examination.	This is just to correct an anomaly between the description of assessment and the percentage breakdown where an error was made.	Accepted

8 th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Sport and Health Sciences					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes:	Reason for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
BSc (Hons) in Nutrition & Health Science BSc (Hons) in Sport Science with Exercise Physiology	1	Chemistry for Health Science CHEM06012	To break this year long module into two semesterised modules (codes). To adopt the new modules that have been approved on the Physical Activity and Health Science/Exercise and Health Science course.	Faculty have been asked to review yearlong modules and move to a fully semesterised model. These modules have been reviewed by an external panel and by ASQ.	Accepted

8th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Sport and Health Sciences					
BSc (Hons) in Nutrition & Health Science BSc (Hons) in Physical Activity and Health Science BSc in Exercise and Health Science	1	Quantitative Methods for Health Science MATH06034	To move this module from Semester 1 to Semester 2. IT for Scientists will move to Semester 1.	The move is proposed to facilitate shared delivery of Quantitative Methods in Health Science in Semester 2 with two other programmes in the Department of Sport & Health Sciences.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Sport Science with Exercise Physiology	2	Sports Biochemistry and Exercise Metabolism BCHM06004	To move this module from Semester 1 to Semester 2 and move Evidence Based Learning to balance credits.	Sports Biochemistry will be moved to Semester 2, in a swop with Evidence Based Learning. Sports Biochemistry will be delivered in Semester 2 in conjunction with Physical Activity & Health Science and Exercise and Health Science.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Sport Science with Exercise Physiology BSc (Hons) in Physical Activity and Health Science, BSc in Exercise and Health Science BSc (Hons) in Nutrition and Health Science	2	Statistics for Sport and Health Science	To review this module to include a more programme relevant assessment strategy. The module currently includes a final exam and CA, and a 100% CA approach would be more suitable for this module.	The assessment strategy will be amended to 100% CA and will include assessment of skills directly relevant to students across the discipline of sport and health science and integrate into the research methods stream on these programmes.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Sport Science with Exercise Physiology	4	Advanced Biomechanics	The current assessment strategy includes a mid-semester exam (20%), a practical exam (20%), and a final written exam (60%). The proposed changes will reduce this to a practical/oral assessment and a written project submission both worth 50%.	As part of a TESTA review of the Sport Science programme last year we identified a need to reduce the number of assessment points. Thus, the current proposal reduces the assessment points from 3 to 2 for this module.	Accepted
BSc in Exercise & Health Science	1	Fundamentals of Health Science and Human Nutrition 1 NUTR06010	Replace this module with NUTR06002 as it is a common module taught on BSc (Hons) in Physical Activity and Health and BSc (Hons) in Nutrition and Health Science.	The wrong module code was attached to the module in the original design of the programme.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Athletic & Rehabilitation Therapy	3	Drugs in Sport PHMC07001	Move this module from Semester 1 to Semester 2 and move Sports Psychology to balance credits.	This will permit the shared delivery of Sports Psychology in Semester 1 with Sports Science	Accepted

8th May 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health					
Department: Department of Sport and Health Sciences					
				with Exercise Physiology. The same module is currently running in both semesters.	
BSc (Hons) in Athletic & Rehabilitation Therapy	2	Emergency First Response SPRT06013	To remove this module from the approved course schedule and run it as a week-long course for students at the beginning of their academic year. Introduce a shared Department module – Evidence Based Learning SCIO6015	This change will ensure a thorough development and progression of transferable skills across the programme that reflects the Department approach overall to preparing students for final year research projects and enhancing employability.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Athletic & Rehabilitation Therapy	2	Anatomy and Conditions of the Spine REHB06018 and Anatomy and Conditions of the Head, Thorax and Abdomen REHB06015	To merge these REHB06018 and REHB06015 into one module. This will allow the inclusion of a Fundamental Rehabilitation Skills module.	The merger of modules is in line with external examiner recommendations to cover just anatomy of these areas. The new module will contribute to this stream on the programme, which currently has no position in Year 2.	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Physical Activity and Health Science Programme			Number of changes proposed across existing programme which was viewed as requiring an External Desk review	Review conducted externally. Very positive review of proposed changes Feedback from reviewers presented at ASQ	Report Accepted

5th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council		
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics		
Department: Department of Civil Engineering and Trades		
Programme	New Programme Proposal	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
BSc (Hons) in Digital Construction Management (Level 8)	AIT has developed industry reach at a regional and national level using Engineers Ireland and the CIF (Construction Industry Federation): an association with membership made up of the majority of construction firms in Ireland with a national profile which focuses on knowledge development in the industry. They identify an acute demand for skills in construction management. The Regional Skills Forum: Midlands Regional Skills highlighted a critical and urgent skills needs gap that within the area of construction management.	Accepted

5th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department: Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
HC in Eng. in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering	1 1	Mathematics (MATH06009) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Mathematics 1 (MATH06048) Mathematics 2 (MATH06049)	Accepted
HC in Eng. in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering	1 1	Applied Technology & Modelling (ACAD06012) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Applied Technology & Modelling 1.1 (ACAD06013) Applied Technology & Modelling 1.2 (ACAD06014)	Accepted
HC in Eng. in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering	1 1	Engineering Science and Materials (ESCI06007) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Physics & Construction Materials 1.1 (ENGE06068) Physics & Construction Materials 1.2 (ENGE06069)	Accepted
HC in Eng. in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering	1 1	Structural Mechanics (STRU06001) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Structural Materials 1.1 (STRU06016) Structural Materials 1.2 (STRU06017)	Accepted
HC in Eng. in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering	1 1	Engineering Surveying (SURV06045) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Surveying 1.1 (SURV06049) Surveying 1.2 (SURV06050)	Accepted
HC in Eng. in Civil Engineering BEng in Civil Engineering	1 1	Learning to Learn & Comp Apps (COMM06040) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Communication for the Built Environment 1.1 (COMM06061) Communication for the Built Environment 1.2 (COMM06062)	Accepted
BSc in Quantity Surveying	1	Measurement & Costing 1 (CONS06035) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 Credits Measurement & Costing 1.1 (CONS06067) Measurement & Costing 1.2 (CONS06036)	Accepted

5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
Programme	Year	Modules + Codes	Proposal	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
HC in Science in Software Design BSc in Software Design MA & CD, Level 8 (& Related Programmes) BSc in Software Design VR & Game Development, Level 8 (& Related Programmes) BSc in Software Design with AI & Cloud (& Related Programmes)	1	Computer Applications 1 5 credits year long (ICT06017)	Rename to Communication for the Academic Environment (COMMS06030)	Accepted
As above	1	Mathematics for Software Design 1 10 credits yearlong (MATH06014)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Maths for Software Design 1.1 (MATH06050) Maths for Software Design 1.2(MATH06051)	Accepted
As above	1	Software Development 1 10 credits yearlong (PROG06013)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Maths for Software Design 1.1 (MATH06050) Maths for Software Design 1.2(MATH06051)	Accepted
As above	1	Agile Methodologies 1 5 credits yearlong (SFTW06022)	Move to Year 3 of the Level 7 and Level 8 Programmes	Accepted
As above	1	Digital Media 1 5 credits yearlong (SFTW06003)	Removed from the Programme	Accepted
As above	1	Communications 1 5 credits yearlong (COMM06034)	Rename to Communication for Engineering (COMMS06058)	Accepted
As above	1	Web Development 10 credits yearlong (WEB06005)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Web Development with AI 1.1 (WEB06006) Web Development with AI 1.2 (WEB06007)	Accepted
As above Excluding MA & CD Yr. 1 Programmes	1	Game Development 1 10 credits yearlong (GAME06005)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Web Development with AI 1.1 (WEB06006)	Accepted

5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
			Web Development with AI 1.2 (WEB06007)	
As above Excluding VR & Gaming Yr. 1 Programmes	1	Mobile Apps for Connected Devices 10 credits year long (SFTW06008)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Mobile Apps & Connected Devices 1.1(SDEV06001) Mobile Apps & Connected Devices 1.2(SDEV06004)	Accepted
HC in Science in Software Design BSc in Software Design MA & CD, Level 8 (& Related Programmes) BSc in Software Design VR & Game Development, Level 8 (& Related Programmes) BSc in Software Design with AI & Cloud (& Related Programmes)	2	Software Development 2 10 credits year long (PROG06010)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Software Development 2.1(PROG06019) Software Development 2.2(PROG06020)	Accepted
As above	2	Agile Methodologies 2 5 credits year long (SFTW06023)	5 credits moved from year 1 & renamed Agile Methodologies 2.1(SFTW06027) Agile Methodologies 2.2 now semester long Sem 2 (SFTW06028)	Accepted
As above	2	Mathematics for Software Design 2 10 credits yearlong (MATH06041)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Mathematics for Software Design 2.1 (MATH06052) Mathematics for Software Design 2.1 (MATH06053)	Accepted
As Above	2	Networks 2 5 credits Semester 2(SFTW06018)	Moved to Year 3 of the Level 7 and Level 8 programmes and renamed Networks 3(SFTW07035)	Accepted
As Above	2	Project 2 5 credits Semester 2 (SFTW06016)	Removed from the Programmes	Accepted
HC in Science in Software Design BSc in Software Design MA & CD, Level 8 (& Related Programmes)	2	Software Development for Connected Devices 2 10 credits yearlong (SFTW06012)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Software Development for Connected Devices 2.1 (SFTW06031) Software Development for Connected Devices 2.1 (SFTW06032)	Accepted

5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
HC in Science in Software Design BSc in Software Design VR & Game Development, Level 8 (& Related Programmes)	2	Software Development for Gaming 5 credits yearlong (PROG06009)	Credits increased from 5 to 10 and subject split into 2 X credit subjects Software Development for Gaming 2.1 (PROG06021) Software Development for Gaming 2.1 (PROG06022)	Accepted
HC in Science in Software Design BSc in Software Design with AI & Cloud (& Related Programmes)	2	Software Development for Cloud 5credits yearlong (SFTW06005)	Credits increased from 5 to 10 and subject split into 2 X credit subjects Software Development for Cloud 2.1 (PROG06033) Software Development for Cloud 2.2 (PROG06034)	Accepted
HC in Science in Software Design BSc in Software Design MA & CD, Level 8 (& Related Programmes)	2	Connected Devices 2.2 5 credits (SFTW06010)	Added to Level 6 and Level 8 programme to standardise the programmes	Accepted
BSc in Software Design MA & CD, Level 8 (& Related Programmes) BSc in Software Design VR & Game Development, Level 8 (& Related Programmes) BSc in Software Design with AI & Cloud (& Related Programmes)	3	Operating Systems and Concurrency 5 credits (SFTW07018)	Removed from Level 7 and Level 8 programmes	Accepted
As above	3	Networks 3 5 credits (SFTW07035)	Moved from Year 2 of the Level 7 and Level 8 programmes to replace Networks 2 (SFTW06018)	Accepted
As above	3	Placement 25 credits (SFTW07008)	Credits increased to 30 credits in line with Institute Policy. New code for module (SFTW07034)	Accepted
BEng (Hons) in Software Engineering	4	Databases 4 5 credits year long (DATA08004)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Data Architecture and Design 4.1 (DATA08007) Data Architecture and Design 4.2 (DATA08008)	Accepted
BEng (Hons) in Software Engineering	4	Distributed Systems 5 credits Sem 2 (DEV08001)	Removed from programmes	Accepted
HC in Eng. in Computer Eng. Bachelor of Eng. in ICT Common Bachelor of Eng. in Computer Engineering	1	Computer Systems 1 5 credits yearlong (COMP06035)	Module will move from yearlong to semester long 5 credit modules	Accepted

5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
BSc in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure BSc (Hons) in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure				
As above	1	Mathematics 1 10 credits yearlong (MATH06025)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Mathematics 1.1 (MATH06044) Mathematics 1.2 (MATH06045)	Accepted
As above	1	Interface Electronics 5 credits yearlong (TRON06019)	Removed from programme but content integrated into Electronics & Workshop 1.1 and 1.2 (TRON06021), (TRON06022)	Accepted
As above	1	Networks 1 10 credit yearlong (NETW06002)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Network Infrastructure 1.1 (NETW06014) Network Infrastructure 1.2 (NETW06015)	Accepted
As above	1	Software Development 10 credit yearlong (PROG06008)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Software Development 1.1(PROG06016) Software Development 1.2(PROG06018)	Accepted
As above	1	Electronics Workshop 5 credit year log (TRON06020)	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects and integrated with interface electronics Electronics & Workshop 1.1(TRON06021) Electronics & Workshop 1.2(TRON06022)	Accepted
As above	1	Computer Applications 1 5 credit yearlong (COMM06053)	Rename to Communication for the Academic Environment (COMMS06030)	Accepted
As above	1	Communications 1 5 credit yearlong (COMM06036)	Rename to Communication for the Engineering (COMMS060)	Accepted
BSc in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure BSc (Hons) in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure	3	Switched Networks 3 10 credit year long (NETW07007)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Network Infrastructure 3.1 (NETW07012) Network Infrastructure 3.2 (NETW07013)	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure BSc (Hons) in Computer Eng. with Network Infrastructure (Add-on)	4	Network Management 4 5 credit year long (NETW08001)	Changed from yearlong to semester long 5 credit modules	Accepted

5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
As above	4	Enhanced Networks 4 5 credit yearlong (NETW08003)	Changed from yearlong to semester long 5 credit modules	Accepted
As above	4	Cloud Infrastructure 4 10 credit yearlong (DEVC08002)	Split into 2 X credit subjects Cloud Infrastructure 4.1 (SDEV08062) Cloud Infrastructure 4.2 (SDEV08063)	Accepted
As above	4	Scripting 4 10 credit yearlong (PROG08002)	Scripting 4.1 (PROG08005) Scripting 4.2 (PROG08006)	Accepted
As above	4	Database Design and Admin 10 credit yearlong (DATA08002)	Database Architecture & Design 4.1 (DATA08007) Database Architecture & Design 4.2 (DATA08008)	Accepted
5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department: Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
HC in Eng. in Mechanical Engineering Bachelor of Eng. in Mechanical Engineering, Common Entry	1	Communications & Computer Applications (COMM06032) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Communications for Manufacturing 1.1 (ENGE06061) Communications for Manufacturing 1.2 (ENGE06062)	Accepted
Bachelor of Eng. in Mechanical Engineering Bachelor of Eng. in Mechanical & Renewable Engineering	1	Mathematics 1 (MATH06016) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Mathematics 1.1 (MATH06046) Mathematics 1.2 (MATH06047)	Accepted
Bachelor of Eng. in Automation and Robotics Bachelor of Eng. (Hons) in Mechanical & Polymer Engineering	1	Engineering Science (ESCI06002) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Engineering Science (ESCI06014) Engineering Technology (ESCI06013)	Accepted
	1	Mechanics (MECH06011) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Mechanics 1.1 (ENGE06059) Mechanics 1.2 (ENGE06060)	Accepted
	1	Materials & Processing (MATS06001) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Engineering Materials (ENGE06067) Processing of Engineering Materials (ENGE06063)	Accepted

5 th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics				
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades				
Reasons for proposed changes: Introduction of Semesterisation on the programmes listed				
	1	Eng. Workshop Drawing and CAD 1 (ENGE06003) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 credit subjects Engineering Workshop & Graphics 1.1 (ENGE06065) Engineering Workshop & Graphics 1.2 (ENGE06066)	Accepted
	2	Energy Systems & Thermofluids (THER06036) 10 credits Year Long	Split into 2 X 5 Credits Energy Systems & Thermofluids 1.1 (THER06038) Energy Systems & Thermofluids 1.2 (ENGE06056)	Accepted
Bachelor of Eng. (Hons) in Manufacturing Technology Bachelor of Eng. (Hons) in Mechanical & Polymer	4	Computer Aided Engineering & Analysis (ENGE08001) 5 Credits Year Long	Moving to Semester 1, 5 credits Computer Aided Engineering Design & Analysis (ENGE08042)	Accepted

5th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council		
Faculty: Faculty of Science & Health		
Department: Department of Nursing and Healthcare		
Programme	Proposal	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
BSc (Hons) in General Nursing	Exit Award at Level 7 and Level 6: The introduction of Level 7 and Level 6 Exit Awards on the programme	Accepted
BSc (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing	Exit Award at Level 7 and Level 6: The introduction of Level 7 and Level 6 Exit Awards on the programme	Accepted
MSc in Nursing in Leadership & Quality Programme:	Amendment to Module: Generating Evidence for the Healthcare Setting Changing delivery notice on APS from yearlong to Semester 2 of the Masters Programme This amendment reflects accurately how the programme is delivered i.e., over 3 semesters as opposed to yearlong delivery which reflected in the current programme schedule.	Accepted

5th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council				
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality				
Department: Department of Accounting and Business Computing				
Programme	Year	Proposal for Programme Changes:	Reason for Change	Accepted /Rejected by ASQ
Higher Diploma in Data Analytics	5/6	Significant modification of the programme from 90 credits to 60 to align with best practice	Two reasons (1) To bring the programme in line with best practice of having 60 credits for a Higher Diploma and (2) Springboard	Accepted
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing	5/6	Significant modification of the programme from 90 credits to 60 to align with best practice	Two reasons (1) To bring the programme in line with best practice of having 60 credits for a Higher Diploma and (2) Springboard	Accepted
Post-graduate Diploma in Data Analytics	5	Offering the current Exit Award as a PGD + the addition of a 10-credit project	The MSc in Data Analytics has an exit award – plan to offer this (with the amendment of a 10-credit project) for Springboard application	Accepted

19th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Engineering and Informatics			
Department: Department of Computer and Software Engineering			
Programme	Proposal		Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Certificate in Network Infrastructure with Security	New Programme Proposal Level 6; Special Purpose Award; 20 Credits Springboard Funded		Accepted
Programme	Proposal	Reasons for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Higher Diploma in Science in Software Development (Cloud Application Development)	Name Change of Programme: Higher Diploma in Science in Agile Software Design	Industry Feedback on this programme which is an ICT Skillnet Programme	Accepted

19th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council			
Faculty: Faculty of Continuing Professional Distance and Online Learning			
Department: Department of Lifelong Learning			
Programme	Proposal		Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Certificate in Procurement	New Programme Proposal Level 6; Special Purpose Award; 60 Credits Springboard Funded		Accepted
Certificate in Financial Accounting and Payroll	New Programme Proposal Level 6; Special Purpose Award; 20 Credits Springboard Funded		Accepted
Programme	Proposal	Reasons for Change	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Certificate in Business in Entrepreneurship	Name Change of Programme: Certificate in Business in Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Creativity	The rationale for the proposed change of the programme title is based on the following considerations: 1. Programme and module content 2. Industry skills requirements 3. Programme marketing and. 4. Institute Strategy 2019-2023 and AIT Graduate attributes	Accepted

19th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council		
Faculty: Faculty of Science and Health		
Department: Department of Nursing and Healthcare ng		
Programme	Proposal	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Certificate in Procurement	New Programme Proposal Level 6; Special Purpose Award; 60 Credits Springboard Funded	Accepted
Certificate in Financial Accounting and Payroll	New Programme Proposal Level 6; Special Purpose Award; 20 Credits Springboard Funded	Accepted

19th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council		
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality		
Department: Department of Accounting and Business Computing		
Programme	Proposal	Accepted/ Rejected by ASQ
Higher Diploma in Business in Information Technology (Level 8)	New programme proposal: Springboard application	Accepted

19th June 2020 Meeting: Academic Strategy and Quality Committee of Academic Council					
Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality					
Department: Department of Business and Management					
Programme	Year	Module + Code	Proposal for Module Changes	Reason for Change	Accepted/Rejected by ASQ
Higher Diploma in Leadership	5	Aligning Resources and Plans (10) MGMT08022	The second assessment and some of the syllabus content proposed to change. The description of the module has been expanded and the learning outcomes have been reviewed and aligned.	To give a more comprehensive assessment of the module content.	Accepted
Higher Diploma in Leadership	5	Reflective Practice in the Workplace (10) RFRV08013	Realignment and apportionment of assessments percentages to reflect the syllabus and learning outcomes more accurately.	A minor redistribution of percentages across four assessment elements.	Accepted

Higher Diploma in Leadership	5	Group Project (10) PROJ08017	Proposing to reduce the credits to 10 and extend the submission date to mid-June.	The programme is being offered through the Springboard initiative and a live work-based learning group project is not possible. The change will prompt students to do the requisite individual work that will result in a better learning experience during the group project.	Accepted
Higher Diploma in Leadership	5	Leadership and Management Development (10) LEAD08008	Change the module descriptor.	To make the descriptor more informative for students.	Accepted
Higher Diploma in Leadership	5	Stakeholder Relationship Management (10) MKTG08020	Change the module title to Stakeholder Relationship Management	To better reflect the content delivered.	Accepted
Bachelor of Business in International Business Management	3	Business English 1 LANG07010 Business English 2 LANG07011	Propose to split the module from 10 credit to two 5 credits.	To reflect the Institute decision to semesterise all year long modules.	Accepted