

Holmes Institute Dublin

2022



Annual Quality Report
Holmes Institute Dublin
Reporting Period 2020-2021

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
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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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Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)

QQI Documents

- [Statutory QA Guidelines \(QAG\)](#)
- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [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 \(2015\)](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹ 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

This document is the AQR for Holmes Institute Dublin for the reporting period **1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021**.

Submitted on **Tuesday, 22nd February 2022**.

The AQR was approved by the Academic Board on 21st February 2022 and is submitted by the Dean, Academic, Dr Eileen Buckley-Dhoot.

Introduction to the Holmes Education Group

The Holmes Education Group (HEG) is an internationally recognised multi-sectoral provider of education. Holmes was founded in Melbourne in 1963. The current senior management team has been in place since 1987 and the organisation is now present in all major English-speaking education markets – Australia, UK, USA, Canada and Ireland. Some key metrics include:

- Established for 58 years.
- Over 40,000 graduates at the degree level since 2004.
- Located in 6 different countries.
- 45 student nationalities.
- 15,000 students pre-Covid.
- 80% graduate satisfaction in 2019 and 2020.
- Largest MBA School in Australia^[1]

Holmes Institute of Higher Education, Australia

Holmes Institute of Higher Education (Holmes) gained degree-awarding powers in 2004 from the State of Victoria, Australia. The institute has renewed its registration 3 times since 2004 with no conditions imposed at any stage. It is now registered federally by TEQSA, the national Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority.

In 2021, Holmes delivers masters and bachelors courses in business, information systems, IT and fashion across 4 campuses in Australia – Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Gold Coast. In 2019 Holmes was the largest provider of MBA education in Australia.

Holmes has successfully managed the delivery of these degrees across multiple locations using sophisticated learning management systems and a university-equivalent academic management culture. More than 80% of academic staff are at least masters qualified and over 60% PhD qualified, the institute has won praise from the regulator for its professional development programme and culture of scholarship. Holmes actively supports academic staff in their research ambitions.

Holmes Institute Cyber Security Research and Innovation Centre (CSRIC), Australia

In 2017 Holmes Institute of Higher Education established a Cyber Security Research and Innovation Centre. At the same time a successful application was made for the accreditation of a Master of Information Systems, including a specialisation in Cyber Security, strategically aligning research with teaching. The institute, staffed with full-time information systems academics, all PhD qualified.

Holmes International Pathways (HIP), UK

Holmes International Pathways have a series of five embedded colleges with UK universities. HIP delivers foundation, year one of bachelors and pre-master's programmes. HIP has evolved out of the successful delivery of higher education courses over 20 years in Australia. The embedded colleges operate under HIPs own quality assurance procedures which are approved by the respective University. Programmes are subject to formal approval, monitoring and review. Assessment is subject to university moderation and External Examiners are appointed for each international college. Quality assurance and student welfare is of paramount importance when operating preparatory colleges on behalf of public universities.

Holmes Grammar School, Australia

Holmes Grammar School is a government accredited private secondary college teaching the final two years of the Victorian Certificate of Education and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning at Years 11 and 12.

English Language Teaching (ELT)

- Teaching House
- OHC (Oxford House College), Australia, UK, USA, Canada and Ireland

Holmes Institute Dublin

Holmes Institute Dublin (HID) was established in March 2018 and has engaged with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) through a process of Access to Initial Validation with QQI in March 2020 and successfully validated a BA (Hons) in Business with QQI approved in April 2021. HID has established a campus at Numbers 2 and 3 Merrion Square Dublin. HID will commence its academic programme in the academic year 2021/2022.

Access to Initial Validation with QQI

Through the process of 'Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards' Stage 1 - Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures', HID successfully agreed draft QA procedures in March 2020, resulting in the HID Quality Assurance Manual.

The independent panel of experts found that *"HI has grown and expanded over the last 55 years. It has a substantial track record in providing higher education programmes across a number of jurisdictions."* And *"Following its meeting with HI representatives, the Panel was very satisfied that HI is an institution with long-standing and significant experience in higher education, and that it has the skills, resources and experience to establish a higher education provider in Dublin."*

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training

HID had its first programme, a BA (Hons) in Business successfully validated in April 2021.

- PG24452, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits
- PG24453, Certificate in Business, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits (Exit Award)

The QQI executive visited the premises and reviewed resources in advance of the programme commencing. The visit was successful and the PAEC 8th December 2021 considered all conditions met and no further follow-up is required.

Development of the AQR

This report was prepared by the Dean, Academic in consultation with the Senior Management Team of HID who meet weekly.

The final draft was approved by the Academic Board on the 21st February 2022

^[1] <https://www.mbanews.com.au/australias-biggest-mba-programs-for-domestic-and-international-students/>

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Holmes Institute Dublin (HID) has a governance framework that operates *via* a committee system, a series of appropriate, well-communicated delegations of authority from the Institute's Board of Directors to key governance bodies and organisational roles.

The Academic Board is the academic authority of the college, it has delegated authority by the Institute's Board for academic governance of all academic activities including academic policies, delivery and enhancement. This is documented in a Governance Charter which outlines the function, responsibilities, membership, and terms of reference of each of the governance bodies in operation at the Institute. The Governance Charter also provides a visual representation of the Institute's governance system and reporting lines for ease of reference.

Membership of the Institute's governance bodies includes internal stakeholders and external, independent members with collective expertise in areas necessary for the credible, quality management of a Higher Education Provider. These members have substantiated expertise in the following areas: corporate and academic management, academe, governance, risk and financial management, marketing, communications, information technology and organisational development. The Institute's holistic and inclusive approach to governance ensures that the Institute remains viable and sustainable in its corporate operations including in the assurance and enhancement of academic quality which is critical to the Institute's ongoing success.

Management of Quality

Holmes Institute Dublin (HID) has established a quality assurance infrastructure which has been demonstrated through formal engagement with QQI. This is published in the [HID Quality Assurance Manual](#).

In accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, HID's quality assurance procedures were developed with regard to all QQI quality assurance guidelines.

The Quality Assurance Manual has been informed by:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines – QQI April 2016,
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent Providers – QQI April 2016
- Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners - QQI July 2015

among others and are aligned to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)- 2015.

The Quality Assurance Manual has been formally approved through the process of 'Access to Initial QA Procedures'. This process was completed in March 2020 and the panel was *“very satisfied that HI is an institution with long-standing and significant experience in higher education, and that it has the skills,*

resources and experience to establish a higher education provider in Dublin. HI conveyed a reflective approach to quality assurance and has improved its systems through a series of iterations since its establishment. The Panel was also impressed with the collegial and open manner in which the HI representatives engaged during the evaluation meeting.” The draft QA procedures were approved. The quality assurance policy and procedures are the responsibility of HID and the manual will be updated annually, subject to the approval of the HID Academic Board.

The HID Quality Assurance Manual was updated based on recommendations from the re-engagement event and to further align with QQI policies and procedures. The External Review Committee reconvened to review the document and recommend it to the Academic Board who formally approved it on the 21st of September 2021 this document will come into effect in March 2022.

Representation of Learners

Learners are represented at every level of governance. The role of learners in governance is covered in the Quality Assurance Manual section 4.3.5 and the role elaborated in Section12, Evaluation by Learners.

Governance Boards and Committees with Learner Representation:

- Academic Board – Two learners
- Academic Management Committee - Two learners
- Teaching and Learning Committee – One learner.
- Programme Board – at least one learner.

Representation of External Stakeholders

In line with the QQI Externality Principle, HID makes appropriate use of external experts who are independent and qualified to make relevant national and international comparisons.

Governance Boards and Committees with External Representation:

- Board of Directors
- Academic Board
- Industry Advisory board
- Board of Examiners
- E-Learning Advisory Group
- External Programme Advisory

As HID has not yet commenced its academic programmes, not all boards and committees have been convened in the academic year 2020/21. Current membership includes:

Academic Board

There are three external members on the Academic Board, selected based on their ‘seniority and appropriate experience suitable for the functions of the Academic Board and its committees’. they are:

- Professor Ellen Hazelkorn
- Professor David Croke
- Professor Hamish Coates.

Board of Examiners

In advance of the commencement of the programme an External Examiner has been appointed as the first member of a team approach to External examining. Dr Louise Gorman, Technological University Dublin is an experienced External Examiner.

External Programme Advisory Committee

External Programme Advisory Committee is an *ad hoc* committee convened by the Academic Board on an as-required basis. All members are external and drawn from the relevant industry or profession and senior external academics with subject or QA expertise as appropriate to the task being undertaken. To date the committee has been convened three times; to advise on the programme development process, review and hold a review of the programme prior to validation and review updates to the Quality Assurance Manual and advise the Academic Board on its alignment with QQI policy.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The policies covering New Programme Development and Validation can be found in Section 7 of the HID Quality Assurance Manual.

Programme Proposals are approved by the Academic Board before a Programme Development Team is convened. The Programme Development Team consult with external stakeholders including relevant industry, professional bodies, academia and target learners as appropriate. The Programme Outline Document is reviewed by the Academic Board and if approved goes to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Once approved by the Academic Board and Board of Directors, the proposal will move to the Programme Design Stage which is aligned to the QQI validation criteria and includes further consultation with relevant stakeholders.

On completion of the programme design the External Programme Advisory Committee is convened, drawn from external experts, this committee evaluates the programme against the applicable validation policies and criteria. The committee also runs an internal pre-validation event.

The evaluation is held in good time to ensure that further consultation and development may be undertaken to respond to any improvements or recommendations made by the committee. The output of the evaluation is a formal document and included in the final submission for validation.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The policies covering Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification can be found in Section 9 of the HID Quality Assurance Manual.

All applicants who can demonstrate that they have attained a basis for successful participation on a programme should be eligible to access that programme. Information is provided to prospective learners through the [HID Website](#).

This includes [programme information](#) on:

- Minimum Entry Requirements
- English language requirements,
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Mature Applicants
- Applicants with disabilities

The website also includes contact details and provides a link to speak with a course advisor.

Information on the following can be found in Section 9 of the [HID Quality Assurance Manual](#).

- Transfer and progression can be found in Section 9.11
- Widening participation can be found in Section 9.10.3

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The policies covering Teaching, Learning and Assessment can be found in Section 23 and Section 10 of the [HID Quality Assurance Manual](#).

Policies for External Examining can be found in section 10.6

Academic Integrity Policy and Guidelines can be found in Section 22. These are being currently updated for the next edition of the manual to ensure alignment with the National Academic Integrity Network guidelines, principles and lexicon of common terms.

Teaching, learning, and assessment strategies are currently programme specific and are found in the programme document and are available to learners on registration. A college wide Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is in preparation with the current focus on academic integrity and assessment criteria.

4.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

The policies covering Staff Recruitment, Management and Development can be found in Sections 15 of the [HID Quality Assurance Manual](#).

The values underpinning the work of Holmes Institute are explicit in the key concepts of the Mission Statement as described in the Quality Assurance Manual, Section 2.2, Excellence, Accountability, Ethics, Nurture, Responsibility, Diversity, Equality, Collaboration and Aspiration.

HID takes its responsibility to staff and students seriously and values and actively welcomes diversity, shown in:

- recognition and encouragement of the diversity of cultures and traditions within the Institute and in the broader community.
- commitment to equality of opportunity, regardless of age, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status or special needs.

All staff employed at HID are entitled to the rights afforded to them under Irish and European law.

Quality of academic staff is ensured and maintained through the policies covering recruitment, staff qualifications, staff review and development.

Each programmes academic staffing requirements are laid out in the programme document and the module specification documents. As described in the Quality Assurance Manual Section 15, HID maintains a 'university equivalent' approach to its high standard of providing higher education, and follows many established university practices, e.g., ensuring that teaching academics have a higher degree than the level of teaching undertaken. For current HID programmes teaching staff must possess a post-graduate degree. To this end, as a matter of practice, HID ensures that faculty delivering its programmes possess relevant qualifications at least one NFQ qualification level higher than the level of the programme being taught or equivalent. In some cases, an equivalent professional qualification may be appropriate.

All new staff undergo a phased induction Section 15.2.4, and Staff Performance Management Section 15.1.2. In addition, all new academic staff undergo teaching observation during their first semester by the Dean, Academic or delegate.

The Staff Communication policy is described in section 15.2.12. Staff are kept informed of key issues through minuted staff meetings and the senior team meet weekly.

HID recognises that staff quality is a critical component for an enhanced learner experience, more so within the learning context. As such, Professional Development (PD) at HID is designed to support and enhance the existing strengths and potential contributions of HID staff, so they can continue to deliver services that support quality learner outcomes.

Staff development opportunities are available for all staff, in addition HID provides a professional development allowance of €1000 per annum for each full-time member of the academic staff to be used for approved scholastic activities such as academic conferences, workshops and upgrading of academic qualifications, a *pro-rata* allowance is available for PT and fractional staff.

5.0 Information and Data Management

The policies covering Information and Data Management can be found under Privacy Policies and Procedures, Section 20.2 of the [HID Quality Assurance Manual](#).

HID is firmly committed to maintaining privacy and ensuring that any personal information held about staff, learners and other stakeholders is captured, stored and used in accordance with European Data Protection Regulation 2018, GDPR. The policies cover all stakeholders, including staff, learners, former staff and student and visitors.

HID will hold personal data on applicants, learners and graduates, for legitimate interest and in accordance with the regulation.

HID will collect data on student performance on which to derive information that will be used to support and enhance learning, this is a legitimate interest. The data will include attendance data, engagement metrics such as interaction with Blackboard, library resources, submission of assessments and results. This data will be collected and analysed with the use of appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the fair and transparent processing of all such data. Data collected for the purposes of benchmarking will be anonymised and reported appropriately. HID will share student results at the award stage with QQI to facilitate learner certification which is a legitimate interest.

HID does not come under The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The policies covering Public Information and Communication can be found under Sections 6 and 9.2 of the HID [Quality Assurance Manual](#).

HID is committed to providing learners and prospective learners information relevant to studying at HID. Such information is made publicly available on HID's website, in programme flyers and marketing material. The Registrar approves all programme information prior to publication.

Website

The HID website is an important source of public information. The site contains information on the Holmes group including the mission statement, campus information and contact details.

Programme information including Awarding Body, Award Title, NQF level, credit volume, entry requirements, programme learning outcomes, modes of delivery, and indicative content and structure is accessible on the website.

The site also includes student information and contact details for student supports and registry, and emergency information including an out of hours emergency number, contact details for medical emergencies and useful links such as Citizen's information and the Irish Council for International Students.

College policies are also accessible through the website:

- [Arrangements for Examinations](#)
- [Attendance Policies](#)
- [Refund Policy](#)
- [Complaints and Grievances](#)
- [HID QA Manual](#)

An enhancement of the website this year will be the inclusion of findings from quality assurance evaluations.

Marketing Material

Marketing material in respect of validated programmes is subject to the approval of the Registrar and is compliant with the London Statement, "Statement of Principles for the Ethical Recruitment of International Students by Education Agents and Consultants". This is described in Section 6 of the Quality Assurance Manual.

The Marketing Manager is responsible for ensuring all marketing has been approved and properly distributed to agents with directions for use. The Marketing Manager is also responsible for reviewing third-party material and ensuring it is current, accurate, accessible and complies with the policy on Provision of Information to Prospective Learners, Section 9.2.

Communication with the public via social media, open days etc. is under development with the Marketing Team in the early stages. The recruitment team is trained regularly and kept informed about the programme with regular information briefings with the Dean, Academic.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

The policies covering Monitoring and Periodic Review can be found throughout the Quality Assurance Manual as described below with the policies for Programme Monitoring under Section 8 and Evaluation by Learners under Section 12.

Ongoing monitoring, self-evaluation and periodic review underpins the quality assurance and quality enhancement theme of HID and provides reassurance to the Academic Board, Board of Directors and external stakeholders that the academic activities, delivery of programmes and learner experience are executed appropriately, and learner performance is satisfactory.

In addition to self-evaluation carried out against the QQI validation criteria at the programme development stage, programmes are subject to ongoing monitoring and review as described in Section 8 of the QAM. Section 8.3 describes the function of the Programme Board in collecting, evaluating and acting on data and feedback collected in respect of programme delivery and performance. This includes, but is not limited to:

Programme admissions data.

Module data:

- Registered learners, for the purposes of reconciling data
- Pass rates and statistics
- Attendance data per module
- Submission Data (continuous assessment)
- Completion rates

Programme Data (per stage):

- Registered learners
- Withdrawals/deferrals
- Stage pass rate
- Stage completion
- Retention (progression from stage to stage within programme)
- Award Statistics

Learner Feedback:

- Summary of Questionnaires
- Minutes of Class Representative Meetings

Lecturers' Feedback:

- Module Review and Development Plans

Programme Review where applicable:

- Recommendations for improvements
- Changes to Modules

Library resources:

- Currency of Module Reading lists

Learning, Teaching

- Initiatives in teaching and learning, including National Forum activity
- Review effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies
- Review current assessment strategies
- Learning Resources, including IT resources

Assessment

- External Examiner Reports

Graduate/Alumni:

- First destination survey
- Graduate success, awards etc.

Review of Programme Action Plan

The programme Director has a critical role in collating this data at the programme level and ensuring it is discussed with learners and staff at the Programme Board and develop a Programme Monitoring report described in Section 8.3.1.

These reports are fed through the system by way of the Academic Management Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee to the Academic Board and will also inform Part B of this report in future. Formal programme review procedures describing the self-evaluation and externality is described in section 8.4 of the QAM.

Independent external experts are appointed to support periodic review. They are selected on the basis of demonstrable and verifiable evidence in the area they are appointed to review. They are identified by reputation and through recommendation and are required to supply a CV to support formal appointment. Examples of the use of external experts to date have been the external feedback of the assessment strategy as part of the programme development process. The convening of the External Programme Advisory Committee to review the self-evaluation of the programme and carry out a pre-validation exercise on the new programme, and an independent external QA expert was appointed to review proposed changes to the QA manual and make recommendations to the Academic Board. In addition, the External Examiner has an opportunity to provide feedback on the appropriateness of the learning outcomes and assessment strategy as part of the process of independently evaluating the assessment of learners.

Evaluation by Learners can be found in Section 12 of the QAM and describes the mechanisms for learner feedback on facilities, supports, teaching and the programme by module. These evaluations have a significant role alongside staff and external evaluation in monitoring to support enhancement.

HIDs own quality assurance policies, procedures and practices are aligned the QQI QA Guidelines and ultimately to the ESG 2015 as illustrated in Table 1. The reports, meeting minutes and evaluations will inform the preparation of this document, the AQR, which serves as an annual reflection on the effectiveness of the documented QA policies and procedures and their implementation.

