

**Annual Quality Report (DCU)**  
**Reporting Period 2020-2021**

**Annual Quality Report (DCU)**  
**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**  
**Reporting Period 2020-2021**

## PREFACE

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 Template<sup>1</sup>

### 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](#)
- [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](#)

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<sup>1</sup> These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

## 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			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
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

The AQR has been approved by **Deputy President, Prof Anne Sinnott** and is submitted by **Director of Quality Promotion, Aisling McKenna**

Dublin City University was first established as the National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin (NIHED) and took in its first cohort of students in 1980. NIHE Dublin was set up to fulfil the national requirement for a highly-trained workforce with skills in business, science and electronics, computer technology, communications and languages and as an agent for change in its local community. In September 1987, an international study group established by the Minister of Education recommended that the NIHE be established as an independent university having the title Dublin City University. The Dublin City University Act came into force on 25 May 1989.

Since its inception, DCU has developed a national and international reputation for distinctiveness and innovation in its teaching, research and its engagement with society. DCU was the first Irish university to implement structured, paid internships as part of the undergraduate learning experience.

DCU leads the Irish university sector in its commitment to addressing educational disadvantage, with over 1,168 students enrolled currently in the University through its Access programme to address socio-economic disadvantage in higher education. In 2013, DCU established the concept of the Age-Friendly University and became the world's first university to adopt this brand. This model, and the associated generic principles, has subsequently been adopted by over 60 universities across the world (on four continents). In December 2017, DCU became Ireland's first University of Sanctuary in recognition of the range of supports it has established to aid the refugee and immigrant community in Ireland. A number of initiatives, including on-campus and online scholarships, have been developed and more will be added as the programme develops. More recently, DCU is the first university globally to be designated as an "Autism-Friendly University".

In 2013, DCU, along with St Patrick's College of Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education and Church of Ireland College of Education initiated a process, which would result in a significant development in Irish higher education, and mark a milestone moment in DCU's history. Together, the four institutions developed an Incorporation Programme, with the goal of coming together as a single institution to form part of the 'new DCU'. The completion of this project has brought many positive changes for The University. Most notably, it has advanced student numbers by 4,000 bringing the total number to approximately 17,000 in 2018, as well as an increase in staff numbers from 1,100 to 1,500 across both academic and professional support units. In addition, the completion of the Incorporation Programme in 2017 enabled the creation of the DCU Institute of Education, the first Faculty of Education in an Irish university, positioning DCU as the leading national provider of accredited education programmes in Ireland. Furthermore, it has also facilitated an enhanced and expanded Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences.

DCU is frequently ranked among the world's top young universities globally by ranking agencies such as Times Higher Top 100 under 50 and the QS Top 50 under 50. A number of subject areas at DCU are ranked within the top 200 globally, according to the QS subject Rankings, including Education and Training, Linguistics, Politics and International studies, and Communications and Media Studies. Times Higher Education ranks the DCU Business School in the top 175 Business Schools globally. The University is ranked 13th in the world in the Greenmetric University Rankings, 101-200th globally in the Times Higher Impact Rankings, including 23rd globally in the 'No Poverty' goal. The QS Graduate Employability rankings place DCU 23rd globally for graduate employability and 1st in Ireland for graduates employed 12 months post course completion.



## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

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# 1. Internal QA Framework

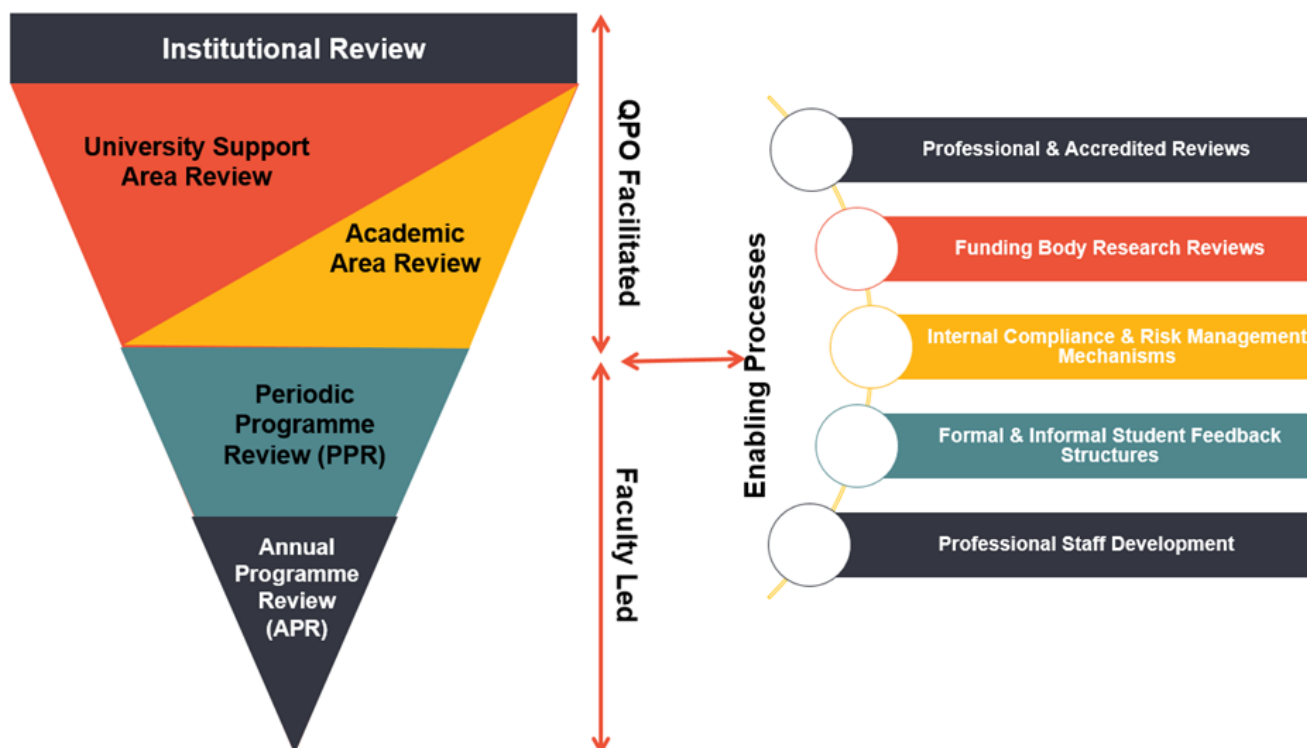
## 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

### Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement.

The [DCU Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement](#) has been developed in compliance with the provisions of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012. It also aligns its activities with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and relevant QQI QA Guidelines.

### DCU Quality Framework

The DCU Quality Assurance Framework provides a cohesive model through which the University can demonstrate quality assurance processes, are embedded, integrated and ongoing with a combination of regular monitoring and periodic review of programmes.



### HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact 2018-2021

The role of quality assurance as a tool for ensuring excellence in teaching, learning and engagement is further reflected in the development of its agreed goals with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in the [HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact Agreement](#). For the 2018-2021 Performance Based Compact Agreement, focused on the delivery of a number of themes relating directly to the successful achievement of goals in relation to the quality of our education and research.

### DCU Strategy 2017-2022, Talent, Discovery and Transformation-

In 2017, DCU developed a new strategic plan, its first since the completion of the Incorporation Programme, which saw the coming together of DCU with St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute and Church of Ireland College of Education. The new DCU Strategic Plan, [Talent, Discovery and Transformation](#), sets out a clear vision for the university, in which *DCU will be a globally significant University of Transformation and Enterprise*, renowned for,

- The development of talent
- The discovery and translation of knowledge to advance society

- Its focus on creativity and innovation
- The advancement and application of technology, and
- Its commitment to sustainability

The current strategic plan, structured around **six key themes** are central to informing our strategic goals, Talent, Discovery, Creativity, Society, Technology and Sustainability.

The plan outlines nine key strategic goals, through which the university will measure its success. These include:

- Provide a transformative student experience;
- Advance our reputation for world-class research;
- Sustain our ambitions through income generation;
- Ensure a coherent, connected university;
- Value and develop our staff community;
- Develop a global university;
- Nurture Creativity and culture across the university;
- Place sustainability at the core of the university;
- Pursue active engagement with our communities.

### “Transitional” Strategic Prioritisation, 2021

In August 2020, following the commencement of Prof. Daire Keogh to the role of DCU President, the university leadership team undertook an in-depth review of the existing DCU strategic plan and progress to date on current initiatives and priorities. This significant review also included a consideration of the broader external higher education context, cognisant of the challenges of institutional priorities and advancement in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The renewal of the current plan resulted in the development of a “*transitional strategy*”, prioritising our *People*, *Focus* on activities aligned to our mission, and sustainable and measurable *Impact* for the University.

### Strategy Implementation

Following the publication of Transformation, Talent, Discovery in September 2017, the University has developed the following Constituent Strategies, which will provide much greater detail regarding actions at local level to deliver on the plan.

These include thematic plans in the following areas,

- [Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Research and Innovation](#)
- [Internationalisation](#)
- [Engagement](#)
- [Student Experience](#)

The development of Faculty plans in each of our 5 Faculties,

- [Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- Engineering and Computing
- [Science and Health](#)
- [DCU Business School](#)
- DCU Institute of Education

The development of strategic plans for our larger professional support units,

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Operations (COO)

An alignment of the university’s strategic ambitions and its commitment to quality is embedded throughout the plan, and is specifically articulated in relation to teaching quality, the quality and impact

of our research, a commitment to operational excellence, and the establishment of a strategic partnerships office.

The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored annually, with progress reported to Governing Authority. An annual implementation report is published internally to communicate progress on implementation within the DCU community.

### **DCU Governing Authority**

DCU Governing Authority (GA) is responsible for the management of the corporate and secretarial functions of the University, and for the oversight of legal functions and activities for both the University and its associated campus companies. The GA has a specific schedule of matters, called reserved functions, for which it alone has the decision-making function in the University, to ensure the appropriate management and control. The membership of the DCU Governing Authority is available [here](#).

The schedule referred to above includes the various statutory functions reserved as set out in the Universities 1997 Act, covering the following areas:

- Section 18 - Functions of a Governing Authority;
- Section 25 - Staff;
- Section 27 - Academic Council;
- Section 34 - Strategic Development Plan;
- Section 35 - Quality Assurance;
- Section 36 - Equality Policy.

GA has an identified member with responsibility for leading the Authority's approach to discussion and approval of School and Unit-level quality reviews at DCU prior to publication of the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan. This member also acts as a liaison between the Authority and the QPC.

### **DCU Academic Council**

Academic Council has responsibility for the academic affairs of the University, [as defined by statute](#). Academic Council plays a critical role in setting the academic direction of the University. Its functions include oversight of the design and development of new programmes, development of structures, policy and regulations relating to the academic affairs of the University and advising the University on sectoral and national strategic priorities and initiatives.

Academic Council has three main sub-committees, namely Education Committee, University Standards Committee and Graduate Research Studies Board. Their terms of reference are available [here](#).<sup>[M11]</sup>

[M11]Updated hyperlink

### **DCU Executive**

The primary function of the University's Executive includes contributing to the future direction of DCU by advising the President on issues of major strategic and operational importance. Further, it advises on the promotion of effective communication across all areas of the University and provides a forum, which brings a broad perspective on discussion and decision-making that have University-wide implications. The Executive membership drawn from the University senior leadership, have student representatives and elected memberships representing academic and professional support staff at DCU. Terms of reference for the DCU Executive Committee is available at the following [link](#).

### **Quality Promotion Committee**

The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) is a committee of Executive, chaired by the President or President's nominee and draws its [membership](#) from across the DCU academic and professional support departments. More information on the terms of reference of QPC is available at the following [link](#).

### DCU Education Committee

The Education Committee has responsibility for strategic planning in relation to academic affairs. It is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the University’s portfolio of taught programmes, making recommendations as to proposed changes and evaluating the strategic importance and viability of proposals for new programmes. The terms of reference for Education Committee can be found [here](#).

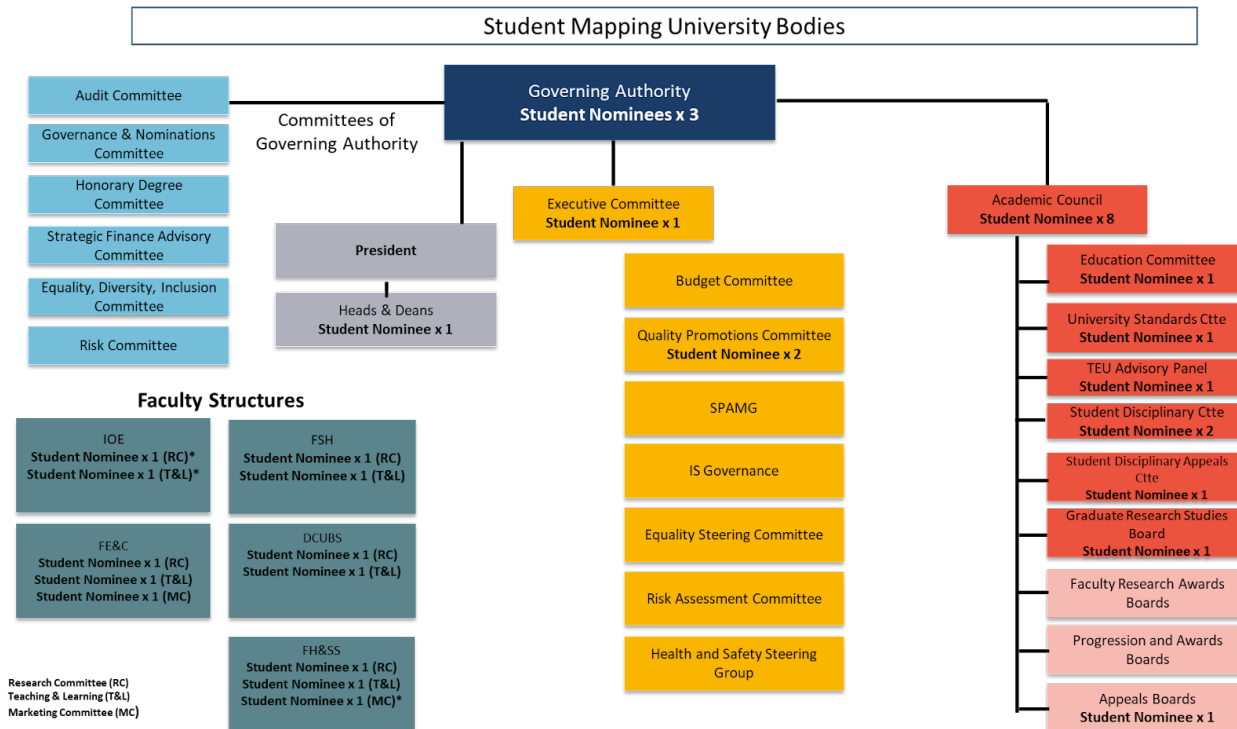
### University Standards Committee

The University Standards Committee is responsible to Academic Council for the development, maintenance and review of University Academic Regulations and Guidelines including Marks and Standards and Programme Regulations. Chaired by the Deputy Registrar / Dean of Teaching and Learning, it approves the appointment of all external examiners for taught programmes, which is an important part of the University’s quality assurance system. It also formulates policy in a wide range of areas related to Teaching and Learning and gives consideration to a range of student related matters. The terms of reference of University Standards Committee can be found [here](#).

### Graduate Research Studies Board

The Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) is responsible for the development and oversight of guidelines, policy and regulations pertaining to postgraduate research education. Chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the GRSB also considers, and makes recommendations on, matters relating to individual research students including external examiner nominations and transfer examinations. The terms of reference of GRSB can be found [here](#).

The following figure provides an overview of DCU University committees, noting, where relevant, student representation on individual committees.



### The DCU Quality Promotion Office

The Quality Promotion Office (QPO) was established to promote, support and facilitate continuous quality improvement activities across academic and administrative units throughout the University. This is undertaken principally through the management of the University’s Quality Review process for Schools, Faculties and Units through: the provision of assistance and advice to Heads of Schools, Dean

of Faculties and Directors of Units as well as academic and administrative staff engaged in the review process; liaison with external reviewers; tracking of the implementation of recommendations arising from the review process; analysis of the outcomes of the review process at an institutional level; dissemination of good practice arising from the review process.

Since 2016, the DCU Quality Promotion Office has been restructured to include the Institutional Research and Analysis function of the university. As a result of this restructuring, the QPO now has an expanded remit to include,

- Regular analysis on behalf of the university for student-based performance metrics, including the identification and analysis of students at risk of academic non-progression
- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support and evidence-based planning, decision- making and quality assurance and enhancement
- Co-ordination of institutional wide student surveys, including Studentsurvey.ie
- Completion of statutory returns on student number to a number of state agencies
- Contribution of data for, and analysis of performance in university rankings

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

DCU has many forms of relationships with different types of organisations, for a variety of reasons that may include:

- The recruitment of students
- The joint development of courses
- Joint research proposals
- To create sustainable strategic alliances

### Types of Agreements

In general, there are three broad levels of cooperation with other Higher Education Institutions that may be supported and formalised through:

- **Letter of Intent** - a general framework for future collaboration at School or Faculty level between DCU and those in other institutions
- **Memorandum of Understanding** - a general framework for future collaboration at institutional level, or leads to the provision of joint programmes or accreditation
- **Memorandum of Agreement** - a detailed and legally binding agreement, underpinning specific activities and the particular arrangements that have been agreed between DCU and partner institutions to effectively realise them
- **Strategic Alliance** - a mutually beneficial long-term formal relationship formed between DCU and another party/ parties in order to pursue a set of agreed goals or to meet a critical organisational need while remaining independent organisations

In addition, collaborative EU level arrangements such as the Erasmus programme are coordinated through the [International Office](#).

### Types of Activities for Agreements

National and international partnerships are based upon a broad strategic fit with university strategy in potentially the following areas:

- Research collaboration & pursuing funding opportunities
- Academic collaboration in learning innovation
- Student recruitment
- Joint ventures such as joint location in third party countries
- Benchmarking various elements of the university
- Other elements such as student, staff exchange, guest speakers, networking

DCU has a range of policies and procedures to support the establishment and ongoing quality assurance of collaborative proposal for programmes of study. These are managed by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and can be access at the following link:

[Collaborative Provision at DCU](#)

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Every proposed new programme must undergo the following processes:

- **Validation**, is the internal approval process which involves Education Committee assessing new programme proposals with a view to ascertaining both their relationship to the University's strategic plan and their likely viability.
- **Accreditation**, involves review by a board of external discipline and professional experts who assess that the programme proposal meets the nationally and internationally accepted requirements for the award to which it is designed to lead.

The Education Committee then reviews validation proposals, submitted for approval by the relevant Faculty. Validation proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Evidence of alignment with the University strategic plan and its component strategies
- Evidence of alignment with the strategic plans of the relevant Faculty/Faculties and School(s), as outlined in the validation proposal
- Evidence of a place for the proposal within higher education in Ireland generally, taking into account programmes offered in other institutions
- Evidence of the likely demand for the proposed programme, and the likelihood of achieving the appropriate student intake
- Coherence of the statement of programme purpose and underpinning educational philosophy
- Appropriateness of the programme learning outcomes, and coherence of their relationship to the programme's purpose and educational philosophy
- Reasonableness of the estimate of the resources needed to offer the programme
- Reasonableness of the proposed launch date
- Appropriateness of the proposed development team
- Appropriateness of the proposed members of the Accreditation Board in light of the regulations for the appointment of such members.

Validation proposals are subject to consideration by Education Committee and, where relevant, Education Committee Standing Committee. Final ratification of the validation process is completed by the Academic Council. Before a programme can proceed to accreditation, the Executive Dean of the Faculty must confirm that all the recommendations of the Education Committee and any recommendations from Academic Council have been implemented.

The appointed Accreditation Board evaluates the proposed programme on the following criteria:

- Likelihood that the proposed programme will meet the needs which the proposal indicates it is intended to meet
- Appropriateness of the entry requirements and exit routes
- Validity of the purpose and underpinning educational philosophy of the proposed programme
- Linkage of the programme learning outcomes with the purpose and the underpinning educational philosophy of the programme
- Consistency and coherence of the proposed modules in the context of the underpinning educational philosophy and the programme learning outcomes
- Reasonableness of achieving the programme learning outcomes, in the time specified, by the majority of students
- Appropriateness and mix of learning and assessment methodologies
- Coherence between assessment methodologies, per module, and the module learning outcomes
- Coherence of the group of skills and competencies that the student would be expected to have at the end of the programme



- Appropriateness of the quality assurance procedures to be used in relation to the programme the qualification.

The Accreditation Board submits an accreditation report containing its recommendations to the Academic Council for approval. Once all recommendations have been addressed, the Academic Council is informed of the completion of the process.

Full Information on academic programme validation and approval regulations can be found at the following [link](#).

Additional support Information for proposers of programmes can be found at this following [link](#).

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

### DCU Admissions Principles and Procedures

DCU has developed a number of principles and policies to ensure that admission to the University is determined based on fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. These include,

[DCU Admissions Principles](#)

[Undergraduate Admissions Policies](#)

[Postgraduate Admissions Policies](#)

[DCU Admissions Appeal Policy](#)

### Transfer Procedures

DCU has developed a number of procedures relating to the transfer of students, both within DCU programmes, and for students in other institutions to transfer onto DCU programmes. More information on these processes can be found at the following [link](#).

### DCU Legacy Re-Admissions Procedure

Procedures are in place for programme chairs to request readmission to a programme made on behalf of a candidate who falls outside the maximum registration period. The process allows for a Programme Chair to make a request for legacy readmission following agreement by the Programme Board. If subsequently approved by the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee, the request is submitted for the consideration of the University Standards Committee. More information on this process can be found at the following [link](#).

### Repeating an Academic Year at DCU

Processes are in place within both Student Support and Development, Registry and the Finance Office to provide students with advice and information on the process for repeating, or registering for deferred modules. More information on this process can be found at the following [link](#).

### Analysis of Examination Results and Progression Rates at DCU

At institutional level, DCU student performance in taught modules is monitored by the DCU Education Committee after every diet of examinations, and end of year programme level at programme level. Further, module and programme level pass rates are reviewed and discussed at Programme Boards.

### Progression of Postgraduate Research Students

Procedures are in place for overseeing the annual progression of students studying on postgraduate research qualification. Annual Progress Reviews are carried out at School level, with the relevant report completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the Head

of School or nominee. Reports are submitted electronically to the Registry each year on or before the date published in the Academic Calendar.

More information on the process of annual progress reviews for graduate students can be found in [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#)

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

### Progression and Award Boards

Module results are considered first at Examination Review Committee (ERC) which reviews the distribution of module results for each Programme. External Examiners are consulted following the ERC and (i) feedback and observations on our processes – including assessment methodology, review of results and (ii) make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board. The Progression and Award Board (comprising of the Programme Chair, the Faculty ADTL, Teaching Convenors/Subject Leaders and Faculty and Registry administrators) then review a)-c) below. At the end of each year, the PAB meets to collate and review grades in the various modules, and take all relevant information into consideration when approving final results.

The functions of PABs are to:

- a. Approve student progression as appropriate
- b. Approve the award and classification of students
- c. Consider applications for extenuating circumstances which have been referred to the PAB

External Examiners may advise the Board on the general standard of student performance in relation to those elements of assessment that they have scrutinised. They should be satisfied that all decisions are appropriate and consistent, and that the management of the assessment and the decision-making process is appropriate and consistent, and comment on the academic quality of the cohort examined relative to the learning outcomes of the programme. Results remain provisional and ECTS credits are not applied until reviewed by the Progression and Award Board. Further information on the Conduct of PABs can be found [here](#).

[DCU Programme Specific Regulations](#), which are updated annually, provide staff and learners with information on examinations, assessment and other regulations within individual programmes.

### Progression of Postgraduate Research Students

Procedures are in place for overseeing the annual progression of students studying on postgraduate research qualification. Annual Progress Reviews are carried out at School level, with the relevant report completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the Head of School or nominee. Reports are submitted electronically to the Registry each year on or before the date published in the Academic Calendar.

More information on the process of annual progress reviews for graduate students can be found in [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#). These regulations include (p.37) information on the establishment of Faculty Award Boards for Research Degrees, who are responsible for making recommendations to Academic Council on the awarding of postgraduate research awards at DCU.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy

DCU delivers over 180 taught academic programmes across its five Faculties and distance education unit, DCU Connected.

DCU's portfolio of undergraduate programmes reflects its focus on inter-disciplinary degrees and the application of knowledge to the needs of enterprise and the wider society. The university's strategic plan commits the university to preparing students to flourish in their personal lives, in civic society, and in the rapidly evolving workplace. The university's connectedness with enterprise and society is reflected in the integration into student learning of applied research, industrial placements and the expertise of practitioners.

Many of our programmes, particularly those delivered by the DCU Institute of Education and School of Nursing, have work-placement at the core of their programme of learning. Outside of these disciplines, DCU was the first university in Ireland to introduce INTRA, a programme of compulsory integrated work-based learning as part of undergraduate programmes. In 2020/21 88% of DCU undergraduates are registered on programmes that include an opportunity for students to engage in a structured, for-credit period of either work-based learning or study abroad. These placements aim to enrich students' education through real-world experience, and provide a pathway for developing graduate attributes and enhancing employability.

The current DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy is available to DCU students and staff at the following [link](#). This strategy is aligned to the Teaching and Learning goals articulated in the 2017-2022 DCU Strategic Plan, *Talent, Discovery and Transformation*. Progress on initiatives relating to this strategy are monitored regularly by the University's Education Committee.

### **DCU Marks and Standards**

Marks and Standards are approved by Academic Council. They are applied consistently at all times and to all taught programmes and modules, including taught modules on research programmes. The Registrar of the University, in the context of his/her wider remit, has ultimate responsibility for the integrity and implementation of Marks and Standards. University Standards Committee reviews Marks and Standards annually and makes recommendations as appropriate to Academic Council on any changes to DCU Marks and Standards.

The DCU Marks and Standards can be found at the following [link](#).

### **Programme Specific Regulations**

Information for [Programme Specific Regulations](#) are all contained within a single area within the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs' website. Programme regulations complement Marks and Standards (as noted above) and make provision for specific issues or circumstances pertaining to particular programmes or discipline areas.

### **Examination Regulations**

The [examination regulations](#) for Dublin City University are published on the University website.

### **Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners**

The appointment of external examiners is an important part of the University's quality assurance system. The University ensures that, in approving all external examiner appointments (through the University Standards Committee for taught programmes, Graduate Research Student Board for research programmes), there is consistency of standards across the University and adherence to all relevant University policies. More information on Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners can be found at the following [link](#).

### **Progression and Award Boards**

The Progression and Award Board comprise of the Programme Chair, the Faculty ADTL, Teaching Convenors/Subject Leaders and Faculty and Registry administrators. Each Board is chaired by the Programme Chairperson or teaching convenor. At the end of each academic year, the PAB meets to collate and review grades in the various modules, and take all relevant information into consideration

when approving final results. The PAB has discretion to make decisions in respect of individual student's marks and award classifications within the overall context of Marks and Standards

More information on DCU Progression and Award Boards functions and guidelines can be found at the following [link](#).

### **Examination Appeals**

Students on taught programmes have the right to appeal against decisions of a Progression and Award Board. Such appeals are processed in accordance with the Examination Appeals Board Terms of Reference, Composition and Standing Orders, as approved by Academic Council. Students may also apply in certain circumstances to have the recording and collation of marks which determined a module result rechecked, and/or to have a section of their assessment reviewed by an independent assessor. Further information on examination appeals and related procedures can be found at the following [link](#).

Research Students also have the right to appeal decisions taken at defined points of their research programme. Further details are available at this [link](#).

### **DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy**

The DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals at Dublin City University engaged in academic work, including all registered students of DCU on both taught and research programmes, and academic staff engaged in assessment of academic work which contributes to an award or credits. More information on the Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy can be found [here](#).

DCU is an active member of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), and has developed a range of activities and tools to support Academic Integrity at DCU. This work is led by the DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit. More information on this can be found at this [link](#).

### **Assessment and Feedback Policy at DCU**

Feedback and assessment are an integral part of teaching and learning and form a critical part of learning for the student. In DCU these elements are articulated in a combined policy which interweave and contribute to teaching and learning at the University. The policies provide structure for assessment and feedback activities which aids both the teacher and the learner. The DCU Assessment and Feedback to Support Student Learning Policy can be found at the following [link](#).

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

### Loop

Our online learning platform is called [Loop](#). Loop allows students to connect with course content, their teachers and fellow learners. It's where students access their notes, participate in discussion fora, construct their ePortfolio and participate in webinars. This platform is central to the delivery of high quality learning experiences for all students of DCU. The concept placed a suite of core DCU platforms at the centre of Loop but at the same time the intention was to also recognise how staff and students could draw on other edge technologies to support their teaching, learning and assessment. In this respect, Loop as a metaphor and overarching arching brand for the VLE is not limited to just core technologies that DCU formally supports. Loop incorporates a number of related technologies to enhance and assure the learning experience at DCU. These include,

- [Moodle](#), the learning management system that manages the creation, delivery and management of all of our modules and programmes and associated assignments, discussion forums and learning content.
- [DCU Reflect Platform](#) online tool that allows students to create a 'virtual portfolio' of their academic, professional and personal achievements. Its functions include the capacity for students to curate their coursework and assignments, create shareable online CVs, upload certificates of achievement and maintain monthly journals of internship experience that can be used to create personal blogs.
- [Urkund](#) text-matching service, which analyses all Loop submitted assignments for text that is available on the internet. This tool helps students to ensure the academic integrity, and appropriate referencing of their work.
- [Unicam](#) supports the video creation for all DCU students and staff, facilitating video capture to support and demonstrate learning.
- All DCU staff and students have access to a licensed [Zoom](#) account, which allows users to hold an unlimited number of Zoom sessions with unlimited duration, with a maximum attendee limit of 300, making it appropriate for supporting virtual classroom activities
- A range of additional [VLE+](#) offerings providing specific tools to support a range of learning activities

### The DCU Student Experience Strategy

The development of [the new DCU Student Experience Strategy](#)), which closely aligns to the DCU Strategic Plan (2017-22), builds on the concept of an enhanced student journey. Through this journey, students have the opportunity to pass through many stages of transitioning into third level education while entering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Encountering opportunities for personal growth and discovery, availing of numerous possibilities for ongoing professional development and re-engaging as Alumni of the University.

### DCU Graduate Attributes

Generation 21 is a unique programme of initiatives whose purpose is to shape our graduates into well-rounded individuals, ready to make an impact on society and on the workforce. It includes opportunities such as the INTRA work placement, which sees over 1,000 students participating in paid internships with companies in Ireland and worldwide each year; the Study Abroad experience, where partner institutions in over 100 institutions provide study opportunities for DCU students.

Building on these key university initiatives, DCU staff worked with industry to identify the key skills and competencies which we believe students need to develop during their time at the University in order to become well-rounded graduates ready to make an impact on society and on the workforce. These DCU Graduate Attributes now form an integrated part of the degree programmes at DCU, allowing students to develop them in an integrated and consistent way.

More information on the DCU Graduate Attributes can be found at the following [link](#).

## DCU Student Charter

Developed in collaboration with the DCU Students' Union, the charter is designed to provide a framework which will help steer students along their DCU journey and make the most of their university experience. The DCU Student Charter can be found at the following [link](#).

## DCU Connected

Open Education students can avail of a wide-variety of supports to ensure they have an enhanced online learning experience. Further information is available [here](#).

## Learner Supports

A broad range of dedicated services are available to DCU students to support their personal development for the duration of their learning experience. These supports include healthcare services, counselling, disability support, autism-specific support, spiritual guidance, financial assistance and [clubs & societies](#) activities.

Staff in the **Student Advice Centres** dedicate a large proportion of their time to dealing with 'ASK' queries (online chat), emails and walk-in appointments from students on a broad range of issues. All staff work to a model of triage, dealing with relevant issues and ensuring a smooth referral to a different service, should this be required. A further enhancement of these support mechanisms is available through the Leadership & Life Skills Centre, located in the U building, which focuses on developing each individual student to reach their full potential by increasing their life skills along with professional and leadership potential.

The delivery of [academic supports](#) across a range of mediums include [student workshops](#), [online courses](#), and [online resources](#). While [professional development supports](#) are available for students to develop skills that will enhance their readiness for future career success. Some examples of activities that can assist students in their professional development include careers advice, mature student mentoring, volunteering, integrated work placements and life coaching. The IITD award-winning [Mentorship Programme](#), which links students with alumni, provides a unique platform to learn about the professional world of work and explore their chosen area of interest.

Further information on the range of professional support services for student is available below:

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year Entrant Support Services

DCU has developed a range of support services specifically developed to address issues relevant to new entrants to higher education. These include:

**Discover DCU: General Orientation** is an online, interactive and gamified programme, available to all incoming students on the DCU VLE at offer stage. The programme consists of a series of short interactive books and related activities before students set foot on campus. This comprehensive programme consists of asynchronous and live elements, designed to help students become familiar with their VLE, start well, and get to know their campus environment.

The programme is regularly reviewed and enhanced based on student feedback. It has been recognised for its originality and excellence through the President's Award for Innovation (2020) and through national conference presentations, training for other Irish HEIs, internationally (European First Year Experience 2019), and in Quality Reviews. A detailed overview of the orientation process is available [here](#).

### Orientation for International Students

A detailed orientation schedule is also extended to all International students to help them settle into their new living and learning environment. University staff engage with students in advance of their arrival to outline supports and services available. Further information outlining the extent of supports is available at the following links – [International Student Orientation](#), [Pre Arrival Support](#), and [Post Arrival Support](#).

## Widening Participation

In 2019, DCU employed a Widening Participation officer charged with promoting inclusion and diversity by encouraging, advising and supporting individuals from under-represented communities to access and complete a course of study in DCU. The work also has a strategic focus as the role encompasses overseeing and monitoring a range of widening participation actions ensuring that DCU continues to promote educational opportunities to marginalised communities.

## Access for Under-Represented Groups in Higher Education

DCU has a long commitment to addressing educational disadvantage among groups currently under-represented in higher education. DCU's Access programme, which targets socio-economic disadvantage is the largest programme of its kind in Ireland. The programme targets students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, including students from ethnic minorities and students from the traveller community. DCU's Access Programme, is the largest programme of its kind in Ireland, supporting 1,168 students in the 2020/2021 academic year. It makes third level education attainable to talented students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds and provides a range of personal, financial and academic support to enable students to thrive and excel in their studies in DCU. Further information on post-entry supports for students studying at DCU through the DCU Access Programme is available [here](#).

DCU was the first university in Ireland to be designated both as a University of Sanctuary and an Age Friendly University. Furthermore, as the first university globally to be designated as an Autism Friendly University, DCU provides significant support for students with autism throughout their student life journey. The first ever Neuro-Divergent Society, which was founded in DCU, is supported heavily through this Office, ensuring that students with autism have a social network on campus. The supports for under-represented groups prior to and during their time at DCU are coordinated by a number of dedicated offices within the Student Support and Development function and include;

**DCU Access to the Workplace** was established in 2019, and has received widespread recognition for its excellence and innovation, winning the Best Business and Third Level Institution Collaboration prize at the Education Awards in 2020. DCU Access to the Workplace is also backed by Rethink Ireland's Children and Youth Fund, which is supporting the programme's growth and development over the next three years. Access to the Workplace organises paid summer work placements for second year access students allowing them to earn and learn, early indications are it broadens students work networks assisting them in securing high value graduate positions, an area highlighted in 2019 by the [HEA](#) as needing action by HEI's. This year the programme included neurodiverse students. Further information on access to the workplace is available at the following [link](#).

**Mature Students** at DCU receive assistance with their academic, personal and professional development. DCU has designed a range of supports, including one-to-one meetings, access to a range of learning support workshops and online tutorials as well as careers advice tailored to meet their specific needs. Designed using the Knowles (1968) adult learning theory, our Head Start Programme focuses on Belonging, Resilience/Self-Confidence, Motivation, Academic Writing, Maths and IT for academic success. Further information on supports for mature entry and student support is available at the following [link](#).

**Students with Disabilities** are supported by the Disability & Learning Support Office. This unit provides a dedicated orientation and needs assessment for students entering through the DARE programme and for students who register at any point during their academic careers. The services available include drop-in support, examination accommodations, assistive technology, Occupational Therapists and mental health supports. DCU has a range of policies relating to the provision of appropriate support services for over 1000 students with a disability. Examples of which are available below:

- [Provision of Academic Tuition to Students with Disabilities](#)

- [Policy on allocation of on-campus accommodation for students with disabilities](#)
- [DCU Examinations Policy for Learners with a Disability](#)
- [Provision of note-taking policy](#)
- [Disability and Learning Support Service Code of Practice for Students](#)
- [Policy on Recording of Lectures for Students with Disabilities](#)

### **University of Sanctuary**

In 2016, DCU was named as Ireland's first University of Sanctuary (UoS). The designation was a recognition of DCU's commitment to welcoming protection applicants and refugees into the university community, and to fostering a culture of inclusion. DCU delivers a range of positive initiatives and inclusive activities under the UoS banner. Each year, the University offers a number of UoS scholarships to protection applicants and refugees who are unable to access state support. In addition, the range of initiatives include DCU Refugee Week, aimed at raising awareness among students and staff; the Migrant English Language Literacy and Intercultural Education (MELLIE) project, which connects DCU staff and students with residents of Direct Provision centres; the University of Sanctuary Lecture, which gives a platform to prominent human rights figures working in the field; and DCU research outputs including peer-reviewed articles, conference keynotes and workshops.

### **College Connect (funded under PATH 3)**

DCU is an active member of the Regional Steering Group established under the College Connect project. College Connect is a collaborative initiative between Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin City University, Dundalk Institute of Technology, and Maynooth University (the Midlands East and North Dublin [MEND] Regional Cluster). College Connect aims to enhance educational aspirations for the most socio-economically disadvantaged people 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.

### **Academic Skills and Related Supports**

DCU provides a host of support services to learners across three academic campuses and online. Specifically, learners have access to resources from first to final year and up to PhD level to enhance their skills and overall learning experience through a variety of supports. Resources are tailored to meet the needs of a diverse and growing student population.

**The Maths Learning Centre's** role is to provide free extra informal support in a welcoming environment to all undergraduate DCU students taking a mathematics module as part of their degree programme. The Centre is located on the ground floor of the O'Reilly Library on the Glasnevin campus. Students can receive one-to-one tuition support during our drop-in service hours where they can work at their own pace with a tutor on hand if they have any questions. Outside of the access hours, the Centre is open as a group study space for mathematics in line with the Library general opening hours. Further information about the Maths Learning Centre can be found [here](#).

**DCU Writing Centre** offers assistance with academic writing to all undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students can attend on their own or in groups to receive expert guidance from a peer tutor. The DCU Writing Centre is located in the Glasnevin Library, Cregan Library and online. Tutorial and one-to-one support provided by the Centre include,

- Guidance in how to structure an assignment at university.
- Advice on how to research and read effectively for an assignment.
- Support with difficulties with specific aspects of writing e.g. paragraphing, grammar, sentence structure, and transition between points, introductions, and conclusions.

Further information is available [here](#).



**SensusAccess** is an automated document conversion service provided by the Library enabling students to convert readings into formats that are more useful or easier to work with such as MP3 files, E-books and Digital Braille books. Further information is available [here](#).

**Library Support Services** are available to enhance their learning experience in both the O'Reilly Library on the Glasnevin Campus and the Cregan Library on our St Patrick's Campus. Support in developing their citing & referencing skills, access to independent and group study space and access to e-books and in-print publications are some of the resources available. Further information on the full suite of services is available [here](#).

**IT Infrastructure** supports students with new technologies and guidance to ensure every student is enabled to effectively participate in all aspect of their learning through the digital infrastructures in place. The full extent of services and supports available to student is accessible [here](#) along with [policies and procedures](#) relating to the IT function.

### **Student Health, Wellbeing and Personal Development**

**Development workshops** that students can attend to support both academic success and personal and professional development are coordinated by Student Support and Development. These workshops are hosted across the campuses and online on a regular basis. More information on types of workshops delivered, and a schedule for upcoming events can be found [here](#).

**DEVELOP** is a central digital repository of resources developed to assist students throughout their learning experience. The hub contains information about opportunities and supports to help students make the most of their university experience, irrespective of the students starting point or prior educational experience. The diversity of this services reflects a truly enhanced student experience filled with new learning, skills development, personal fulfilment and new opportunities. This online hub of resources provides access to a variety of life and digital skills to provide a truly transformative student experience and is accessible via the student VLE.

**Pathways to Success** is a 4-week series of workshops introduced to DCU students in 2015, which continues to focus on helping First Year students settle in and set goals for their time at university. This programme, facilitated through DCU staff who qualified as Life Coaches, offers First Years and all students an opportunity to take part in a group based activity in a safe environment and develop a personalised strategy for 'success'.

**Student Health Centre:** The Centre provides medical care to registered students of DCU and operates a walk-in service, with GP appointments available throughout the week. It provides updates for students on vaccinations required, information about infectious diseases and liaises with relevant schools about required vaccinations for lab work. In the past, the Centre organised Health Fairs which allowed students to browse through information on various health-related matters. Further information on the extent of services provided is available [here](#).

**Counselling / Psychological Support:** Counselling & Personal Development offers an appointment-based service for students in need of psychological or emotional support through their time at University. Students register with the service and are triaged using the internationally recognised CORE triage scoring system – hence ensuring that students who may be 'at risk' are identified early in the process. The Service runs at full capacity at most times of the year. The service has recently introduced a variety of new initiatives to ensure students are provided with earlier interventions, in order to address issues before they escalate. These interventions include outreach workshops on reducing stress, dealing with procrastination, life balance, sleep hygiene etc. – offered by our occupational therapists in the Disability & Learning Support Unit. This information is also available through DEVELOP which is accessible to all students via the student VLE. Launched in 2020, Silver Cloud is a CBT online programme designed to provide students with the tools and skills to support their wellbeing and mental health.

**Chaplaincy** offers a crucial confidential walk-in service for students of all religions and none. This is a vibrant service which plays a key role in offering a gathering space for students, a confidential ear

should the student require advice or guidance, Muslim prayer spaces and Christian gatherings. The Chaplaincy team is composed of ordained priests and lay chaplains and focus on providing a communal space for students to gather. This can often be a place of refuge for First Year students who find the new large learning environment daunting.

**Health Promotion Office:** The Health Promotion Officer continues to offer support and guidance to maintain health and well-being for all staff and students. The Office has developed a number of outreach activities, pulling on existing and new activities around the areas of physical health, mental health, sexual health, smoking cessation and healthy eating. As a multicultural community, DCU aims to embed health and well-being within the university to foster an atmosphere of happy, healthy students.

The model of cross-unit referrals and ensuring that the student has ready access to the relevant service at the time that they require it is at the heart of the work of DCU. DCU Staff are provided with a 'Guide to Support Services' and a briefing each year, to inform them of the developments in service offering in order to ensure that they have up-to-date information. They also receive a graphical representation of 'Dealing with Students in Crisis', which is a brief overview of the referral process if a student presents in crisis.

**The DCU Engagement Award** is an opportunity for students to receive formal recognition for engagement with university life and civic society. It provides a clear and structured approach to self-development and achievement outside the formal curriculum and will develop participants personal and professional skills, gain confidence, boost overall career prospects and enhance the student experience.

With 3 levels of the DCU Engagement Award Bronze, Silver and Gold (Uaneen), students can participate and develop personal, professional and academic skills at every level, enabling a deep reflection on university life. Further information is available <https://www.dcu.ie/students/about-dcu-engage-student-award>.

**DCU Uaneen Module** forms part of the Student Experience Strategy, DCU formally recognises and rewards the achievement of holistic education by accrediting a module in extra-curricular activities – the Uaneen Module. This module is a unique scheme that formally recognises student achievements and learning acquired in areas of clubs, societies, community work and extra-curricular activity in general and is the final level of the DCU Engagement Award. Depending on your degree programme, the Uaneen Module can be either a contributing five-credit elective or a non-contributing optional additional five-credit module. In both cases, successful completion means that students will receive an awarded credit included in the degree parchment. Further information is available [here](#).

### Professional Development Services

**The DCU Careers Service** is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate DCU students. The team is committed to providing a wide variety of professional services which include;

- [Provision of a range of digital tools and resources to prepare to launch their career](#)
- CV and Interview preparation (available to students on the university VLE, Loop)
- [Individual guidance with DCU Careers Consultants](#)
- [An online careers portal with a wide range of job opportunities](#)

Further information on the career services provided is available [here](#).

**The INTRA programme** is an accredited and highly valued part of student learning at DCU. It is a compulsory element of many degree programmes and must be completed in order to graduate. INTRA provides an opportunity for employers to benefit from the talent and skills of students across a range of disciplines including Business, Science, Computing, Engineering and Humanities. Our hard working and enthusiastic students have spent their first years of college learning the theory and pursuing the practical. The INTRA programme provides an opportunity for real-time experience in the workplace. Further information is available [here](#).

## Policies

Policies relating to supporting students at DCU include but are not limited to:

- Coach Management Policy (02/06/2014)
- Confidentiality & Disclosure Policy - SS&D (26/03/2019)
- Death of a student (15/12/2017)
- Sexual Misconduct Policy - Students (05/09/2018)
- Sport Coaches - Ethics & Code of Conduct (01/03/2012)
- Student Alcohol Policy (05/03/2019)
- Student Code of Conduct and Code of Discipline (24/01/2017)
- Student Charter (31/08/2012)
- Student Fitness to Study Policy (01/06/2021)
- Student Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy (19/03/2019)
- Student Policy on Drug Misuse (05/02/2019)
- Support for Pregnant Students Policy (11/05/2018)

A full list of policies are available [here](#).

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

### Policies relating to Postgraduate Research Study at DCU

Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research and doctoral education are led by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the [Graduate Studies Office](#). Graduate Studies Office has three principal areas of responsibility which include: (1) leading the development of all aspects of DCU's postgraduate research education, (2) acting as champion for the needs of DCU's postgraduate student community and (3) driving the development of DCU's postgraduate policy and planning. Graduate Studies Office also engages in a diverse range of activities under these areas of responsibility, such as: policy development and implementation for best practice in graduate research; orientation and induction programme for new research students; an annual calendar of skills development events; seminars and workshops for students; scholarship and industry internship programmes; internal and external collaborative projects; funding proposals and consortium activities at national, European and international level.

The Graduate Research Studies Board (referred to above) is responsible both for a range of policy issues and for making decisions in respect of individual students at certain stages of their progression through their research programmes.

The following links provide further information in relation to regulations relating to postgraduate research at DCU:

- [Academic Roles and Responsibilities in Graduate Research](#)
- [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#)
- [Higher Doctorate Provisions and Regulations](#)
- [Deferral Guidelines for Research Students](#)
- [Format of 'PhD/MA by Artefact' – Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners](#)
- [Format of 'PhD/ MA through Creative or Performance Practice' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners](#)
- [Format of 'PhD by Publication' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners](#)
- [Graduate Research Guide 2020-21](#)
- [Independent Panel Member - Appointment and Remit](#)
- [Orientation Guide for Research Students 2020-21](#)
- [Examiner Guidelines for the Examination of a Master's Thesis \(where no viva voce takes place\)](#)
- [Policy on Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions](#)
- [Quality Assurance of Graduate Training Elements \(GTEs\) Guidelines](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\), Policy for Research Programmes](#)
- [Remote Supervision of Research Students - guidance document](#)
- [Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions](#)
- [Resolving Difficulties Informally – Guidance for Research Students and Supervisors](#)
- [Thesis Submission and Oral Examination – A DCU Doctoral Student Guide](#)
- [Withdrawing or Early Exit from Research Degree Programme](#)
- [Guidance for students and supervisors in respect of withdrawing, or early exit from research programmes](#)

In addition, the Graduate Studies Office also provides detailed information to further assist and support postgraduate research students throughout their studies. Examples of these supports are detailed below:

- [Graduate Training at DCU](#)
- [Workshops and Events](#)
- [Research Integrity Training Programme](#)

A further number of policies exist in relation to wider issues of academic quality and integrity at DCU. Relevant policies can be found at the following links:

- [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Data Privacy Policy](#)
- [Research Ethics and Integrity at DCU](#)

The [DCU Graduate Research Guide](#) provides students with support in understanding the administration and policies and procedures relating to postgraduate research study.

### **Other Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures Supporting Research Activity**

DCU have a range of policies and codes that have been developed to help facilitate a positive institutional research environment in DCU. All relevant institutional Research Policies, Codes of Conduct and Codes of Practice are collated in a [Policy Starter Pack](#) for new research staff. These policies and procedures advise researchers on good practice or establish a framework (which may be derived from external regulatory or compliance requirements) for researchers to operate within.

These include:

- [Code of Good Research Practice](#)
- [Code of Practice on Authorship](#)
- [Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)
- [Out of Hours Access Policy](#)
- [Hosting International Researchers at DCU](#)
- [Ethics Guidelines for Researchers](#)
- [Research Data Management Guidelines for Researchers](#)
- [Research Integrity Guidelines and Training](#)
- [DCU Position Statement on Open Access to Research Publications](#)
- [Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics at DCU](#)
- [Policy for the Use of Animals for Scientific or Educational Purposes](#)
- [Research Infrastructure Policy](#)

In order to further support researchers in managing their research activities to the highest standards of professionalism, DCU has developed the [Research Lifecycle](#) resource. This maps the seven stages of an externally funded research project and the supports available in DCU to assist researchers through the research lifecycle - from defining the project idea and applying for funding, through to running and finishing the project.

There are several policies in place to structure the University's Innovation activity that aim to ensure the highest-quality outcome. These are briefly described below:

#### **Intellectual Property Policy**

DCU's [Intellectual Property Policy](#), updated in September 2020 is publicly accessible on the DCU website. The University's role in the discovery and transmission of knowledge, and the provision of public service creates an environment which is highly conducive to the conception and development of many forms of intellectual property. There is always the possibility that such developments may have commercial value and DCU therefore remain committed to exploit such opportunities to the benefit of the Irish economy, the inventors, collaborative partners and the university.

#### **Conflicts of Interest Policy**

DCU's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) was updated in October 2020 and helps ensure the highest standards of practice in its educational, research and commercialization mission. DCU gives a great deal of freedom to its staff, but in so doing needs to put in place a mechanism to protect its staff, and itself, from reputational damage and other liabilities.

#### **DCU Consultancy Policy**

DCU's Consultancy Policy is internally accessible to DCU staff members only and provides clarity around procedures and processes for the management of consultancy carried out on behalf of the

university. The policy ensures that the distinction between private consultancy and university consultancy is well documented. The policy is currently under review.

### **Research Committee**

The University Research Committee is responsible for the organisational structure of research at DCU and discusses matters that aim to maximise research potential across the university. As per its Terms of Reference, the Committee will:

- a) Advise the Vice President for Research and Innovation on the strategic direction of research and innovation activities across the University
- b) Advise the Vice President for Research and Innovation on the development, promotion and review of research and innovation policies, ensuring the quality and impact of the University's research and innovation activities is maximised.
- c) Advise on matters related to the structures, systems and support services concerned with the management of research and innovation in the University.
- d) Manage and oversee a range of internal university research-related initiatives, especially those related to University Designated Research Centres.
- e) Receive and consider recommendations from Faculties, Research centres and research-related advisory bodies concerning research and innovation matters of institutional importance and take forward these as appropriate.
- f) Inform and respond to Senior Management Group and University Executive on policy, initiatives and resources to support and enhance research and innovation activities.

### **DCU INVENT**

DCU Invent DAC is a wholly owned subsidiary of the university and is the University's commercialisation and technology transfer unit. It engages with companies and organisations to bring university research to the marketplace and to create opportunities for collaborative research. Further information is available [here](#).

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

The University asserts that its staff is its greatest asset and that it holds all the various categories in equal esteem. The University is dependent on its staff to fulfill its mission and its success depends on the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest calibre.

The University has adopted a Policy for Recruitment and Selection (including promotion) which aims to ensure that, by using its procedures and accompanying guidelines the most suitable person is appointed or promoted. The University's Policies and Procedures for both Recruitment and Selection and Promotions provide for the application of best human resources practice (having a proper appreciation of employment law) together with a careful application of the principles of equity, fairness and flexibility.

The following links provide further information on appointments and promotion policies at DCU:

[Recruitment & Selection Policies & Procedures](#) (Section 1 of the HR Policies & Procedures Manual)  
[DCU Promotions Policies & Procedures](#) (Section 3 of the HR Policies & Procedures Manual)

Other relevant policies include:

[Policy to Promote Respect and Protect Dignity at DCU](#)

[Equality and Access Policy](#)

[Equal Opportunities Statement for Job Advertisements](#)

[Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities](#)

### Staff Learning & Development

The University is committed to meeting employee learning and development needs. This investment in staff development is integral to the achievement of a challenging and ambitious set of priorities in line with the University's Strategic *Plan Talent, Discovery and Transformation 2017 - 2022*. Further information on DCU's HR Learning & Organisational Development (L&OD) approach is available at the [Learning & Organisational Development homepage](#).

Recognising the considerable increase in our scale and complexity, HR L&OD has an increasingly broad reach. The team consults with key stakeholders across the University to determine learning needs and strategic priorities on an ongoing basis. This is guided by the recently launched [Academic Development and Promotion Framework](#). Appropriate interventions are then designed and implemented to meet these skill, capability and competency requirements. Colleagues have the opportunity to discuss Learning and Development objectives and plans through the university's Probation Assessment process and the recently launched Performance Review & Development scheme.

The resulting opportunities for staff development are available through the following mechanisms:

- Our [course schedule](#) provides a comprehensive suite of development opportunities for individual staff development.
- A range of self directed options, including LinkedIn Learning, our Essential eLearning programme (to manage compliance based learning) and our Learning Spotlight catalogue to support colleagues ongoing development.
- Learning Campaigns & Programmes – designed to meet the development needs of specific groups of staff. Examples include the DCU Orientation Programme Mentoring Programme, Professional Skills for Research Leaders and the University Leadership and Management Programme (ULM).

Both the PSRL and the ULM are blended and accredited learning programmes. The Orientation Programme provides information on the specific resources and supports available for those with teaching responsibilities.

L&OD offer a bespoke Change Management service for the University. Interventions include coaching, communications support, facilitation and other supports to ensure change is managed professionally and appropriately across the University. L&OD continue to engage with faculties, schools & departments to identify, design and deliver these interventions as required.

In addition to L&OD a number of other units across the University contribute to the professional development of staff including the Teaching Enhancement Unit, the Library, Research and Innovation Support (RIS), and Information Systems Services (ISS).

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

The remit of the Learning & Organisational Development team now includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for DCU employees. The team manages the Athena Swan Gender Equality programme for the University alongside a range of policies, training and initiatives to raise awareness around equality and make DCU a more inclusive workplace for colleagues. A key pillar of our EDI strategy is the DCU Women in Leadership Initiative. The vision for this initiative is that DCU will become a university that explicitly values women as leaders. A wide range of formal and informal initiatives, existing and new, support the achievement of this ambitious vision. Further information on the various strands of the initiative in addition to an update on progress are available on the [DCU Women in Leadership webpage](#).

### **DCU Mentoring & Coaching Programme**

DCU offers staff members the opportunity to engage with an active mentorship programme. Mentors will be senior academic and research staff including professors and retired members of staff and senior administrative staff. The University also runs a successful Reverse Mentoring scheme, where senior colleagues are mentored by DCU students. The HR Learning & Organisational Development team also manage a Coaching panel where senior colleagues can access coaching from a range of trained and accredited Coaches. Information on the DCU Mentoring & Coaching Programme are available [here](#).

### **DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit**

The DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit's mission is to *foster excellence in practice through leadership in teaching, the provision of professional development opportunities for staff, and the scholarship of teaching and learning*. The Unit leads a number of [professional development opportunities](#) designed to support the professional development of academic staff. The Teaching Enhancement Unit further delivers a series of workshops for programme teams and schools covering a wide variety of areas related to teaching, learning and assessment. More information on these workshops can be found on the [Teaching Enhancement Unit website](#). Another initiative undertaken by the TEU is the AdvanceHE Fellowship scheme. This initiative is to recognise excellence in teaching and learning. An AdvanceHE Fellowship demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. Across four categories, from Associate to Principal, Fellowship provides individuals with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership of teaching and learning.

### **Research Career Framework**

The DCU Research Career Framework (RCF), designed to attract and retain Postdoctoral researchers, provides significant professional development opportunities. The Framework aims to ensure that DCU remains a University of choice for top class research and researchers in the future. Further information on the Framework and initiatives underpinning the Framework is available [here](#).

### **Research Development Programme**

The Research Development Programme is developed by HR Learning & Development in collaboration with RIS following consultation with Researchers. The programme aims to support the career and professional development of researchers and academics as they undertake the Research Career Framework. This programme provides skills based learning and development opportunities, which encourage both the personal and professional growth of researchers. Information on the full range of research courses, the Researcher Development Programme and information on the DCU Research Career Framework are located on the [Researcher Development Hub](#).



## 6.0 Information and Data Management

Information is an asset and if well managed can contribute significantly to the smooth operation of the University.

The University is transforming the way in which its students and staff interact with each other, using student information to achieve excellence in service, and to ensure its future needs can be met. This transformation will be enabled through a flexible and robust Student Information System (SIS), a system that can support the University's change and growth agenda.

The SIS Programme has a pivotal role to play in enabling the University to achieve its strategic goals. It will enable the University to deliver an excellent student experience by providing an easy to access and single source of information that drives a consistent experience before, during and after a student's time in the University.

The University uses a wide variety of systems to manage its data resources. Each of these systems is subject to a rolling review of access control, security applications, and system updates, to ensure that they are secure, robust and fit for use by University staff.

To assist in the management of these legislative changes and infrastructural challenges the University formed an 'Information Systems (IS) Governance Committee' to advise on the strategic direction of all information sources within the University as well as to ensure that this is consistent with the overall strategy.

### Guru

The Guru system is a platform that provides student, module and programme information to academic staff and management through a user-friendly interface. In addition to data provision and statistical analysis, it is also used in the digital generation, uploading and external review of examination papers. It is also used for the submission of external examiner reports and permits the appropriate sharing and review of these reports at all levels within the university. More information about the guru system can be found at the following link: <https://gurudevelopments.com/>

### Discoverer

Discoverer is an Oracle Business Reporting Tool which sits on top of the student information system and is used by administrative staff in Units and Faculties. This tool gives power and flexibility for the running of a suite of standard reports and creating ad hoc reports to respond to specific information requests.

### IRIS

Following the recommendations of the IRIU in 2010 an additional BI solution (IRIS) was identified by the University. This is built on Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition and is integrated with multiple DCU data sources. A number of dashboards of metrics are available to Faculty Management Boards, Programme chairs and Senior Management of the University to provide statistics and metrics for decision making through IRIS.

The University will continue to use both Discoverer and IRIS in the short to medium term. We are currently planning an upgrade of the IRIS platform and associated technologies. However, we are also exploring the use of other modern flexible reporting platforms for comparison. This however is a resource intensive area and future BI requirements will be considered as part of the multi-year SIS Project which is discussed later.

Each of the above mentioned systems provides information to different departments for self-monitoring and planning of their portfolio of activities.

### Robust & Comprehensive Student (Learner) Information System

The student information system is supported by Academic Systems and ISS in conjunction with a third party provider maintenance and support agreement. Back-ups are taken nightly and in the event of any identified issue the system can be restored to the latest backup. ISS conducts ongoing monitoring and

deployment of server security patches, network improvements and system updates to ensure data is secure, working in conjunction with Academic Systems and relevant business areas. Security and performance of the learner information system is subject to ongoing monitoring and review, particularly at key points in the academic calendar such as publication of exam results and on-line registration.

The student information system maintains the core record of approved university curriculum per annum, student biographical, academic records and student fee information. It further permits the recording of additional relevant data for specific groups of students e.g. postgraduate research students, nursing degree students and those on specific schemes - DARE, HEAR.

The student information system also sustains and facilitates the reliable processing and progression of the students through the entire student lifecycle from admission through to graduation. Registry, Academic Systems and ISS meet regularly to review and plan for significant events within the university academic calendar (eg on-line registration, progression and award boards, etc.) Registry managers also meet regularly with Faculty Managers in which issues requiring attention can be raised and subsequently followed up.

The University can ensure that student assessment data is accurate and complete via quality checks carried out at Faculty and Registry levels through the annual assessment review (Progression and Award Boards) and academic structure processes. The student information system is considered the primary source for all curriculum and student record information and other systems containing this information pull this directly from the primary source.

Access to the student information system is controlled via the use of Function Sets to ensure appropriate access to data. Function sets are audited regularly by Registry to ensure compliance and have been subjected to Internal Audit Processes. A test environment is used for thoroughly testing any system developments before deployment on the live environment.

The University avails of a number of other systems to support the student learning environment and manage the student experience and lifecycle. These are

**Coursebuilder:** maintains module descriptors, learning outcomes, programme learning outcomes, module coordinator control and access

**Syllabus Plus:** used to schedule and publish lecture timetables and operate the room booking service for internal and external clients, clubs and societies

**Microsoft Dynamics:** used by Student Support and Development, International office and student recruitment to assist with providing the broad range of support services to students in DCU and recruitment of new students

The ISS Ticketing system for logging support queries provides an evidence-based approach to tracking reports of any problems encountered. ISS and Academic Systems liaise closely with the provider with regard to identifying issues, troubleshooting and suggesting developments to the system where required.

### **DCU Institutional Research and Analysis**

Institutional Research and Analysis function supports the University by gathering and analysing information and evidence for use in university-wide academic and administrative decision-making and assessment activities. Since 2017, this function has become part of the DCU Quality Promotion Office.

Key functions include:

- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support an evidence-based approach to university planning, decision making and quality enhancement.
- Design, analysis and reporting on institution-wide student feedback surveys.
- Co-ordinating the implementation and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators at institutional level.
- Analysis of the external environment, including benchmarking activities.

- Supporting the implementation of Business Intelligence Systems to deliver user-friendly reporting across the university.
- Supporting the completion, submission and analysis of data to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and other Government Agencies

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

### Information on DCU Policies

The University maintains a dedicated Central Policies Web page (CPW) that collates the most significant policies by which it governs its affairs. The CPW also contains useful sections on University Statutes, Codes and Regulations that will be of particular interest to staff, students and the general public.

The CPW is owned by the Office of the Chief Operations Officer with day-to-day responsibility for its maintenance and contents resting with the Risk & Compliance Officer.

The purpose of the CPW is to:

- to provide access, via a single website location, to university policies that deal with the administration of the academic and business affairs of the University;
- to indicate which policies have been recently amended or newly created in the last year;
- to indicate, for specific categories of staff, those policies which may be of particular relevance;
- to provide guidance on the drafting and approval process for a university policy; and
- to assist in the correct designation and categorisation of various documents as either policies, codes, procedures or guidelines by applying the principles set out in the University's 'Hierarchy of Documents'.

[University Policies Website](#)

[Policy Starter Packs for new staff](#)

[Policy Writing Guidance](#)

### Planned Activity for Future Development

DCU has recently begun a multi-year project to upgrade/replace our student information system. The student information system is in ways the central nervous system of the organisation. A large number of our key IT systems and business processes depend on a robust, available, flexible and secure student information system. As such, the system also plays a key role in the experience of our students both on and off campus.

The existing student information system has been extremely secure and robust over the years since installation over twenty years ago. However, DCU has grown significantly over the last number of years in student numbers and complexity in relation to IT architecture and business requirements. As a result, the current system is no longer meeting our needs in terms of key strategic and operational requirements.

DCU commenced the implementation of the chosen solution in 2019, and the current project will see a transfer to the new solution by the end of 2023. The new Student Information System project forms part of a broader range of activities aligned to the development of robust operational processes and organisational structures. The implementation of the DCU Operating Framework is led by the university's Senior Management Group, and is focused initially on the development of structures and processes focused on the delivery of a student-centric operating model to support the university's learning activities.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### Annual and Periodic Programme Review

Academic programmes at DCU are subject to internal programmatic review, both annually (APR), and on a five-year cyclical schedule of periodic programmatic review (PPR). In addition, 56% of our taught programme portfolio is subject to ongoing external accreditation by Professional, Regulatory, and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). APR is conducted during October of each academic year, reviewing the programme for the previous academic year. The outputs of APRs are presented and discussed at Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees, with a summary report on the key issues relating to programme delivery and student attainment discussed at Faculty Management Board. In addition, each Faculty prepares a short report identifying issues raised that are managed beyond faculty-level to the University Education Committee in March following APR completion. Building on an annual cycle, periodic programme review (PPR) is typically conducted on a five-year cyclical basis. The internal PRR process is completed using a standardised template and reporting structure, however, in cases where programmes are also subject to external reviews by PRSBs, the self-evaluation and outputs of these externally led reviews can be used as a substitute for the internal review process, where appropriate. More information on Annual and Periodic Programme Review can be found at the following [link](#).

### Externally- Led Unit Reviews.

The Quality Promotion Office is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the cyclical review of units at DCU, on a 7-year rolling cycle. The reviews are based on a self-assessment approach, followed by a peer review group visit, and conclude with the development of a quality improvement plan by the unit under review in response to the recommendations of the peer review group. The academic and support unit reviews are primarily focused on the evaluation and exploration of strategic, organisational and management issues and external relations.

The quality review process includes 4 key stages,

- **Self-Evaluation Report-** the completion of a comprehensive self-evaluation of an academic or professional support area, led by an internally selected quality review committee. Themes explored during self-evaluation both build on previous quality reviews, and other internal and external review activity, and are aligned to the quality assurance requirements outlined in the QQI Guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines. The process of self-evaluation requires an evidence-informed approach to self-evaluation, and units undergoing review are encouraging to use both existing sources of data and information, and seeking new information from relevant stakeholders to support the completion of self-evaluation
- **Peer Review Visit and Report-** The Peer Review visit is conducted by a six-person team, constituted of three external members, and two internal reviewers. Membership of Peer Review Groups are drawn from national and international experts, both from higher education and a peer from outside of the higher education sector. The Peer Review visit aims to verify and evaluate the self-evaluation report, and meet with staff, students, and other stakeholders to discuss key issues identified. The visit is followed by the completion of a Peer Review Group Report, which summarises the Group's findings and makes commendations and recommendations for future quality enhancement within the Area under review.
- **Quality Improvement Planning-** following receipt of the final Peer Review Group report, the area develops a Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) in response to the report. This involves both an Area, and University level response to the PRG recommendations. The QuIP is discussed and agreed at a follow-up meeting, attended by at least one external member of the Peer Review Group
- **Publication of Review Outputs-** following consideration and discussion of both the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan at University Executive and DCU Governing Authority, both documents are published on the DCU website.

Detailed information on procedures, background and guidance documents, and templates relating to these unit level reviews can be found at the following [link](#).

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### Guide:

Under this section, provide details of engagement with third parties, including:

- Arrangements with PRSBs, awarding bodies, QA bodies
- Collaborative provision
- Articulation agreements

If available on the institution's website, include links to separate lists of all other relevant arrangements with third parties that were entered into prior to the reporting period.

## 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

### Guide:

Indicate the total number of arrangements in place with each of the following (i) PRSBs, (ii) awarding bodies, or (iii) QA bodies in the table below.

In the boxes below, provide details of any programmes for which accreditation/approval has been extended, or which have been newly accredited/approved, during the reporting period. Details of more than five arrangements may be included if necessary. If available, links to publications related to the arrangement, such as accreditation/approval reports, may be included alongside details of the arrangement.

If available, include links to a list of all other relevant arrangements approved prior to the reporting period.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	19
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

<b>1. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	The Teaching Council / An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta

Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Physical Education with Mathematics BSc in Physical Education with Biology BSc in Science Education BSc in Education & Training Bachelor of Education Bachelor of Religious Education and English Bachelor of Religious Education and History Bachelor of Religious Education and Music Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge and French, German or Spanish Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching) Professional Master of Education (Post-Primary Teaching)
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2022/23

<b>2. Type of arrangement</b>	
(PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland / An Bord Altranais
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Nursing (General) BSc in Nursing (Mental Health) BSc in Nursing (Intellectual Disability) BSc in Nursing (Children's and General) Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing MSc in Dementia Health Care Practice MSc in Dementia Nursing Practice Masters in General Health Care Practice MSc in General Nursing Practice MSc Intell. Dis. Health Care Practice MSc in Int. Dis. Nurs. Practice Masters in Mental Health Nursing Practice MSc in Mental Health Care Practice
Date of accreditation or last review	2020
Date of next review	2025

<b>3. Type of arrangement</b>	
(PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Accounting and Finance BSc in Aviation Management



	<p>BSc in Aviation Man with Pilot Studies  Bachelor of Business Studies  Bachelor of Business Studies (Exchange)  Business Studies ( with INTRA )  BA in Global Business  BA in Global Business (Canada)  BA in Global Business (France)  BA in Global Business (Germany)  BA in Global Business (Spain)  BA in Global Business (USA)  Graduate Cert in Management (Business)  Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics  Bachelor Business Studies International  Masters in Business Administration  MSc in Accounting  MSc in Electronic Commerce (Business)  MSc in Finance  M.Sc. in Talent, Leadership &amp; HR Strategy  MSc in Human Resource Management  MSc International Accounting &amp; Business  BSc Marketing, Innovation &amp; Technology  BSc Marketing, Innovation &amp; Tech(INTRA)  MSc in Investment, Treasury &amp; Banking  MSc in Management of Operations  Graduate Cert in Management of Operation  MSc in Work &amp; Organisational Psychology  MSc in Management (Aviation Leadership)  MSc in Management (Business)  MSc in Business Administration  MSc in Digital Marketing  MSc in Emergency Management  MSc in Management (Insights &amp; Innovation)  MSc in Work &amp; Organisational Behaviour  MSc in Management (Strategy)</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	2021
Date of next review	2026

<b>4. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
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Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology/Behaviour BSc in Psychology MSc in Psychology BA in Humanities (Psychology Major)
Date of accreditation or last review	2017 and 2018
Date of next review	2022 and 2023

<b>5. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering B.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering MEng in Biomedical Engineering B.Eng. Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng B.Eng. in Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng MEng in Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng B.Eng. in Common Entry into Engineering BEng Electronic & Computer Engineering B.Eng. in Mechatronic Engineering MEng Electronic & Computer Engineering MEng In Electronic & Comp Eng. (Wuhan) MEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Eng
Date of accreditation or last review	various
Date of next review	various

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

### Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines **collaborative provision** as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**joint award**' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**linked provider**' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

### Guide:

If the institution has collaborative provision arrangements in place, please indicate in the first table the total number of each type of arrangement, then provide details of any new collaborations, or updates to existing collaborations, that occurred during the reporting period. More than five arrangements may be included if necessary. If available, links to publications related to the arrangement, such as memoranda of agreement, may be included alongside details of the arrangement.

If available, include links to a list of all other relevant arrangements entered into prior to the reporting period.

[For DABs: details of all linked providers should be included.]

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	
Joint/double/multiple awards	5
Collaborative programmes	3
Franchise programmes	
Linked providers (DABs only)	1

<b>1. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	Double Awards
Programme titles and links to publications	Northeastern University, Boston Neoma Business School, Reims, France European School of Business, Reutlingen, Germany ICADE at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain Brock University, Ontario, Canada
Date of last review	BA in Global Business (France) BA in Global Business (Germany)

	BA in Global Business (Spain) BA in Global Business (USA) BA Global Business Canada
Date of next review	2016
	2021

<b>2. Collaborative provision</b>	Collaborative Partnership
(Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Research Masters and Research PhD
Date of last review	n/a
Date of next review	Currently under review

### 9.3 Articulation Agreements

**Definition:**

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an **articulation agreement** may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

**Guide:**

If the institution has articulation agreements with other bodies in place, indicate the total number in the first box, then, in the subsequent boxes, provide details of the any new or updated articulation agreements. Details of more than five arrangements may be included if necessary. If available, links to any publications related to the arrangement may be included alongside details of the arrangement.

If available, include links to a list of all other relevant arrangements entered into prior to the reporting period.

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	
<b>1. Articulation agreement:</b>	
Name of body (/bodies):	Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Business Studies
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	

[Higher Education Institution]  
2022

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**Annual Quality Report (Institution)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2020-2021**

## PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

### 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

#### 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

##### Progress on DCU Strategy Implementation in 2020/21

In August 2020, following the commencement of Prof. Daire Keogh to the role of DCU President, the university leadership team undertook an in-depth review of the existing DCU strategic plan and progress to date on current initiatives and priorities. This significant review also included a consideration of the broader external higher education context, cognisant of the challenges of institutional priorities and advancement in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The renewal of the current plan resulted in the development of a “*transitional strategy*”, prioritising our *People*, *Focus* on activities aligned to our mission, and sustainable and measurable *Impact* for the University.

In support of the implementation of our strategic goals, the DCU senior management group have articulated a DCU Operating Framework, that sets the context for how DCU will operate in the future, and consider the interlinked dimensions of service, organization and governance, people and capacity, and systems and data. The DCU Operating Framework is underpinned by a number of agreed framework principles, which align to the DCU strategy. These principles have guided the development of a high-level service design which focuses on service redesign on DCU curriculum design and management, and core services across the student journey.

Other significant milestones in support of the DCU strategy in 2020/21 include,

- The successful accreditation, and offering through the CAO application process of a suite of new and restructured undergraduate programmes as part of the DCU Futures initiative
- Roll-out of a new applications portal for postgraduate taught applications, as part of the SIS programme. The delivery of this new process for managing applications represents the first delivery of the multi-annual business transformation project enabled by our new student information system.
- Completion of extensive refurbishment of Woodlock Hall on the All Hallows campus and agreement on the development of the DCU FutureTech Building on the Glasnevin campus as part of the DCU campus masterplan. The Future Tech building is a 10,000m<sup>2</sup> facility is a project that will further advance DCU’s international reputation for excellence in science, computing and engineering disciplines. It will have the capacity to accommodate over 3,000 additional STEM students on the university’s Glasnevin campus. It will also house DCU’s entire School of Health & Human Performance
- The participation of 140 DCU Access students in the DCU Access to the Workplace initiative, which provides fully paid, professional summer internships for Access students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

### Guide:

An update should be provided on objectives/planned actions for the year as outlined in the last AQR. If these have not been completed or are no longer applicable this should be indicated.

The table is designed to assist in this process and should include headline information only.

*Please delete guide text before submission.*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Planned objectives (Previous AQR)</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Update on Status</b> Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Continued implementation of initiatives to address the recommendations of the Cinnte Review 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of interactive, browser-based dashboard reporting, using Power BI to support reporting in a number of areas.</li> <li>• The implementation of the SIS project includes a work stream focused on data and reporting, to ensure high quality analytics capability from the new student information system.</li> <li>• The DCU Performance Review and Development (PRD) process was initiated through a large-scale pilot and review process during 2020/21. Feedback from this large-scale pilot will inform the full rollout of the PRD process in 2022</li> <li>• Continued refinement of existing academic policies, and development of new policies and procedures on DCU Marks and Standards</li> </ul>
2	Development of procedures to include student reviewers on all DCU Quality Reviews	Agreement by QPC on the inclusion of student reviewers to Peer Review Group reports. All quality reviews conducted in the 2020/21 quality review timetable have included as student reviewer as a full member of the Peer Review Groups
3	Completion of a strategically focused Thematic Review of Digital Learning at DCU	Thematic Review of Digital learning completed. Review visit conducted remotely in December 2020.
4	Development of a DCU Operating Framework to guide business transformation and operational effectiveness at DCU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement on the Operating Framework Principles Completed during 2020/21, and generation of High-Level service design for the in-scope elements of the Framework.</li> <li>• Agreement on high-level design blue-print for a number of service areas finalised</li> <li>• Alignment of the DCU Framework to the design and configuration of the SIS project implementation, which will result in the implementation of a new student information system, and an operational transformation agenda at DCU</li> </ul>



## 1.3 Governance and Management

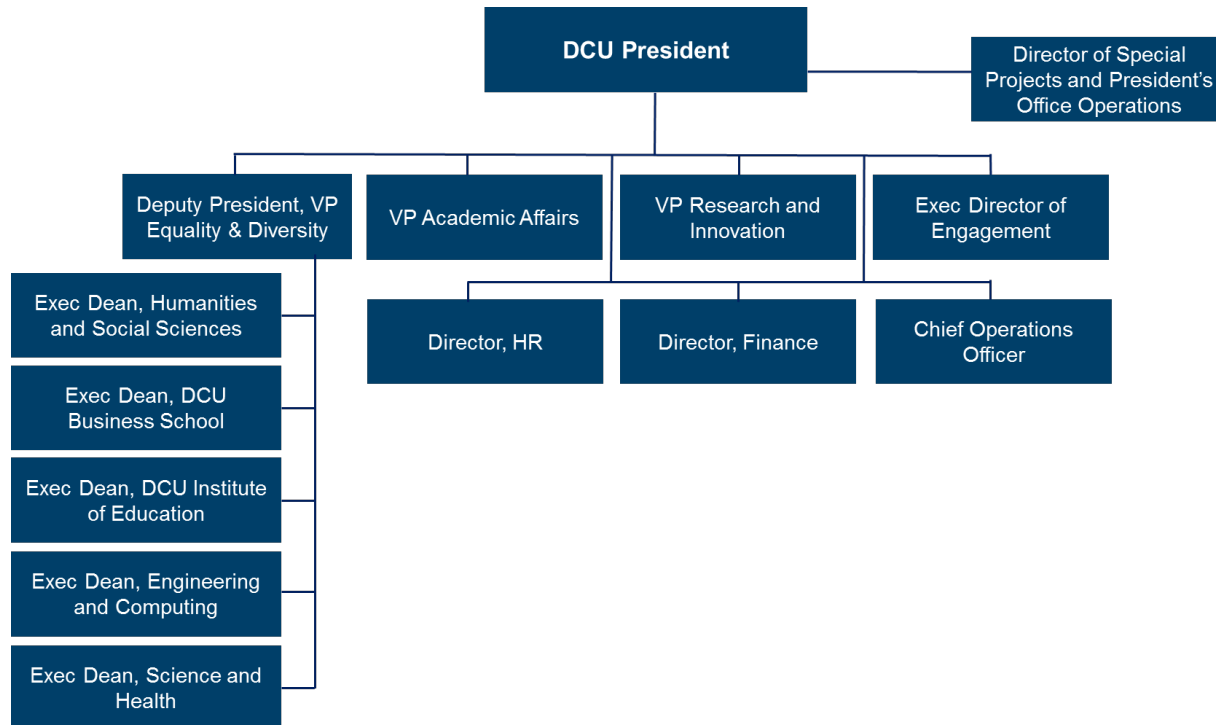
### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

[https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/registry/university\\_schedule\\_of\\_meetings\\_2019-2020.pdf](https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/registry/university_schedule_of_meetings_2019-2020.pdf)

Body	Meeting dates from Sept 2019 - 2020
Governing Authority Committee Meetings	10 <sup>th</sup> September, 2020 20 <sup>th</sup> October, 2020 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 2020 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2021, 15 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021 25 <sup>th</sup> June, 2021
Executive Meetings	1, 15 & 29 <sup>th</sup> September, 2020 13 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> October, 2020 10 <sup>th</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> November, 2020 8 <sup>th</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> December, 2020 12 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021, 9 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2021 9 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 6 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021 4 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> May, 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2021 15 <sup>th</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup> June, 2021 3 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021 7 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup> September, 2021
Quality Promotion Committee Meetings	16 <sup>th</sup> September, 2020 18 <sup>th</sup> November, 2020 20 <sup>th</sup> January, 2021 24 <sup>th</sup> March, 2021 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021 16 <sup>th</sup> June, 2021
Academic Council Meetings	14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2020 9 <sup>th</sup> December, 2020 3 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2021 7 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup> June, 2021
Education Committee	23 <sup>rd</sup> September, 2020 21 <sup>st</sup> October, 2020 18 <sup>th</sup> November, 2020 16 <sup>th</sup> December, 2020 13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2021 10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2021 10 <sup>th</sup> & 31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2021 28 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021 26 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021 15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021

### 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Following the commencement of Prof Daire Keogh to the role of DCU President in July 2020, a number of changes have been made during the reporting year to the DCU leadership team. These include the assumption of leadership responsibility for Equality and Diversity within the role of the Deputy President, and the creation of the role of Executive Director of Engagement. The following organisational chart includes the roles within the new DCU senior leadership team.



## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Registry	17 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	<a href="https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office">https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office</a>
Digital Learning Remote Review	8 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020.	<a href="https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office">https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office</a>
Information Systems and Services	28 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021.	<a href="https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports">https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports</a>
Finance Office	26 <sup>th</sup> - 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2021.	<a href="https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports">https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports</a>

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>2</sup> 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	4	0	4				
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews	0						
Virtual processes	4	0	4				
Average panel size for each process type*	5						

<sup>2</sup> 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**

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	23	Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	4	2	2	0	2	2	2			4	
Secretary	4	3	1	0	0	4					
Academic/Discipline Specific	16	7	9	0	6	10	6				
Student Representative	2	2	0	0	0	2					
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	4	1	3	0	0	4					

## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

The 2020/21 academic year was one characterized by the progress of University activity through primarily online and remote means. Significant work undertaken in the 2019/20 academic year to underpin quality in this online environment was implemented and further developed during the 2020/21 period.

The period was also one of continued progress in relation to the implementation of our strategy, continued progress in relation to quality assurance activities, and ongoing quality enhancement initiatives. The following initiatives and activities provide a summary of some of the key activities undertaken or initiated during the reporting period in support of institutional quality assurance and enhancement.

### Governance and Management of Quality

In September 2021, the first meeting of the new DCU Governing Authority took place. The composition of our new Authority includes members from the world of education, industry, and the Arts. At this meeting the Governing Authority appointed Brid Horan as the University's new Chancellor in succession to Dr. Martin McAleese. Brid Horan has served as a member of DCU Governing Authority from September 2014 to June 2021, on the Audit Committee from 2014 to 2016, and as Committee Chair from 2016 to 2021. Prior to joining the Authority in 2014, she was also appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills as an external member of the Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education in Ireland (generally known as the Cassells Group). In 2016, she was appointed by the Higher Education Authority as Chair of an International Expert Panel to undertake a review of Ireland's Higher Education Funding Allocation Model.

The April 2021 Academic Council approved the proposed high-level Future operating model for curriculum approval and management, as part of the SMG-led DCU Operating Framework initiative. The approval of the high-level blueprint is the first step that will result in the implementation of a new service model for the service model that will include the policy, quality assurance framework, procedures and processes that enable the University to develop, design, approve and manage the curriculum. It is intended that the service model developed will ensure that Executive Faculties at DCU are facilitated to be agile and innovative in service of the University strategy. Faculties are charged with responsibility for delivering curriculum approval and management, while the University will assure and support high standards of student and wider service-recipient experience, programme and module quality and relevance, and data-driven strategic decision-making.

### Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

#### Advance HE Fellowships at DCU

[Advance HE Fellowship](#) demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. In October 2019 DCU became a member of Advance HE and formally launched a pilot of the Fellowship Scheme. Following the success of this pilot led by the DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU), 18 staff were awarded Fellowships in 2020. In 2021, the TEU opened the scheme to all staff and the first supported (online) journey to Fellowship was launched. DCU's supported journey to Fellowship is the first of its kind nationally and has resulted in over 60 DCU Fellows across all Faculties, the highest number of Advance HE Fellows in any HEI in Ireland. All new DCU Fellows were recognised at a celebratory event at the Helix in November 2021.

#### DCU Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme

A new and enhanced Performance Review & Development (PRD) Scheme was launched by the University in September 2020 commencing with a large scale pilot which took place during 2021. Overall, the scheme aims to provide staff with a structured framework through which conversations regarding performance, professional and career development can take place. The DCU

Performance Review & Development (PRD) scheme is designed to support excellence in employee and organisational performance. The PRD process will help staff to better understand how they contribute to and support the delivery of the University strategy through their individual and team responsibilities.

The PRD scheme provides a supportive and structured framework through which conversations regarding professional and career development can take place. In these conversations, staff can focus on:

- Setting of individual goals in agreement with the Reviewer (normally the line manager)
- Reviewing performance with agreed outcomes
- Identifying development needs and agreeing a development plan with the Reviewer
- Agreeing work and career objectives

The 2021 Pilot Scheme involved 465 participants from a number of academic schools and professional support units across the University. Extensive feedback from pilot participants was collected between October and December 2021 and a review of the recommendations arising from the feedback is due to be completed by the *PRD* Steering Committee in March 2022. Given the refinements that will be required in relation to both the operational and technical support afforded by the *CoreTalent* System (which drives the implementation of the PRD scheme), a Phase 2 pilot will be undertaken in 2022 in advance of a full implementation of the scheme later in 2022 or in Q1 2023.

## Supports and resources for learners

### My DCU

In September 2020, DCU launched MyDCU, an online portal through which general orientation was delivered in both 2020 and 2021. The activities and supports developed include elements for pre-orientation, orientation, and study skills supports activities. These interactive environments include official welcome messages, the Discover DCU transition series, self-directed activities designed to help students get ready and get to know Loop, a chat with Advice Centre staff via the ASK button, fun competitions and a programme of online general orientation events. Students have access after they validate the credentials they receive in their welcome email from the Registry.

### First Year Check-in @ DCU

The Quality Promotion Office, Student Support & Development and Insights Centre for Data Analytics are collaborating on an initiative aimed at helping the University understand more about student transitions to higher education and provide an opportunity for the University to tailor communications relating to student events, activities and support systems for first year students. First-year students were invited to participate in a semester long study which involved answering 18 questions framed around three behavioural indicators - Belongingness, Engagement and Confidence<sup>3</sup>. Weekly evaluations through the app measured the level of change between these indicators which, in turn, will drive tailored communications through push messages focusing on events, activities and support systems.

## Information and Data Management

Significant progress was made during 2020/21 on the implementation of a multi-year programme to deliver a new Student Information System (SIS) to DCU. The new Student Information System will enable DCU to adopt a full student-centric model that facilitates a 'self-service' and personalised delivery of services, empowering students to access information at any time, from anywhere. The first phase of this programme, the implementation of a new application portal for postgraduate taught programmes was delivered in November 2020, with full delivery of the solution to be completed by September 2023. The SIS programme will enable the following key elements of DCU's strategic goals:

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<sup>3</sup> Mantz Yorke (2016) The development and initial use of a survey of student 'belongingness', engagement and self-confidence in UK higher education, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41:1, 154-166

- Enhance the quality and operational effectiveness of DCU and interactions with students and staff
- Support expansion and growth, enabling more flexible, modular and blended online learning
- Support engagement with key DCU stakeholders such as employers
- Support the achievement of international ambitions, through mobile and socially enhanced digital communication and engagement
- Advanced analytics to help DCU attract students by better understanding their needs, offering appropriate courses (in the right format), and providing them with the support they need, when they need it.

## Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

During the 2020/21 academic year, the following progress has been made in relation to ongoing self-monitoring and review,

- During 2020/21 DCU implemented a model for the conduct of remotely-based internal quality reviews. This model was first adopted for the review of the DCU Human Resources department in June 2020, and continually reviewed and improved based on stakeholder feedback during the reviews conducted in 2020/21. DCU was able to complete all planned internal quality reviews for the 2020/21 through this model of remote peer review visits. It is hoped that DCU will return to campus-based quality reviews during the 2021/22 academic year, when the relaxation of Covid restrictions allows.
- DCU Executive approved the inclusion of a student reviewer as a full member of DCU internal quality review Peer Review Groups. During 2020/21, all Peer Review Groups for DCU Quality reviews included a student reviewer as a full member of the Peer Review Group. Training for student reviewers was developed, and is delivered by the Quality Promotion Office ahead of student participation in quality reviews.
- The Quality Promotion Office and Office of Student Life extended the implementation of DCU Student-Staff Forums as an ongoing vehicle for informal dialogue and feedback for students and staff on the quality of various aspects of student life at DCU. Forums are conducted twice each semester in all DCU Faculties, and once per academic year in all student-facing professional support areas.
- DCU Executive approved a DCU Student Partnership Framework that provides for closer engagement between the University and the student body, particularly on issues relation to quality assurance and enhancement and student involvement in university decision-making. This Framework is an output of the University's engagement with the NStEP Institutional Development workshop in March 2020.

## Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

A number of DCU Research Centres underwent externally-led reviews during the reporting year. These included,

- INSIGHT Centre's 8-year SFI International Panel Review (Visit dates: 18-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2021)
- ADAPT SFI reviewed, led by international panel (March 2021)

During 2020/21, DCU agreed a schedule and procedures for a review of postgraduate research programme provision for the DCU-DKIT Graduate School, for NFQ Level 9 and 10 research awards at Dundalk Institute of Technology, which are awarded by Dublin City University. This review is scheduled to take place in February, 2022.

## Changes to Academic Policies and Procedures



During 2020/21, DCU Academic Council approved a number of changes to academic policies and procedures.

- Following the 2019 Academic Council decision for substantial changes to the DCU Academic Calendar, Academic Council approved the Terms of Reference for an Academic Calendar Implementation Group to oversee the implementation of the revised calendar, to be introduced in the 2021/22 academic year.
- In February 2021, Academic Council approved an amendment to the External Examiner Regulations to facilitate an additional 1-year term extension for external examiners who are availing of illness, maternity, paternity, adoptive or sick-leave
- In April 2021 approved an addendum to DCU University Examination Regulations to reflect arrangements for online examinations in the 2020/21 academic year

## Programmes of Education and Training

### New Programme Validation and Accreditation

The following programmes completed programme validation and accreditation, and were approved by Academic Council during 2020/21,

- MSc Elite Sport Performance
- Professional Diploma in Teaching Physics
- B.Eng. in Sustainable Systems and Energy
- BSc in Digital Business and Innovation
- BSc in Psychology and Disruptive Technologies
- BA in Climate and Environmental Sustainability
- B.Ed in Tech, Engineering and Graphics
- European Masters in Law, Data and AI

### Periodic Programme Review

The following programmes were subject to periodic programme review in 2020/21

#### DCU Business School

- BSc in Business Studies
- All undergraduate programmes underwent curriculum review
- All academic programmes in DCU Business were reviewed as part of AACSB re-accreditation

#### DCU Institute of Education

- Bachelor of Early Childhood Care and Education (BECE)
- Certificate in Religious Studies (CRS) (Full time & part time modes)
- Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education, Learning Support & Special Education (GDILS)

#### Faculty of Engineering and Computing

- BSc in Computer Applications/ BSc in Computer Applications (Sft. Eng.)

#### Faculty of Science and Health

- BSc in Analytical Science
- BSc in Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences
- BSc in Applied Physics
- BSc in Physics with Astronomy
- BSc in Physics with Biomedical Sciences
- MSc in Psychotherapy (externally accredited)
- UG Nursing Programmes were subject to re-accreditation with Irish Nursing and Midwifery Board
- Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing was subject to re-accreditation with Irish Nursing and Midwifery Board

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Under the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) leadership, DCU was one of the first Irish universities to become a member of the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) in October 2019. Taking influence from the ICAI Integrity Day of Action, the TEU ran an academic integrity awareness campaign over the course of a week. This was repeated online in 2020 and 2021, and with the support of DCU Library, Students Union, and academic staff. Further evidence of DCU's leadership in promoting academic integrity, is the role of Billy Kelly, DCU Dean of Teaching and Learning, as Chair of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). DCU staff members Dr. Fiona O'Riordan and Dr. Gillian Lake are NAIN members.

### Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL)

[Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning](#) (EDTL) is a three-year academic staff professional learning programme coordinated by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The project aims to support university teachers to develop their digital skills so that students' learning experiences can be enhanced with technology. In turn, the development of digital skills for teachers will expose students to technology for teaching and learning and support them to develop their own digital skills.

DCU staff participating in the EDTL are supported through [tailored professional development](#) in the area of digital assessment, which is available to DCU programme or school teams through the EDTL project. Resources have also been made available to provide exemplars of good practice, that can offer inspiration and guidance for academics who are initially developing digital assessment.

EDTL builds on work of the "[Y1Feedback](#)" project led in DCU by the Open Education Unit and "Integrity" project led by the TEU. "Students as Partners in Assessment" is an area of current focus and aligns with national initiatives such as [NSTeP](#). We have also formed a community of practice around the use of Interactive Orals as an approach to improve academic integrity.

### Academic Integrity Principles for Assessment Design

DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) worked with partner universities on the INTEGRITY project, funded under the KA2 strand, aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes that are based on the principles of academic integrity, supported by policies, mechanisms, and tools that help prevent and detect cases of plagiarism in higher education. As part of this collaboration, TEU developed a resource toolkit for academics to support them in designing assessments that actively encourage academic integrity. The suite of resources advanced for the toolkit includes a [literature review publication](#); a [set of twelve principles](#) and related explanations; interactive glossary; self and team checklists; animated scenarios; and a collection of case studies.

### Academic Integrity Week

DCU promotes shared responsibility and a holistic approach to promoting academic integrity. This shared approach is highlighted through the 'Promoting Academic Integrity Week', delivered by DCU in October 2020. This week-long initiative comprised a number of synchronous and asynchronous online events for students and staff to prompt them to think about academic integrity, understand its importance, and learn about how they can uphold it (full programme on TEU website linked [here](#)). Some of the highlights of the week include over 1,500 students engaged in both academic integrity and library challenges. Almost 350 students pledged their commitment to academic integrity in the collaborative declaration bank (some examples of student declarations can be found on the TEU website linked [here](#)). Almost 100 staff and students took part in the spotlight panel webinar to discuss the ethics of academic integrity.

### Academic Integrity Hub

An online Academic Integrity Hub, hosted on the DCU VLE, Loop, is aimed at academic staff involved in designing assessment and who are interested in embedding academic integrity principles and practices. It contains multiple self-paced resources that academic staff can engage with in their own

time, and revisit as often as they like. An introductory video to the DCU Academic Integrity Hub can be found [here](#).

Staff have been encouraged to share their innovative practice with colleagues on a range of topics relating to academic integrity. Examples of this include, [The Assessment See-Saw: Balancing Academic Integrity with Meaningful Learning](#), among 4<sup>th</sup> year teacher education students, [Implementing Peer Review for Undergraduate Assessment](#), for 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate Computing students, and [Overcoming Plagiarism using Written Simulations for Assessment](#), in comparative politics modules. Two new case studies added recently are [Using Discussion Groups](#) as an innovative assessment method to engage students and promote academic integrity, and the use of [Video Assessment](#) to promote academic integrity in writing computer code.

### **Students as Partners in Assessment**

Engaging students as partners in their learning journey is a powerful tool that benefits both students and academics. Partnership opportunities empower students by engaging and motivating them to take ownership and responsibility for their learning. These are attributes that contribute to successful assessment, evidenced in quality assessment outputs that authentically showcase the efficacy of students' achievement. The literature demonstrates that partnering students in assessment does not have to be complex. Moreover, evidence demonstrates that when students are partners in the assessment process academic integrity is enhanced.

### **Interactive Oral Assessments**

The TEU is collaborating with Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, to pilot interactive orals as a viable alternative assessment to the traditional end-of-semester exams. An interactive oral is a natural conversation or exchange which explores a student's understanding in a simulated authentic learning environment. This [short 2.5 minute video](#) explains interactive oral assessment in the context of DCU, through the voice of both academics and students.

There is a small group of about 8 DCU academics piloting this approach, led by the TEU in collaboration with Griffith University. Griffith University has extensive experience, and a body of evidence-based research to show that interactive orals are an authentic assessment approach that effectively helps prepare students for employment, and when used as part of strategically designed integrated assessment, promotes academic integrity. Whilst being an effective alternative assessment tool to end-of-semester exams, it is also proven to be efficient and scalable. An exciting extension to the DCU Interactive Oral CoP this year is a shared Interactive Oral CoP with Griffith University and Charles Sturt University in Australia. The first meeting was held on 24th November 2021, hosted by the TEU. At a two hour meeting over twenty academics (*eight from DCU*) presented vignettes of their use of interactive oral across all disciplines. This shared CoP will continue to meet twice a year to collaborate and share experience and research in this space.

### **DCU University-wide Academic Integrity Awareness Campaign**

Being influenced by the work of NAIN (National Academic Integrity Network), and building on existing DCU TEU projects and initiatives DCU is engaging in a year-long (March 2021-February 2022) University-wide, National Forum funded research project. This two-phased research project will act as a tool for more focused conversations around academic integrity. It is envisaged that this work will build capacity and raise awareness of academic integrity with all DCU stakeholder groups. This, in turn, will we hope, influence both cultural and ethical changes across the university, through a renewed sharing of responsibility for the promotion of academic integrity. Phase one of this project is complete. This phase involved student and staff survey analysis and dissemination for further conversation. We are now in phase two and are enjoying focused discussions through group and paired interviews. This is again part of the capacity-building approach to promoting academic integrity.

### 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

#### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b> <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	Development of a new DCU Strategic Plan	During 2021/22, DCU will engage in a significant period of strategic planning, resulting in the development of a new institutional-level strategic plan. It is anticipated that this plan will be completed by September 2022
2	Completion of a high-level service blueprint for all services reviewed as part of the DCU Operating Framework initiative	DCU will complete the development of high-level service blue-print for all services identified for review as part of the DCU Operating Framework initiative
3	Completion of a quality review of the collaborative partnership for postgraduate research provision between DCU and Dundalk Institution of Technology	DCU will complete a review of the DCU-DKIT Graduate School, a collaborative partnership between DCU and Dundalk Institute of Technology, which provides for Level 9 and 10 postgraduate research at DkIT to be awarded by DCU.
4	Implementation of a suite of innovative pedagogies to support the roll-out of the DCU Futures programme suite, an initiative funded under the Human Capital Initiative, Strand 3	All DCU Futures Programmes will be validated and accredited Initial intake of first undergraduate cohort, with mechanisms developed to analyse student success and gather regular feedback on student learning experiences Development of cross-institutional Transversal Skill Expert Panels to define and co-create a robust competency framework for all identified skills

## 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
DCU Registry (postponed from Q2 2020)	17 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	28 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> November 2012
Thematic Digital Learning Review (postponed from Q2, 2020)	8 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	n/a
Information Systems and Services	28 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021.	1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2013
Finance Office	26 <sup>th</sup> - 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2021.	2 <sup>nd</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2014

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Provide a link to the published review schedule for any reviews beyond the upcoming reporting period.

*Please delete guide text before submission.*

<https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/about-review-process-quality-promotion-office>

#### DCU Quality Review Schedule- 2020/21-2024/25

2020/21	Registry (Q4 2020- TBC)	Digital Learning (Q4 2020)	Finance Office (Q2 2021)	ISS (Q2 2021)
2021/22	Estates Office (Q1 2022)	<u>Graduate</u> Programmes <u>DkIT</u> (Q1, 2022)	Faculty of Science and Health (Q2 2022)	DCU Library (Q4 2022)
2022/23	OVPAA (Q2, 2023)	DCU Institute of Education (Q2,2023)	DCU Business School (Q2 2023)	Sport and Wellbeing (Q4 2023)
2023/24	Faculty of <u>Eng</u> and <u>Comp</u> (Q4 2023)	<u>Comms</u> and <u>Marketing</u> (Q4 2023)	President's Office (Q2 2023)	OVPR (Q2 2023)
2024/25	SS&D (Q4 2024)	OSL (Q1 2025)	External Engagement (Q1 2023)	OCOO (Q2 2025)

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### Case Study 1

#### A Digital Edge: Essentials for the Online Learner

##### Context

In September 2020, as part of Dublin City University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a new online MOOC, A Digital Edge: Essentials for the Online Learner was launched. The course was developed by DCU and delivered through global learning platform, FutureLearn, and was available to learners globally. The underlying premise for the development of the course was that learning online requires a new set of skills to master; it is not the same as learning in a physical classroom. This MOOC aims to specifically target the building of skills and competencies to support students to learn how to learn online.

Funded as part of DCU's Covid-19 Research and Innovation Hub, the course is a collaboration between a team of experienced online educators and researchers in DCU's National Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL), the DCU Students' Union and the Irish Universities Association (IUA). Available to people worldwide through DCU's strategic partnership with FutureLearn, the course gives students the edge to succeed online. It equips them with the tools and know-how to get the most out of their studies and thrive as lifelong learners. Since 2020, over 10,000 learners have enrolled on the programme.

##### Features of the Programme

A Digital Edge was designed by leaders in online learning, drawing on UNESCO's Learning Compass 2030 and the European LifeComp Framework, and the course is co-facilitated by students, providing an opportunity for participants to learn about the challenges and opportunities of online learning from students who have experienced it themselves. Topics covered within the course include,

- Taking charge of your learning
- Setting goals and establishing good learning habits
- Creating the right places and spaces for learning
- Managing collaboration and effective online relationships
- Developing your online support network
- Harnessing digital tools and online resources
- Looking after your digital well-being and flourishing online
- Managing and professionalizing your online identity

##### Benefits

A distinctive feature of the course is the co-facilitation and active contribution from a team of DCU Student Ambassadors who will share their tips, advice and first-hand experiences of how to be effective online learners. During the two-week course, students will gain an understanding of how to get the most out of online learning and how to professionalise their online identity.

The course builds on DCU's strategic collaboration with FutureLearn following the launch of a pioneering new micro-credentialing initiative earlier in the year. DCU has been a world leader in digital education for over 25-years and this latest initiative is enabling the university to remain at the forefront of the digital transformation of teaching and learning for the 21st Century.

## Case Study 2

### Leveraging Virtual Learning Environments in supporting a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Digital Campus

#### Context

DCU uses Moodle as the university virtual learning environment. DCU launched Loop as a brand with an underlying metaphor to better reflect the goal of developing a 21st Century Digital Campus. The term Loop was intentionally chosen to encapsulate a move away from a somewhat technical focus on Moodle to creating the concept of a rich loop or digital learning community bringing together both people and technology.

DCU's Loop virtual learning environment contains several years' worth of courses, a 'course' being a page for an individual module or some other ad-hoc educational activity. Module pages are automatically created by connecting to the student record system (ITS), which over the years had often placed pages in an unstructured manner on the site. Therefore, in 2021, the TEU commenced an initiative to re-structure Loop, by creating categories for each faculty, each academic year and each school, within which schools' relevant module pages would be housed. TEU and ISS then composed a protocol for all Loop managers to ensure this new site structure is maintained hereafter.

In addition to the restructure, the TEU further enhanced Loop by implementing a minimum standard as a course template for each faculty. This template was aligned with the internationally recognised Universal Design for Learning Framework and the Quality Matters Framework. The introduction of this template ensured that appropriate students had consistent layout and structures to their module pages.

#### Benefits

The benefits of restructuring Loop in this way means that module learning material and student engagement data are organised systematically by school and academic year. This ensures ease of data management and data privacy each academic year, and also offers potential for developing structured reports and learning analytics interventions to gain insight into student learning and engagement behaviour as well as ascertaining levels of usage of Loop itself and its myriad features. For example, we now can generate reports to monitor the various elements adoption of the UDL template, we can provide reports on a school or faculty basis with regards to the accessibility of resources that are provided on the course pages. Such a report will enable us to identify issues and provide targeted professional development to staff to enable them to improve the accessibility of their courses. Another example of a benefit of this restructure is that we can now easily identify pedagogical practices such as group work and self & peer assessment on a school or faculty basis. This type of oversight makes sharing of good teaching practice and fostering communities of practice significantly easier.

## Case Study 3

### First Year Check-In: An Online Tool to Monitor 1<sup>st</sup> Year Transitions

#### Introduction

Transitioning to university level study can be challenging for students. In 2020/21, incoming full-time undergraduate students who may have anticipated a "traditional" campus-based student experience, had a very different transition to higher education. The First Year Check-in initiative was developed to gain insight into the challenges of entering students in establishing a personal sense of belonging at university, self-confidence in their ability to succeed in their studies, and their level of engagement with their programme. The pilot First Year Check-in was run concurrently in 2020/21 in both Dublin City University and University College, Cork.

### First Year Check-in app and Survey

'First year Check-in' was based on an approach previously adopted by 13 UK Universities as part of the "*What Works? Student Retention and Success Change Programme*"<sup>4</sup>. The short 16-question survey focuses on three behavioural indicators, which contribute to student success,

- **Belongingness:** to the degree to which they are feeling a sense of belongingness to the university and or programme of study.
- **Engagement:** the degree to which they are engaging with student peers and or teaching and support staff
- **Self-Confidence:** the level of confidence in one's abilities and or performance at university

The main objectives of this initiative were to,

- Gather real-time data on the first year experience at this very unusual time for students, when the transition to higher education is affected by the changes brought by the pandemic;
- Analyse data patterns and provide information to decision-makers and those directing and supporting the student experience;
- Provide signposts to students on supports, resources, events, and activities that may help to build their sense of belonging and integration into the institution
- Allow broad benchmarking of aggregated trends and patterns across the two institutions to explore different institutional contexts, responses and practices.

### Participating in First Year Check-in

First Year Check-in used an existing technology, developed by the INSIGHT Centre for Data Analytics called '[AthenaCX](#)'. Students who chose to participate were asked to download an app, and were prompted each week to complete in the short survey, which took less than two minutes to complete. Participation in this initiative was voluntary and anonymous.

### Analysing Results

Data was collected and analysed on a weekly basis, and used to inform communications and information provision on events, activities and supports to assist in improving student belongingness, engagement and self-confidence. The analysis also tracked changes in index scores and responses to questions among cohorts throughout first semester using interactive dashboards.

Participants were also able to use the app to understand their own index scores for Belongingness, Engagement and Self-Confidence. Individual scores were not benchmarked or compared to other participant scores, but allowed participants to reflect themselves on their current scores relative to this "neutral" index score.

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<sup>4</sup> Mantz Yorke (2016) The development and initial use of a survey of student 'belongingness', engagement and self-confidence in UK higher education, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41:1, 154-166