Annual Quality Report (Institution)

Reporting Period 2020-2021

Institute of Technology Carlow

2022

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

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

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Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)

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	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
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Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Institute of Technology Carlow for the reporting period **1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021.**

The AQR has been approved by the **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee of Academic Council** and is submitted by **Mr David Denieffe, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar.**

Institute of Technology Carlow is an autonomous Institute, established under Irish legislation, specifically the Institute of Technology Acts 1992-2006. The Institute is a Designated Awarding Body of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), which is the statutory body with responsibility for the National Framework of Qualifications and the oversight of Quality Assurance of education and training provision in Ireland. As a QQI Designated Awarding Body, Institute of Technology Carlow is empowered to make awards for programmes up to Level 9 on the NFQ. In addition, Institute of Technology Carlow has Delegated Authority to Level 10 in the research areas of Biological, Molecular and Environmental Science and research approval in Health Science, Engineering and Computing.

Institute of Technology Carlow's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/ITCarlow-Strategic-Plan-2019-2023.pdf) identifies key priorities that aim to contribute to regional and national economic, social and cultural development, informed and enriched by the Institute of Technology Carlow's growing activities and profile. It is this plan which guides the direction of the Institute and the programmes being developed, validated and delivered within it.

The Mission of Institute of Technology Carlow is to Engage, Learn, Innovate and Lead. This is articulated through an educational environment and context where learners pursue studies in higher education and research up to doctoral level. Through a culture of enquiry, innovation and excellence, Institute of Technology Carlow challenges its learners, staff, global collaborative partners and other stakeholders to create, apply and share knowledge and values in a supportive and vibrant university-level Institute.

Institutional strategy is informed by wide-scale and regular consultation with learners, staff, graduates, employers and representatives of all our stakeholders, as well as through periodic external strategic and academic reviews of faculties and external strategic reviews of professional services. This is formulated at senior management level, approved by Governing Body via Academic Council and at that stage it is communicated on an Institute-wide basis.

We are guided by national engagement and feedback initiatives, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the technological higher education quality framework, the national forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning, professional bodies, national policy and national and international reports.

The Institute's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 is set out at
https://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/strategic-plan-2019-2023.htm

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Strategic Approach

With learner experience as the focus, the central role of quality assurance and enhancement is explicitly articulated in our Strategic Plan 2019- 2023 which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in achieving strategic objectives and maintaining and enhancing all elements of the organisation and the experience of those who engage with us. This is a plan by and for our community, our regions and country. It is the result of many months of information gathering, dialogue, analysis and careful thought by all members of the Institute across every discipline, function and activity. The resulting five strategic priorities encompass our learners, our research, our engagement, our campus community and our sustainable development. Goals developed under each of these themes are reinforced by key actions. These actions are further supported by detailed action plans and key performance indicators, including those contained in our new mission-based performance compact with the HEA, which defines our role in the achievement of key national objectives for higher education in the coming years. The five priorities, shown in Figure 1.1, are:

1. Our Learners

     We will exemplify excellence in education and student life, provide opportunity, engage with all our learners and support them in their development as confident global citizens.

2. Our Research

     We will build on our success in knowledge development, grow our research capacity,

increase our collaborations and impact, and broaden our disciplines and funding streams.

3. Our Engagement

   We will expand our local, regional, national and global partnerships, lead in knowledge creation and application, enterprise creation and socio-economic development.

4. Our Campus Community

   We will support our community by strengthening our culture of inclusivity, demonstrating excellence in leadership and governance, developing our physical and virtual infrastructure, and by restructuring our organisation for further growth.

5. Our Sustainable Development

   We will educate for sustainable development locally, nationally and globally, and we will lead by example.

Figure 1.1 Strategic Plan 2019-2023 at a glance

Our quality assurance and enhancement activities align with our strategic plan, are informed by the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG) and with QQI. In terms of linking our institute strategy to our quality policy and procedures, our quality manual is the guiding document. It provides a road map and overview of our overarching policy and procedures for quality assurance, our governance framework, procedures for quality assurance in teaching, learning and research, on-going monitoring and review, the learner voice, procedure for the design, development, validation and withdrawal of

programmes, admission, progression and completion, staff development, learner supports and information management.

Our quality culture is supported by strong corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development and improvement. We firmly believe in accountability, transparency, and the public provision of information and our quality manual is available on our website alongside our policies on linked provision, joint awards, research, ethics in research, assessment, and academic standards. We also routinely publish the outcomes from quality review processes and reports including our annual institutional quality report (AIQR).

Quality assurance and quality enhancement are therefore inter-related. In the Institute of Technology Carlow, this supports a quality culture that is embraced by all, from the students and academic staff to the institutional leadership and management. This was commended by the 2020 Cinnte Review Team - '*The review team commends IT Carlow for its strong commitment to QA, as well as the evidence of quality culture across the organisation, supported by robust governance structures.*'

The Institute of Technology Carlow believe and engage in robust self-evaluation and peer review as a key component of our quality enhancement culture across all of our activities including faculty, professional support services and collaborative partner reviews. This philosophy has served us in maintaining a high standard of achievement in recent formal quality assurance reviews.

The ethos and values that drive the culture of our Institution are supported by strong corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development. This was commended by the Cinnte Review Team - 'The *review team commends the Governing Body and the Executive for their excellent stewardship of the institute's resources, which has left IT Carlow in a strong position to pursue its ambition for technological university status'.*

Governance

At institute level, the Institute of Technology Carlow Governing Body is the ultimate statutory authority, which guides and oversees the strategic direction and management of the organisation including quality assurance. It is appointed for a five-year term and includes

representation from institute management, academic and professional support staff, and representative organisations, learners and stakeholders.
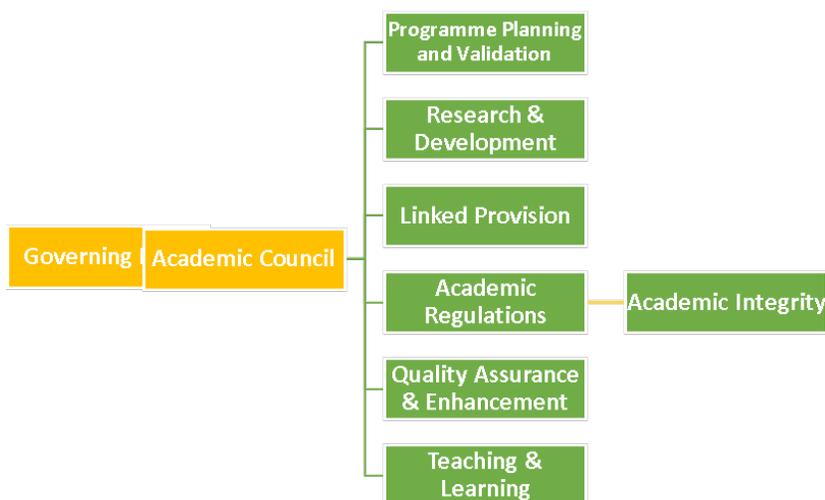
Figure 1.2 Committees of Academic Council

The executive management of Institute of Technology Carlow and its academic and administrative systems rests with the senior executive team which, through the President, is directly answerable to the Governing Body. Each member of the senior executive is responsible for and represents, at this forum, distinct academic or professional service faculties or departments. Overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, academic standards and programme validation rests with the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar and both the Quality Officer and Assistant Registrar functions assist in this. In addition, each Institute of Technology Carlow professional support staff service manager reports directly to a member of this senior executive team.

In terms of quality assurance and informed decision making, a key advisory and communication forum at Institute of Technology Carlow is the institute management group. Its membership includes the senior executive team and all heads of academic departments and professional support services. The relevant Institute of Technology Carlow management reporting structures are outlined here.

One of the main quality assurance functions of the Governing Body is the appointment of the institute's Academic Council to assist Governing Body in planning, co-ordination, overseeing and developing the educational work of Institute of Technology Carlow and to protect, maintain and develop academic standards. This responsibility is discharged by means of a series of six committees and associated working groups, each of which include representation from postgraduate and undergraduate learners, academic staff and institute management. In

addition, professional support staff are routinely co-opted to these committees to provide expertise where necessary. The six committees are:

- Academic regulations which makes regulation governing the selection, admission, retention, awards, graduation and exclusion of learners. A Sub-Committee of Academic Regulations is the Academic Integrity Committee

- Linked provision which has oversight of all aspects of linked and collaborative provision

- Programme planning and validation is responsible for the development, monitoring and reviewing of all taught programmes

- Quality assurance and enhancement protects, enhances and develops academic standards for all programmes

- Research and development is responsible for the planning, approval and review of all postgraduate research programmes

- Teaching, learning and support services develops policies to support excellence in teaching and a quality learning experience.

Each committee has clearly defined terms of reference and each committee reports to Academic Council. Therefore, Academic Council has an explicit function in the development, validation and quality assurance of all programmes delivered by, approved by or validated by Institute of Technology Carlow. The ongoing academic management and review of programmes is the responsibility of the programme board or stream comprising the relevant academic staff and departmental management as well as learner representation and these boards or streams report to Academic Council.

At Institute of Technology Carlow, our quality focus and consultation in decision making extends to all aspects of the organisation. While academic quality processes are extremely well established, the institute has approved a 'Professional Support Services (PSS) Strategic Review Policy' (Appendix III Quality Manual) in line with the expectations of the Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Institutes of Technology. This is recognition of the fact that maintaining and developing the quality of academic excellence is supported by a large number of professional services and functions providing a complex and coherent support structure and are key factors in the provision of the unique student centered and supportive environment of

Institute of Technology Carlow which has been emphasised in the detailed strategic and programmatic reviews of each academic unit completed in 2016 and again undertaken during this reporting period. The day to day running of Institute of Technology Carlow may be delegated by the President to specific staff members with defined responsibility for policy implementation as the President deems appropriate.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Since 2010, Institute of Technology Carlow has continued to develop and strengthen our approach to collaboration and engagement. Following the 2010 Institutional Review, the Institute reviewed its collaborative arrangements in accordance with HETAC's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards and in consultation with HETAC agreed supplementary quality assurance procedures to underpin all collaborative provision. Through this process, the Institute embarked on a review of our processes and template agreements and have made a number of enhancements largely aimed at assisting colleagues and current and potential collaborative partners with a clearer process and guidance materials. As a designated awarding body, the Institute has continued to ensure the quality assurance, including procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for all linked joint, collaborative and transnational provision up to Level 9. In line with the requirements for ensuring learner success and; IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision; QQI Statutory Sector-Specific Guidelines for Universities and DABs (per the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, Institute of Technology Carlow developed its Policies and Procedures for Linked and Transnational Provision.

In engaging in linked provision, Institute of Technology Carlow remains cognisant of all legislative requirements underpinning the various strands of collaboration in which we engaged. Collaborative provision can take a number of forms. To date, Institute of Technology Carlow has been involved in the following types of collaboration partnership:

• Accreditation
• Articulation
• Exchange
• Off-site delivery
• Validation.

In terms of linked provision, there are four distinct stages within the overall linked provision lifecycle and these are clearly articulated in the Institute of Technology Carlow's Policies and Procedures for Linked Provision.
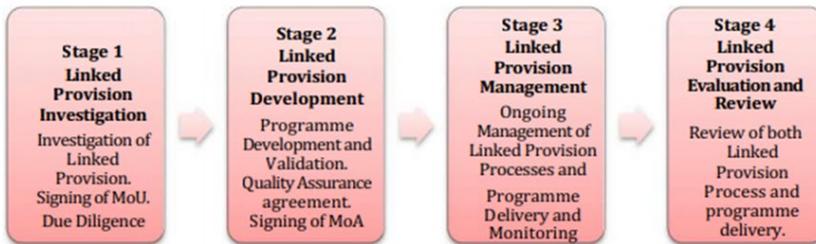
Figure 1.2.1 Stages of Linked Provision Pathway

For linked and collaborative provision, quality assurance procedures fully describing the proposed provision, site visits, ongoing monitoring, assessment, examination and external quality assurance, and resource provision must be agreed by the consortium. These may be modelled precisely on the Institute of Technology Carlow procedures or may employ an agreed application of consortium QA principles and procedures.

At present, Institute of Technology Carlow has a range of partnerships, exchanges and collaborations of varying degrees of complexity and engagement. Institute of Technology Carlow's Register of Linked and Collaborative Provision is maintained by the Quality Assurance and Collaborations Officer within the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar.

The current development and trajectory of our linked provision and collaborative activity supports the Institute's strategic goals in internationalisation, global impact and partnership as set out in the Institute's Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

These objectives are further reinforced by the Institute's Research and Innovation Strategy, which highlights the importance to the Institute of building "on our success in knowledge development, grow our research capacity, increase our collaborations and impact, and broaden our disciplines and funding streams" (from Institute of Technology Carlow Mission-Based Performance Compact 2018-2021) and of collaboration with industry "double the number of research projects" (from Strategic Plan 2019- 2023).

The Institute has had long-standing collaborations with An Cosán and the Irish Defence Forces and currently offers over twenty programmes within these collaborations. They are now linked providers of these programmes.

In 2017, the Institute entered into collaborative agreements with the Gestalt Institute of Ireland and with the Tivoli Institute for the delivery of masters' programmes in psychotherapy. A new linked provision partnership with Dublin Art Therapy College since 2019 has reinforced the

development of an Institute-led collaborative hub in the domains of psychotherapy and counselling. In 2020 a partnership with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the co-development and co-delivery of a Higher Certificate in Supply Chain Management has been developed. The newest Linked Provision Programme has been developed with the Irish National Stud in the delivery of a Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding.

An important strategic collaborative partnership was formed with Carlow College in 2018 with a view to developing Research and Collaborative Development initiatives in the areas of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

In addition to the above partners, the Institute is committed to maintaining and developing partnerships with further education (FE) providers. In particular, we are seeking to introduce further flexibility in our degree pathways through closer working with strategic partner providers, and through advanced entry to second year for FE graduates with Level 6 qualifications and have twenty formal articulation agreements in place with FE providers, three of which are with Education and Training Boards (ETB).

Institute of Technology Carlow learners continue to undertake a wide range of voluntary study abroad opportunities, primarily in their third year of study. Institute of Technology Carlow has articulation agreements with 80 partner institutes in more than 18 countries and further partner institutions in North and South America and Asia through the International Office's International Programme. This includes one double degree programme with Hochschule Hannover, Germany.

Adopting a measured approach to the development of collaborative and linked provision has resulted in expanded activity in those areas that meet our strategic aims. The Institute does not have any franchise agreements or validation/ accreditation arrangements.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The development of new programmes and the revision, review and monitoring of existing programmes is a fundamental aspect of quality assurance procedures. The programme Lifecycle in Figure 2.1 clearly labels the steps involved in the programme, selection, development and review. This section articulates how each of these sections is supported by rigorous review, management and quality assurance policies.
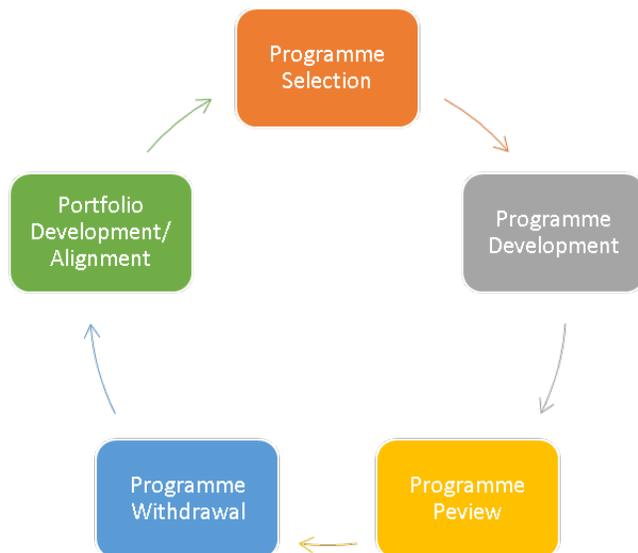
Figure 2.1 Programme Lifecycle

Policy

The procedures and processes of programme development, delivery, assessment, internal and external examination, moderation and programme monitoring processes are modelled on the standard Institute of Technology Carlow institutional quality assurance procedures.

Programme Development

In order to ensure that the programmes developed meet the requirements of the learner and the community, a two-step process is detailed at Microsoft Word - 1. Programme Development Policy V.6.2 (2).docx (itcarlow.ie).

Stage 1 requires the proposing department to present an overview of the proposed programme to the Senior Executive team to ensure that the programme is in line with its requirements.

Stage 2, the validation process requires the programme team presents the programme to an expert external review panel who assess the programme.

This process is summarized in the programme accreditation flowchart (NFQ Level 6-10) which can be found at Microsoft Word - Accreditation Flowchart v.6.2.docx (itcarlow.ie). The details in the flowchart include indicative timelines to ensure sufficient time is allowed for the necessary internal and external consultations with stakeholders to be undertaken.

Programme Review

The ongoing academic management and review of programmes is the responsibility of the programme board or stream comprising the relevant academic staff and departmental management as well as learner representation and these boards or streams report to Academic Council.

The ongoing monitoring and review process for programmes is details in the Policy for ongoing monitoring of programmes.

Institute of Technology Carlow believes in robust cyclical self-evaluation and peer review as a major component of our quality enhancement culture assisting us in maintaining the highest standards of achievement in terms of quality assurance, informed by the QQI policy for cyclical review of higher education institutions. As part of this we have a two stage quinquennial

strategic and programmatic review of all of our academic faculties (outcomes are published here for the 2016 reviews).

As set out in the Institute of Technology Carlow's Quality Manual http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm specifically, Appendix X Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and Appendix XI Policy and Procedure for Programmatic Review, Institute of Technology Carlow has detailed policies and procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring of programmes. The implementation of these is overseen by the Institute's Academic Council and its constituent committees. Quantitative and qualitative information is used to inform the ongoing monitoring, annual review and quinquennial review processes.

The Institute of Technology Carlow Quality Assurance Work plan set out at APPENDIX VI within the Quality Manual illustrates where this policy sits within the overarching Quality Assurance Framework (http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm)

Appendix IX of the Institute's Quality Manual Policy and Procedure for Teaching and Learning, Appendix XIV Recognised Methods of Assessment (extracted from the Academic Standards and Assessment Regulations Sept.2014), Appendix XV Double, Joint and Anonymous Marking and Appendix XVI Group Projects and Assessment- Fairness and Consistency set out policies in relation to Programme Delivery and Assessment.

Procedure

The Institute of Technology Carlow Quality Assurance Work plan set out at Appendix VI within our quality manual illustrates where policies on programmes and awards and assessment of learners are placed within the overarching Quality Assurance Framework and the relevant policies and procedures themselves are presented as:

- Appendix IX: Policy and Procedure for Teaching and Learning
- Appendix X: Policy and Procedure for On-going Monitoring of Programmes
- Appendix XI: Policy and Procedure for Programmatic Review
- Appendix XII: Modes of Programme Delivery
- Appendix XIV: Recognised Methods of Assessment
- Appendix XV: Double, Joint and Anonymous Marking
- Appendix XVI: Group Projects and Assessment – Fairness and Consistency
- Appendix XXII: Policy and Procedure for External Examiner
- Appendix XXIV: Academic Integrity and Anti-Plagiarism Policy

Additional support Institute of Technology Carlow support documentation has been developed by the Teaching and Learning Centre. Publicly available resources which cover a range of topics are available at https://www.itcarlow.ie/study/teaching-learning-centre/tlc-resources.htm.   Information and resources for all students and staff are also available through

blackboard at https://www.itcarlow.ie/study/teaching-learning-centre/student-academic-support.htm, through dedicated support sites – TLC_Staff Hub and TLC_Student Hub. Resources include:

- Academic Integrity Support
- Academic Toolboxes (e.g. Guide to Writing Learning Outcomes, e.g. Rubrics, etc.)
- Guidelines for drafting programme assessment strategies
- Referencing Guides
- PACE Programme

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Policy

As set out in Section 4 of Institute of Technology Carlow's Quality Manual we ensure the smooth progress of learners in their academic career is in the best interest of Institute of Technology Carlow, individual learners, programmes, and systems. This is also captured in the Learner Engagement and Progression Framework (LEAP), summarised in Figure 2.2.1, which details the supportive steps available to learners as they progress through their educational journey. This framework was finalised in 2019 and is a living document which will be updated as required. It gives learners a directory of what supports to expect and how they can be accessed.

Figure 2.2.1 Learner Engagement and Progression Framework

Admission, assessment, recognition and completion procedures, along with the actual academic programme and learner support provided, play an important role, particularly when learners are mobile within and across the higher education system. The admissions process is available in Institute of Technology Carlow's Prospectus and Student Handbook, both are reviewed annually and offer the learner guidance and alternatives during their student life. Additionally, Institute of Technology Carlow's Policy and Procedure for Learner Access and Widening Participation (Appendix XXV of Quality Manual), guides the learner through the process of application and the facilitation of such application and provides all prospective learners with information, including selection criteria that allows them to make informed decisions on applying to a programme. The Institute has a High-Performance Entry Scheme (Appendix XXIX of the Quality Manual) recognising achievements outside of formal learning in Innovation/Entrepreneurship, Sport and Active Citizenship in consideration for entry.

To further support of the learner in choosing the correct programme, the Policy and Procedure on Transfer (Appendix XXVI of the Quality Manual) offers options and timeframes in the event of the learner requiring the option to change the direction of their study.

Following admission to Institute of Technology Carlow, induction sessions are conducted throughout the Institute by the President and Registrar, Senior Management within each respective Faculty / Campus, Academic staff and existing learners, providing an introduction to Institute of Technology Carlow and the respective programme of choice. This provides all prospective learners with as much information on the programme as possible to inform their choice. Additionally, information on progression within programmes is available within Institute of Technology Carlow's Policy and Procedure for Progression (Appendix XXVII of the Quality Manual).

When choosing a programme, the method of assessment used within Institute of Technology Carlow and specifically for each programme, is also a factor in the learner's choice of programme, as assessment, whether formative or summative, has a profound effect on the learners' progress and on their future careers.

Institute of Technology Carlow ensures that:
- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field. This is reflected in the Policy and

Procedure for External Examiners (Appendix XXII) and External Examination – Foundations and Definitions (Appendix XXIII);

- The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published within Institute of Technology Carlow's Academic Standards and Assessment Regulations and relevant abstracts available within this document, for ease of reference, within the following Appendices:
  - Recognised Methods of Assessment (Appendix XIV);
  - Double, Joint and Anonymous Marking (Appendix XV);
  - Group Projects and Assessment – Fairness and Consistency (Appendix XVI);
  - Policy and Procedure for Work Placement of Learners (Appendix XXVIII).

Additionally, Institute of Technology Carlow's Policy and Procedure on Late submission of Assignments (Appendix XVII), takes into account mitigating circumstances, while Academic Integrity & Anti-Plagiarism Policy (Appendix XXIII) offers clear direction to the learner of institutional standards of acceptability in conducting assignments to maintain Institute of Technology Carlow's exemplary academic reputation.

SOLAS

Institute of Technology Carlow is a provider of apprenticeship programmes, which all reside in the Department of Built Environment in the Faculty of Engineering. The department delivers the apprenticeship programme via a nationally designed curriculum and assessments under the direction of SOLAS. The department has dedicated apprentice staff and administrator who manages the process liaising with various functions such as Examinations and Finance.

The apprentice administrator is the key contact point with SOLAS and is a user of their portal and system CASCADE. All examination papers and material lists for practical examinations are retrieved via the portal directly from SOLAS. The administrator is also responsible for the timetabling of examinations, in collaboration with SOLAS and is the key communicator with apprentices and their employer. Examination boards, chaired by Head of Faculty/Department are held in accordance with Institute and SOLAS quality assurance practice and are always attended by the assigned Authorised Officer on behalf of SOLAS.

There are two types of apprenticeships within the national system: traditional craft apprenticeships and new, employer-led apprenticeships. Institute of Technology Carlow currently delivers both types.

Craft Apprenticeships

There are 27 traditional craft apprenticeships, which are available across a range of sectors including Construction, Motor, Electrical and Engineering. Craft apprenticeships are generally comprised of seven phases, three off-the-job and four on-the-job, and take a minimum of four years to complete. They lead to the learner becoming a fully qualified craftsperson.

Carpentry & Joinery	Institute of Technology Carlow
Electrical	Institute of Technology Carlow
Electrical Instrumentation	Institute of Technology Carlow (National Provider)
Instrumentation	Institute of Technology Carlow (National Provider)

The Institute provides apprenticeship under the guidance of SOLAS and is active in leading the development of specific apprenticeship in terms of curricula design and assessment. Institute of Technology Carlow has active members on the Technological Higher Educational Association Apprenticeship Committee (THEAC), which represents apprenticeship for the sector on a national basis. This group is currently feeding into the National Action Plan for Apprenticeship led by the Department of Further Higher Education Research Innovation and Science.

In early 2020, Institute of Technology Carlow was pivotal in the development of a contingency strategy with the Higher Education Authority, SOLAS and other providers for the delivery of apprenticeship during the COVID pandemic. This included ensuring quality control, delivering apprenticeship by remote learning, leading a new strategic pathway to apprenticeship delivery.

In terms of apprenticeship excellence Institute of Technology Carlow had participants in the National Skills and World Skills Competitions. In 2019/2020, Institute of Technology Carlow apprentices with their employer Pfizer were the national winners for showing their skills in Electrical Instrumentation in the Generation Apprenticeship national competition.

Employer-Led Apprenticeships

Employer-led apprenticeships emerged following a review of apprenticeship commissioned by the Minister for Education and Skills in 2013. They are developed and managed by industry-led consortia, working with education and training providers and other partners. The training alternates between a workplace and an education and training institute, with a minimum of 50% of the training being undertaken on-the-job. Industries such as Computer & ICT, MedTech, Insurance, Finance, Accountancy, Logistics and Hospitality sectors now have apprenticeships.

Institute of Technology Carlow has been active in the design and development of employer-led apprenticeships and led the development of the Higher Certificate in Geo Drilling, which also commenced in 2019.

Work is ongoing to expand provision in this area with programmes and upskilling opportunities in development.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Programmes are designed with overall programme objectives which are in line with the Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 and meet with the learner's requirement and both Regional and National requirements in line with QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines, both topic and sector specific. As a designated Awarding Body, we have adopted the QQI Award Standards. This is additionally informed by International trends. Such programmes in meeting these requirements are reflected in their explicit intended learning outcomes and that lead to a coherent programme of study which facilitates learner progression.

The qualification resulting from a programme is clearly specified and communicated, with reference to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Three different types of learning outcomes have been identified – knowledge, know-how and skill and competence.

These have been further subdivided as follows, in order to facilitate elaboration in the case of each defined Award Standard:

1. Knowledge-Breadth; and Kind

2. Know-how and skill-Range; and Selectivity

3. Competence-Context; Role; Learning to learn; and Insight.

Details on specific Institute of Technology Carlow Award Standard definitions can be accessed here

When programmes are designed the learning outcomes align to the specific associated award standard requirements. During the validation process, the programme development team demonstrate how they ensure that a learner acquires and demonstrates the standard of knowledge, skill or competence associated with the level of each award within the National Framework of Qualifications before the programme is validated. The learner must demonstrate acquisition of the required the standard of knowledge, skill or competence associated with the level of each award to the satisfaction of the Examination Board before being deemed eligible for the award.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Teaching, Learning and Support Services Committee of Academic Council oversees any new teaching academic support initiatives and attendant policies.

In terms of quality enhancement, the Institute has a policy and associated procedures to support academic writing and academic integrity which can be found at the following link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Academic-Integrity-Policy-V4.pdf. To support the embedding of this policy, the Institute has put in place support mechanisms which are offered through the Teaching and Learning Centre. These include continued professional development for staff and support for students in the area of Turnitin, the Institute's approved text-matching software. Also, through the Institute's Academic Writing Centre, support sessions on academic writing and referencing are offered to all students, in order to support them with their writing. This is further supported through the provision of an online, self-paced and self-directed module, Academic Success, which is available on the Institute's Virtual Learning Platform and can be accessed by all students in the Institute. The programme is designed to support students in their transition to higher education and to introduce them to concepts around academic integrity. Since its introduction, there has been a consistent increase in its uptake, with many lecturing staff now embedding it within their programmes as part of their assessment strategies.

In relation to the external examiner process, the Institute also has policy and procedures to support this, which can be found at: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/External-Examiners-Policy.pdf. To support new external examiners and to ensure that they are familiar with both the process and with the support that has been given to staff in respect of assessment strategies, a comprehensive external examiner training programme is offered each year.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The Learner Engagement and Retention (LEAP) Framework is finalised (detailed above) and the supporting policies and procedures are included in the framework, providing a scaffold document. The LEAP framework will also provide support the learner through their educational journey. Supports both educational and pastoral care and services provided to all learners including international learners are articulated. Dedicated Student Support is provided to learners through many different avenues, from class tutors, programmed directors, library, peers (for example, PALS programme), library, the Teaching & Learning Centre and the Students Union. Though participation in the HEAR and DARE programmes bespoke support for learners is provided.   After admission all learners are encouraged to access supports provided though Student Services.

Through the Teaching and Learning Centre, the Institute supports all learners with a range of academic supports with details of the uptake for the reporting period given in Appendix 1.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

As set out in the Institute's Policy Statement for Awards by Research, the scope of Institute of Technology Carlow's research programme provision is delineated by the terms of its delegated authority to make awards at NFQ Level 9 (by research and dissertation) and at NFQ Level 10.

Institute of Technology Carlow shall not offer programmes outside of the terms of its delegated authority. The limits to Institute of Technology Carlow's awarding authority, under delegated authority are its validated programmes at National Framework of Qualifications levels 6, 7, 8, taught and research programmes at level 9 and research programmes at level 10 in the area of Biotechnology and Molecular Environmental Science. Institute of Technology Carlow also has Approved Provider Status for Level 10 awards in Health Science, Engineering, Computing and Information Technology. The requirements, as set out in HETAC regulations regarding Research Degree Programme Policy and Criteria (2010) are noted.

All research programme activity leading to awards under NFQ Level 9 and NFQ Level 10 is subject to the academic quality assurance policies and procedures approved and adopted by Institute of Technology Carlow's Academic Council as well as those required by QQI. All research programme activity is subject to the approval of Academic Council which has statutory responsibility for the admission, retention, exclusion and examination of learners. The Institute of Technology Carlow Academic Council, with the approval of the Institute of Technology Carlow Governing Body, has established a Research and Development Committee of

Academic Council and Postgraduate Research Programme Boards. The purpose of these bodies is to assist the Academic Council in the performance of its functions in relation to programmes of research leading to higher degree awards. Where research programme activity leads to an award it is also be subject to the oversight and approval of QQI. Any award that falls outside the scope of Institute of Technology Carlow's delegated authority is approved by QQI.

Procedure

As set out in the Institute's Policy and Procedure for Postgraduate Awards by Research and Dissertation (https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Policy-Statement-for-Awards-by-Research-NFQ-L9-and-L10-Version-5.pdf at NFQ Level 9 and Level 10, individual research programmes are assessed by a process of external review (Appendices C1 and C2). Validation of the research area takes place at discipline level. Application for validation for programmes of research in a new discipline area shall be made to the Registrar by the appropriate school or department using the New Programme Proposal Forms (PP1 and PP2). The form PP2 shall be supplemented by a self-assessment report form detailing how the proposed research area satisfies validation criteria (Appendix B3). Completed Programme Proposal Forms, together with Self Evaluation Reviews shall be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for internal assessment and review prior to the establishment of an external expert panel to review new research proposals. The panel shall have the appropriate expertise to benchmark the proposal against national and international comparators. Following review and site visit the panel shall make a recommendation to validate the proposed programme (or not). The Research & Development Committee shall then consider such recommendation. The Committee shall then make recommendation to Academic Council. Academic Council shall recommend approval of validation to Governing Body. Governing Body shall consider the recommendation and decide on approval. Reports and outcomes of the validation process shall be published. Validation of discipline areas shall be subject to cyclical review.

Institute of Technology Carlow's Academic Council maintains two registers of learners on programmes for higher degrees by research, as follows:

- A Register of learners attached to programmes toward an award of the Degree of Master (by research and dissertation) – hereafter referred to as "the Level 9 Register" and
- A Register of learners attached to programmes toward an award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy – hereafter referred to as "the Level 10 Register".

Each individual application for registration is considered separately by the Research and Development Committee of Academic Council.

Institute of Technology Carlow offers two type of awards resulting from research programmes:

- Degree of Master (by research and dissertation). Candidates for this award shall be expected to meet the Standard for the relevant broad field of learning (Science, Computing, Engineering, Business, Art and Design) defined for awards at level 9 (by research and dissertation) on the NFQ (Appendices A9 and A 10 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). The NFQ does not specify any minimum programme duration however national and international practice suggests that a learner registered on an NFQ Level 9 research programme shall require between one and two years of full-time study to achieve the required outcomes. In circumstances where a learner does not complete the programme within a four-year (full time equivalent) period from first admission to the Register, then registration will lapse. In circumstances where a learner wishes subsequently to present for the degree, application for re-registration shall be mandatory.

- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Candidates for the Level 10 award shall be expected to meet the Standard for the relevant broad field of learning defined for awards at level 10 on the NFQ (Appendix A10 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). The NFQ does not provide for any minimum programme duration however national and International best practice suggests that a learner working on a typical programme of research towards an award at Level 10 requires between three and four years of full-time study to achieve the required outcomes. In circumstances where a learner does not complete the programme within a period of six years (full time equivalent) of admission to the register, registration shall lapse. If the learner wishes subsequently to present for the degree, application for re-registration shall be mandatory. In circumstances where a learner has transferred from the Level 9 research Register to the Level 10 Register, the registration period shall run from the date of initial admission to the Level 9 Register.

A learner who wishes to transfer from the Level 9 research Register to the Level 10 Register shall make formal application to Academic Council using the appropriate application form with supporting documentation (Appendix C3 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). Applications for transfer shall be supported by an independent evaluation by a recognised independent

expert assessor in the field of the proposed research and accompanied by a substantial transfer report (Appendix C4 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). The nomination of the External Expert Reviewer shall have been approved by the Research & Development Committee of Academic Council prior to submission of the proposed programme for review.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Policy

Institute of Technology Carlow has fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of all staff that allow them to assure themselves of the competence of their academic staff. A significant review of the Policies and Procedures related to the Human Resources area has been completed with all Policies and Procedures have been included in the Quality Management System and can be found at https://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm Institute of Technology Carlow holds a Bronze Athena Swan Award and and is committed to achieving equity of opportunity for all and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our learners, our leaders and our staff. This includes providing support to Departments and faculties to develop Gender Action Plans and apply for Athena Swan Awards. Associated policies and procedures, including the Institute of Technology Carlow Gender Equality Action Plan can be found here.

While higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their academic staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively, Institute of Technology Carlow embraces this responsibility and ensures that it:

- Follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment, appointment, promotion and dismissal that recognise the importance of teaching and learning;
- Offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of academic staff, which takes into account the outcomes of staff evaluation exercises, including peer review and learner feedback.;
- Encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research where staff and learners within Institute of Technology Carlow are regularly invited to research forums offering discussion on research methodologies and developments.;

- Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies where staff within Institute of Technology Carlow have successfully completed Institute of Technology Carlow's MA in Teaching and Learning;

- Provide opportunities and promotes professional development for all staff and postgraduate learners to undertake training through the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

- Recognise excellence in teaching through academic promotion criteria and public awards such as https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/awards/teaching-hero-awards. These awards were established by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in partnership with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and other student bodies to recognise and celebrate learners' experiences of great teaching throughout all higher education institutions and are presented to individuals who have made an impact at a key transition in a learner's journey in higher education. This award was presented to members of Institute of Technology Carlow teaching staff in 2014 as voted by their learners.

The role of academic staff is essential in creating a high quality learner experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying learner population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require learner-centred learning where the role of academia is, therefore, also changing. Institute of Technology Carlow has measures in place to reflect such change, such as its Policy and Procedure for Learner Involvement in Quality Assurance (Appendix IV).

Procedure

All potential applicants are informed of the Institute's processes for recruitment and selection and all staff are informed of Institute of Technology Carlow's policy and procedures for Staff Development including and support of staff undertaking Level 10 qualifications. This policy has resulted in 45% of all staff a Level 10 qualification.

Staff Development and Support

The Institute's Teaching and Learning Centre coordinates and provides both accredited and non-accredited professional development, available to all staff across the Institute, including full-time and part-time staff. In addition, continued professional development is provided to

collaborative partners of the Institute, which in turn helps to ensure that the overall learner experience is enhanced.

The following table1 in section 2.0.4 outlines the overall staff-faced initiatives that have been implemented through the Teaching and Learning Centre in an effort to support all staff.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision making. Institute of Technology Carlow collects, analyses and uses relevant information for effective management of programmes and other activities. There are processes in place to collect and analyse information about programmes and activities, feeding into Institute of Technology Carlow's internal quality assurance processes, such as identified within the Policy and Procedure for the On-going Monitoring of Programmes (quality manual, Appendix X). This information is used to inform academic and professional support service reviews and strategic planning. The type of information routinely gathered and analysed at Institute of Technology Carlow includes the following:

Profile of the learner population
Learner progression, success and drop-out rates Learners' satisfaction with their programmes Learning resources and learner support available Employability of graduates

To comply with freedom of information legislation, Institute of Technology Carlow has appointed a freedom of information officer and operates both a records management policy, and a records retention schedule.

Information on Institute of Technology Carlow's activities is useful for prospective and current learners as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Institute of Technology Carlow provides information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their learners, which are available within Assessment Standards and Assessment Regulations, the Teaching and learning Centre, the Registrar's Office and our prospectus.

Institute of Technology Carlow continues meet and exceed key performance indicators identified and reported on annually to the HEA through its Mission-based Performance Compact.

Benchmarking

Through the Office of Institutional Planning and Research, Institute of Technology Carlow continuously benchmarks itself against its peers.

Institute of Technology Carlow is proud to be ranked in the five top performing universities in Ireland, according to the U-Multirank international ranking of higher education institutions.

U-Multirank (https://www.umultirank.org/) is the largest and most inclusive global university ranking, highlighting the diversity in higher education around the world. Now in its eighth edition, it compares university performance across teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement.

In its 2021 edition, Institute of Technology Carlow received nine top A grades from U-Multirank – up four from last year. The A grades were awarded for: Bachelor graduation rate; graduating on time (bachelors); interdisciplinary publications; co-publications with industrial partners; publications cited in patents; international academic staff; bachelor graduates working in the region; master graduates working in the region. Institute of Technology Carlow also received an A grade for the gender balance indicator.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Information on Institute of Technology Carlow's activities is useful for prospective and current learners as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institute of Technology Carlow provides information about their activities, including the programmes and modules they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their learners, which are available within Assessment Standards and Assessment Regulations, the Teaching and learning Centre, the Registrar's Office and http://www.itcarlow.ie/study-at-itc/prospectus.htm

As outlined previously, the Institute website has a detailed section on quality to include policies, procedures, publications and outcomes (including validation, review, learner feedback analysis), programmes and registers as well as contact details for the Institute Quality Office.

The Institute of Technology Carlow website provides details on:

- activities, including education and training programmes
- research and related services;
- quality assurance policies and procedures; and
- evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations.

Institute of Technology Carlow also has active Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TU MOU I 2012-2014 Joint Stage 1 TU Submission	Outcomes Review of Strategic Plan 2009-2013	Strategic Plan 2014-2018 HEA Compact 2014-2017	Vision and Implementation Framework for TU	Strategic Plan 2014-18 Midterm Review	TU MOU II 2017-2020	Strategic Plan 2019-2023 HEA Compact 2018-2021	Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) 2019	Research and Innovation Impact Strategy 2020-2025 CINNTE Institutional Review 2020	Application to the Minister for FHERIS to establish the Technological University of South East
QA/QE Gap Analysis and Work Plan Postgraduate Research Review Collaborative and Transnational Provision Review	Progress Review of Institutional Review Outcomes Delegated Authority Extension to all Level 9 Taught Programmes	HEA Performance Funding / SDC1 MOA II with Military College – Irish Defence Forces Appointment of CORE Directors Establishment of *Research and Commercialisation Support Centre* and *Postgraduate Studies Support Office*	HEA Performance Funding / SDC2 Stage 1 Quinquennial Review (Strategic)- Faculties, Campuses, Centres DA Extension to all Level 9 Research Programmes and Joint Awards Commencement of PMSS Reviews	HEA Performance Funding / SDC3 Stage 2 Quinquennial Review (Programmatic) Faculties, Campuses, Centres Research Strategy 2016-2020 Strategic Review PMSS - Library and Computing Services	HEA Performance Funding / SDC4 Graduate Attributes Framework Establishment of the Office for Institutional Planning and Research Establishment of the Office for Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Strategic Review	New HEA Compact 2018-2021 Institutional Application for Athena SWAN Bronze Accreditation Extension Level 10 Provision - Health Sciences Blended Learning Framework: Pilot Implementation MOA with Irish Gestalt	HEA Performance Funding / SDC1 Athena SWAN Bronze Award Joint Application for TU Carlow College MOA Strategic Review PMSS: Development and Research; Sport Establishment of Insurtech DAC and C4D DAC MOA III Military College – Irish DF	Designated Awarding Body Status New Academic Delivery Framework Design HEA Performance Funding / SDC2 Student Success Strategy – LEAP (Learner Engagement and Progression) Academic Council Effectiveness Review Governing Body Effectiveness Review Cross-institutional modification of delivery, assessment and support	Cross Institutional Programmatic Reviews and Implementation of the new Academic Delivery Framework Approval by the Chinese Ministry for Education for the establishment of the Carlow International College of Technology with Chinese University partner HUAHE HEA-SALI Engineering and Innovation Cross-institutional modification of

				Establishment of Design+ Technology Gateway	PMSS: Student Services; Academic Admin.; Estates	Institute and Tivoli Institute Establishment of SocialCORE	Establishment of EduCORE	associated with COVID-19 Pandemic	delivery, assessment and support associated with COVID-19 Pandemic
Annual Institutional Quality Reports (AIQR)									
Annual Corporate Governance Programme of Internal Audits									
Annual Corporate Governance Financial Audits									
Annual Institutional Reports and Financial Statements									

Figure 8.1 Overview of Institute of Technology Carlow Strategic Planning, Review and Quality Enhancement milestones since Institutional Review 2010/2011

At Institute of Technology Carlow, our quality focus and consultation in decision making extends to all aspects of the organisation.

While academic quality processes are extremely well established, the institute has recently approved a 'Professional, Managerial and Support Services (PMSS) Strategic Review Policy' (Appendix III Quality Manual) in line with the expectations of the Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Institutes of Technology. This is recognition of the fact that a large number of professional services and functions provide a complex and coherent support structure maintaining and developing the quality of academic excellence. They are key to the provision of the unique learner centred and supportive environment of Institute of Technology Carlow which has been emphasised in the detailed strategic and programmatic reviews of each academic unit completed in 2016 and in this reporting period. As part of the self-evaluation processes, Institute of Technology Carlow carried out a Gap Analysis of its QA system in 2012, conducted by Dr Dermot J Douglas and the outcomes of that Report formed the work plan for the Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee. It resulted in the introduction of new roles including an Assistant Registrar and a Quality and Collaborations Officer. The introduction of the role of Director of the Office of Institutional Planning and Research offers Institute-wide support on data analysis to further enhance and inform the Strategic direction of Institute of Technology Carlow. As part of our self-evaluation processes and theme- based approach, in the area of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, the Quality system has undergone a further review in 2019, conducted by Anne Campbell, which is informing the Quality Work Plan. This reiterates our approach to systematic review and enhancement. This has enabled the extension of a robust self-assessment model being applied to all professional services which compliments that undertaken by all academic units. The cyclic nature of these reviews will ensure that quality assurance is core to all activities and that a quality focused culture is embedded. Enhancing this quality assurance culture will form a basis for future development.

Policies for programmatic reviews and professional support units can be accessed here. The procedures and processes of programme delivery, assessment, internal and external examination, moderation and programme monitoring processes are modelled on the standard Institute of Technology Carlow institutional quality assurance procedures.

The Institute of Technology Carlow Quality Assurance Work plan set out at APPENDIX VI within the Quality Manual illustrates where this policy sits within the overarching Quality Assurance Framework (http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm)

How Institute of Technology Carlow's internal internal quality assurance system engages with external quality assurance is summarised in Figure 8.1 clearly demonstrating the link between the internal and external processes. Fundamental is the Quality Workplan alignment to the Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and quality enhancement.

9.0   Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1   Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	38 Programmes 20 PRSB
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	1

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Honourable Society of King's Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	LLB, BA (Hons) in Law https://www.kingsinns.ie/cmsfiles/entrance-examination/KIScheduleOfApprovedDegrees2021_240121_MH.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	2019

Date of next review	2024

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems); Bachelor of Engineering in Aircraft Systems Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Aerospace Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronic Systems https://www.engineersireland.ie/Professionals/Membership/Become-a-member/Accredited-third-level-courses/Find-accredited-programme/
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/accredited-programmes
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2024

4. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Aeronautical Society
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Aircraft Systems https://www.aerosociety.com/media/9494/c-users-ejackson-onedrive-the-royal-aeronautical-society-academic-accreditation-accredited-courses-ug-pg-september-2018.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

5. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2024

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.

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	n/a
Joint/double/multiple awards	1
Collaborative programmes	64
Franchise programmes	n/a
Linked providers (DABs only)	8 Link to Register of Linked Provision: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Irish Defence Forces
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Communications Technology Management PG Dip in Science in Communications Technology Management BEng in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems) Higher Certificate in Engineering in Electronic Engineering MEng in Weapons, Ordnance, Munitions and Explosive Engineering Certificate in International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device/Device Disposal (10 credit, Level 9) MSc in Military Engineering Management PG Dip in Science in Military Engineering Management BA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies

	BA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (Logistics) Certificate in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (minor award level 7 30 Credits) Higher Certificate in Arts in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	2021
Date of next review	2026

2. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	The Tivoli Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical) Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling (Clinical) – 3 years ab initio Honours Degree with Minor Award exit of Certificate after stage 1 Certificate in Psychotherapy Theory (Level 9 – 30 Credit Minor) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	2020
Date of next review	2025

3. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	An Cosán
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Addiction Studies and Community Development (Level 7) Bachelor of Arts in Leadership and Community Development (Level 7)

	Certificate in Leadership and Social Enterprise (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Applied Addiction Studies and Community (Level 6) Certificate in Leadership and Community Development (Level 6) Certificate in Social Analysis (Level 6) Certificate in Community Leadership (Level 6) Certificate in Group Work & Facilitation Skills (Level 6) Certificate in Learning to Learn at Third Level (Level 6) Certificate in Introduction to Social Enterprise Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Leadership (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Transformative Community Education (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Citizenship and Social Action (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Introduction to Community Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Introduction to Community Leadership (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in the Nature and Context of Addiction (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Drug Prevention, Education & Awareness (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Development Practical Approaches (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Understanding and Managing Conflict in a Community Development Context (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Reflective Practice, Knowledge, Skills & Attitude (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Social Policy (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Equality & Diversity (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership & Organisational Development (level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Introduction to Counselling & Motivational Interviewing (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Approaches to Treatment and Rehabilitation (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Development and Technology (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Research Methods and Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Project Cycle Management in the Community & Voluntary Sector (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership and Social Change (level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership in Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Drugs and Crime in a Global Context (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Drug Work and Leadership in Practice (level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Communications (Level 6 Special Purpose award) Certificate in Critical and Ethical Thinking in a Changing World (Level 6 Special Purpose award) Certificate in Foundations in Adult Learning (Level 6 Special Purpose award) Certificate in Personal and Professional Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award, 60 credits) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	2021

Date of next review	2026

4. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Carlow College St Patrick's
Programme titles and links to publications	Research and Collaborative Development Initiatives Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

5. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Gestalt Institute of Ireland - Irish Gestalt Centre
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Certificate in Gestalt Theory (Level 9 – 30 Credit Minor) Certificate in Clinical Supervision (Level 9, Special Purpose, 20 credits) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	2020
Date of next review	2025

6. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Dublin Art Therapy College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy, with exit award of minor Level 6 after Stage 1, Higher Certificate after Stage 2 and Bachelor degree after Stage 3 Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf

Date of last review	2018
Date of next review	2023

7. **Collaborative provision** (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	The Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport Ireland (CILT)
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Business in Logistics and Supply Chain Management (Level 6 Major Award) Certificate in Business in Logistics and Supply Chain Management (Level 6 – Minor Award) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	2016
Date of next review	2022

8. **Collaborative provision** (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Irish National Stud
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register-Linked-Provision-v9_1.pdf
Date of last review	n/a
Date of next review	n/a

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.

Articulation agreements - Total number	5 Link to Articulation Agreements: https://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-programmes-registers.htm

1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Liffey College
Programme titles and links to publications	Appropriate 1st Year Programmes at Institute of Technology Carlow
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	6th May 2020
Date of next review	5th May 2023
Detail of the agreement	Institute of Technology Carlow welcomes applications from qualified graduates of the Certificate in International Foundation Studies (IFS) at Liffey College. The following will be considered by Institute of Technology Carlow for the purposes of accepting Liffey College students onto the appropriate 1st year programme at the Institute: • Applicants will be accepted based on their merits on a case-by-case basis. Apart from academic achievements, considerations will also be given to factors like areas of study, maturity of applicant and demand for the specific programme. • Students will also demonstrate an achievement of IELTS 5.5 or equivalent with a minimum of 5.5 across all bands. It will be noted that Liffey College IFS graduates will achieve a minimum of B2 on their CEFR scale which will satisfy the requirements. • When required and requested, applicants will need to submit any relevant transcripts and certificates.

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

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

The central role of quality assurance and enhancement is explicitly articulated in the *Institute of Technology Carlow's Strategic Plan 2019*-2023 (https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/ITCarlow-Strategic-Plan-2019-2023.pdf).

The Strategic Plan 2019-2023, affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in achieving strategic objectives and maintaining and enhancing the Institute of Technology Carlow's reputation and position within Higher Education both nationally and internationally.

The *Institute of Technology Carlow Strategic Plan 2019-2023* establishes five key priorities to contribute to regional and national economic, social and cultural development, informed and enriched by the Institute of Technology Carlow's growing activities and profile. This plan guides all Institute activities, including quality, engagement, research, learning & teaching and the programmes being developed, validated and delivered.

The development and provision of inter-institutional, regional, national and international collaborative research programmes, joint research awards, and transnational research programme provision have become significant features of the higher education landscape.

Institute of Technology Carlow has been granted delegated authority from QQI for all provision, including Collaborative and Joint Awards, up to and including taught and research level 9 and has attained delegated authority for Research at level 10 across a broader suite of areas.

Institute of Technology Carlow, together with Waterford Institute of Technology has made an application for designation as the South East Technological University.   The international review panel visited in 2021 and the designation date will be in the next reporting period.

Institute of Technology Carlow continues to enhance the learning opportunities for staff through the provision of a range of 10-credit modules as part of the MA in Teaching and Learning (MATL). Institute of Technology Carlow funds staff to complete these modules. There has been a strong uptake of these modules, in particular the Research Supervision Module, which was offered a number of times during the reporting period. Details in Appendix 1.

Alignment to Professional Body CORU

The Institute of Technology Carlow, is committed to the highest standards of education and professional alignment of its programmes within all disciplines.

This commitment, by the Institute, to aligning programmes to Professional Body recognition and approval is at the heart of the Institute of Technology Carlow's Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

Alignment to Professional Body recognition and approval, is reflected with Social Care Education within the Institute and the accreditation of its suite of programmes on Social Care under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005, as amended.

The Act provides for the establishment of Registration Boards, specifically, the Social Care Workers Registration Board, to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. CORU (Health and Social Care Professional Council and Registration Board) is the multi-profession health regulator for Ireland which includes the regulation of Social Care and the Social Care Workers Registration Board under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005, as amended. In order to ensure that graduates are recognised professionals in this space, Institute of Technology Carlow undertook a significant project to align its suite of Social Care programmes. A CORU visit for Professional recognition is planned.

Significant specific changes to QA within the institution.

Institute of Technology Carlow continues to support dissemination of quality assurance policies and procedures through its dedicated section of the website and newsletters to staff which detail all policy updates and decisions from Academic Council.

Leading through self-review, Institute of Technology Carlow continues to enhance the learner experience by carrying out Professional Support Service Reviews by independent external panels.

Institute of Technology Carlow maintains and enhances its Quality Management System (QMS), including the Institute Quality Work Plan, to reflect the requirements under ESG (2015).

In adopting the ECU Athena SWAN principles and the Athena Swan Charter, the Institute is clearly signaling its commitment to enhancing and promoting gender equality for staff and students across the Institute. Institute of Technology Carlow was awarded the international Athena SWAN Bronze Award by AdvanceHE in recognition of the Institute's work in advancing gender equality in academia, and in promoting diversity and inclusion for staff and students in higher education. Staff have been seconded in the Faculty of Engineering, the Department of Humanities and The Department of Computing to project manage Athena Swan Bronze application in these areas as we continue to champion EDI. The South East Technological University (SETU) project joint funded projects are ongoing and an application has been made for designation due in May 2022. These projects involve teams from both organisations who work together in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, promoting access to higher education in the region, international mobility, support for adult learners, socio-economically challenged students and other target populations. Network building projects amongst science, health, engineering, design, business and humanities academic and research staff, human resource staff, student support personnel, academic managers and finance departments also feature as do a number of projects to promote higher education connecting with industry and community groups across the South East. Other projects take a regional approach to teaching, learning and assessment, programme alignment and examining ways for higher education to contribute to sustainable development in the region. There are 28 projects funded through this initiative.

Institute of Technology Carlow was the first HEI to hold a virtual Cinnte Institutional Review and the main Review Panel Visit was held remotely from 10th June – 30th June 2020. This culminated in thirteen commendations and twelve recommendations by the Review Team. The Review Team commended Institute of Technology Carlow for:

- The transformation that has taken place in its institutional development and strategic direction since the last institutional review.
- The sustenance of a strong financial discipline which has enabled extensive capital development of the campus in support of its pursuit of TU status.
- The Institute's strong commitment to quality assurance, as well as the evidence of quality culture across the organisation, supported by robust governance structures.
- Its strong commitment to student support and engagement and notes the ample evidence provided that Institute of Technology Carlow is a student-centred institute.
- The excellent support provided by Institute of Technology Carlow to staff interested in engaging in research, as evidenced by the percentage of staff who have attained PhDs over the past 8 years.

The Institutional Review Implementation Plan, which aligns the recommendations from the CINNTE Review to actions can be viewed here.

Institute of Technology Carlow continues to implement and review its QA work-plan which is available in Appendix VI of the Institute of Technology Carlow's Quality Manual.

1.2   Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

N o.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status 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	Final Report from CINNTE published	Published October 2020 here
2	Action Plan based on recommendations from CINNTE Report	Plan developed November 2020 and available here
3	Academic Delivery Framework	Implementation to commence through Programmatic Review 2020/2021. Reports from the Reviews can be accessed here.
4	CORU	CORU Approval Processes 2020-2022. Awaiting CORU visit which will take place in March 2022
5	Application for Level 10 provision in Social Sciences	Application to be submitted to QQI in 2021. QQI Panel visit scheduled for next reporting period.
6	Technological University Application	Application submitted to Department in April 2021. Designation Day scheduled for next reporting period.
7	Technological University International Advisory Panel	International Advisory Panel visit took place in July 2021. Designation Day scheduled for next reporting period.

1.3 Governance and Management
1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Academic Council	15 Meetings
	2nd September 2020
	21st September 2020
	6th October 2020
	12th October 2020
	23rd October 2020
	29th October 2020
	26th November 2020
	13th January 2021
	18th February 2021
	23rd March 2021
	15th April 2021
	20th April 2021
	12th May 2021
	17th June 2021
	12th July 2021
Academic Regulations Committee*	6 Meetings
	22nd September 2020
	15th October 2020
	2nd December 2020

	20th January 2021
	10th March 2021
	20th May 2021
Linked Provision Committee	4 Meetings
	19th October 2020
	2nd February 2021
	29th April 2021
	14th June 2021
Programme Planning & Validation Committee	8 Meetings
	18th September 2020
	19th October 2020
	23rd November 2020
	15th December 2020
	12th January 2021
	18th March 2021
	28th April 2021
	17th June 2021
Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee*	6 Meetings
	24th November 2020
	13th January 2021
	12th February 2021
	16th March 2021
	28th April 2021
	9th June 2021
Research & Development Committee*	6 Meetings
	15th September 2020
	15th October 2020
	25th November 2020

	2nd February 2021
	16th March 2021
	15th June 2021
Teaching, Learning & Support Services*	4 Meetings
	24th September 2020
	9th December 2020
	18th February 2021
	2nd June 2021
Governing Body	11 Meetings
	15th October 2020
	12th November 2020
	17th December 2020
	28th January 2021
	25th February 2021
	19th March 2021
	15th April 2021
	29th April 2021
	27th May 2021
	24th June 2021
	26th August 2021
Ethics in Research Committee	4 Meetings
	28th October 2020
	9th December 2021
	24th March 2021
	2nd June 2021
Academic Integrity Committee	1 Meeting
	October 2020

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

No changes have been made to the Leadership and Management team in this reporting period. A review of the organisational structure of the Faculties has been undertaken and this has resulted in changes to some Departmental structures. Resulting new Departments will have the appropriate support structure to enhance the quality of the programme provision and learner experience in identified areas. Due to continuing growth in numbers of learners in the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering, it has been decided to introduce two new Departments. This will enhance the learner experience and ensure that learners are further supported in their educational journey. Department of Aerospace, Mechanical and Electronic Engineering will become the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering and the Department of Electronic Engineering and Communications. The Department of Science and Health will become the Department of Sport, Exercise and Health and the Department of Applied Science.

Figure 1.3.2.1 Organisational Chart (a) Faculty of Engineering and (b) Faculty of Science

Institute of Technology Carlow reviewed the requirements at a Senior Management level and applied for funding through the HEA Senior Academic Leadership Initiative but this application was unsuccessful.

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
Validation of various major, minor and special purpose programmes from NFQ levels 6- 9.	2020/ 2021	ITCarlow - The website of the Institute of Technology Carlow, based in the southeast of Ireland
Gestalt Institute of Ireland Linked Provision Review	November 2020	Gestalt-LP-Review-Report-2020-web.pdf (itcarlow.ie)
Tivoli Institute Linked Provision Review	November 2020	Tivoli-LP-Review-Report-2020-web.pdf (itcarlow.ie)
Strategic and Programmatic Reviews (Business & associated Lifelong Learning programmes)	May 2021	IT Carlow	Programmatic Reviews
Strategic and Programmatic Reviews (Science, and associated Lifelong Learning programmes)	June 2021	IT Carlow	Programmatic Reviews
Strategic and Programmatic Reviews (Engineering & associated Extended Campus and Lifelong Learning programmes)	June 2021	IT Carlow	Programmatic Reviews

Strategic and Programmatic Reviews (Wexford Campus)	June 2021	IT Carlow | Programmatic Reviews
Technological University International Panel Advisory Visit	July 2021	

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[1] 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	437	0	0	2	13	422	0
of those:							
On-site processes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desk reviews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virtual processes	437	0	0	2	13	422	0
Average panel size for each process type*	5	0	0	5	7	3	0

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	*Female*	*Other, or unspecified*			*UK, incl. NI*	*Other European*	*Outside of Europe*	*Similar*	*Different*
Chair	19	3	16	0	4	15	0	0	0	19	0
Secretary	19	6	13	0	19	0	0	0	0	19	0
Academic/Discipline Specific	67	39	28	0	0	53	12	0	2	64	3
Student Representative	13	6	7	0	0	13	0	0	0	12	1
QA	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Teaching & Learning	29	15	14	0	0	23	5	0	1	29	0
External Industry /Third Mission	60	32	28	0	0	58	1	0	1	0	58

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

2.0.1 Governance and Management of Quality

As reported in AQR 2019/20, Institute of Technology Carlow noted the significant challenges in the work based on the scale of its current provision in establishing a new academic delivery framework (ADF), which will be rolled out from 2021 onwards. The ADF project includes moving to semesterisation and notes that staff are very supportive of this approach. Institute of Technology Carlow noted a number of activities that are supporting this and will impact upon operational and Teaching & Learning activities. Institute of Technology Carlow also noted that it currently meets the TU criteria, with more than 4% of its learners enrolled at level 8 or higher undertaking research degrees at NFQ levels 9/10.

Moving from a yearlong delivery model to a semesterised system involves a fundamental review of all programmes and their aligned learning outcomes. In order to ensure the quality assurance of the transition and to support the implementation process, supporting staff were assigned to the project. These included an ADF Manager and a Management Information Systems (MIS) Manager. These posts are to support the implementation of the ADF during its roll out.

Academic staff involved in the programme redesign were supported by relevant training provided by the Teaching & Learning Centre. Academic staff from each faulty were designated as ADF coordinators and they were provided with extra training, through the Teaching & Learning Centre, to support design and implementation at the programme level. The ADF process was incorporated into the Programmatic Review which took place in June 2021. The role out will begin in September 2021.
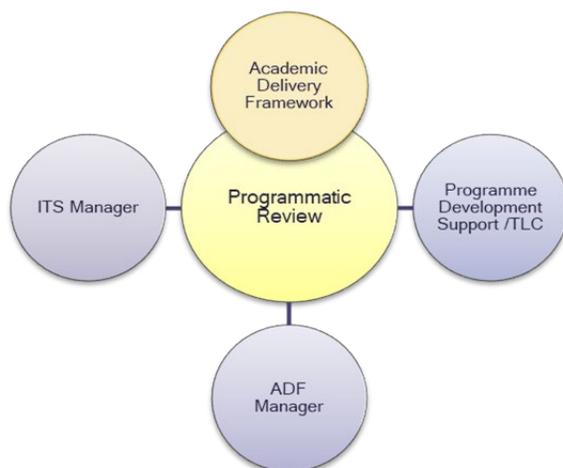
Figure 2.0.1 Support roles for the programmatic reviews and the implementation of the ADF process

2.0.2 Programmes of Education and Training

Institute of Technology Carlow continues to lead in the area of Recognised Prior learning (RPL) and micro credentials enabling learners to build their learning.

2.0.3 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

As outlined in Section 2.0.1 several roles were created to support the Academic Delivery Framework. staff education and upskilling remains a key strategic pillar in Institute of Technology Carlow. Details on the specific programmes offered by the Teaching & Learning Centre are given here:

Staff-faced Initiatives	Purpose	Contribution
1. Provision of accredited professional development modules to all staff (See Appendix A): • 135 participants • 12 cohorts • 96 hours of dissertation supervision	To support staff with their professional development needs through a flexible pathway of professional development modules.	Supporting staff with continuous development in the area of pedagogy and effective teaching practices.
2. Launch of the Institute of Technology Carlow Teaching and Learning Funding Grants 2020/2021, under the funding support of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (8 projects supported by €21,000 funding).	To stimulate small-scale Local Enhancement Projects (LEPs) and to support engagement with teaching and learning enhancement by individuals or small teams.	Providing an opportunity to support staff to engage with a teaching and learning enhancement initiative, particularly those staff who are new to such engagement. The grants demonstrate a commitment by the Institute to enhance the learner experience and to build institutional capacity in teaching and learning.
3. Seminar Series - six funded National Forum seminar events to	To provide staff with the opportunity to	Supported the dissemination of effective

support collaboration within the sector, as follows: • **The Business of Contract Cheating** (took place October 2020) • **How the National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education in Ireland can Inform Continuing Professional Development for Library Staff** (*scheduled for April 2020 but rearranged for 2020-21 due to Covid-19*) (took place April 2021); • **Engineering an Ethical Reboot: Embracing the Social Dimension of Engineering** (*scheduled for May 2020 but rearranged for 2021-22 due to Covid-19*); • **Exploring the Experiences of Black and Ethnic Minority Students in Higher Education** (took place November 2020); • **Decolonising the Curriculum** (took place November 2020); • **Social Action Models of Teaching and Learning in Technology Enhanced Learning Environments: Possibilities and Limitations** *(scheduled for June 2020 but rearranged for 2020-21 due to Covid-19) (took place April 2021).* Within the reporting period, funding was also approved for the running of seven National Forum seminars in the year 2021-22.	connect with colleagues and to focus on shared interests in both the research and practice of teaching and learning enhancement.	practice and the scholarship of teaching and learning.
4. Re-design and development of online support resources and	To continue to provide support for	Ensuring that staff have access to the necessary

learning modules specific to Blackboard Collaborate.	staff due to the increase in online teaching.	support in terms of online pedagogical knowledge and skills.
5. Roll out of Race and Ethnicity Webinar – 28th April 2021	To increase awareness around what and how we teach and whether it is representative of everyone's vision.	Ensuring that staff and students were supported in critically unpacking the ideologies which are embedded in their work, to deeply consider what they are teaching, why and how it frames the world.
6. Launch of large scale National Forum funding projects under the SATLE initiative (€100,000) to support staff to engage in professional development and collaborative activities.	To foster strong sectoral collaboration within and between departments, institutions and disciplines.	Providing a coherent basis to drive teaching and learning innovation and enhancement, by bringing together teaching and learning expertise, institutional priorities and dedicated funding to support strategic alignment.
7. Development of an Institute-wide Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy Programme Level Template for Programmatic Review 2021.	To provide staff with a standardized template when reviewing their programmes as part of the Programmatic Review process.	Supporting staff to consider particular items in relation to their programmatic reviews, inter alia, inclusive curriculum, internationalization, flexible modes of delivery, work-integrated learning etc.

1. Publication of Re-imagining Assessment Strategies documentation, exploring ways of embedding more inclusive assessment strategies as part of pedagogical practice.	To support staff to consider alternative ways of assessing that adopt a more inclusive approach and a more enhanced learning experience.	Providing staff with a resource document outlining alternative assessment practices of a more inclusive nature.
8. One-on-one consultation clinics with staff to support staff them to continue teaching in a blended environment.	To respond to individual staff members' needs in moving instruction online.	Providing ongoing support for all staff and addressing specific needs in relation to their practice.
9. Scheduled Staff Workshops and CPD Sessions (non-accredited - '20/'21) (See Appendix B). • 3 weeks of CPD offered (Set. 2020, Nov. 2020, Feb 2021). • 695 participants (a total of 66.75 hours of support offered)	To support staff professional development with a range of pedagogical and technological-related support sessions.	Ensuring that a community of learners and practitioners was created during the pandemic and the move to a more blended learning environment.
10. Scheduled bespoke workshops offered to our linked providers.	To provide specialised professional support for all linked providers.	Ensuring quality standards in terms of pedagogical practice amongst our linked providers.
11. Development of guidelines and supports for staff on teaching in a blended and online environment. Further development of our TLC Staff Hub with the	To provide online, user-friendly and accessible support material for all staff.	Establishing a consistent approach to our support offerings and creating and curating quality resources available to all staff.

curation and creation of resources.		
12. Support and Promotion of the Teaching Hero Awards as organised by the National Forum in conjunction with the Students' Union. 22 Teaching Heroes awarded from across the Institute.	To recognise and celebrate individual Faculty members' contributions to teaching and learning	Celebrating good practice amongst those involved in teaching and learning directly.
2. Workshop on Strategies for an Inclusive Curriculum: adopting a UDL approach, facilitated by AHEAD – 18th Feb 2021	To provide training for staff across all Faculties on embedding EDI principles and practices within their teaching, learning and assessment strategies.	Ensuring that staff have the necessary knowledge and competencies to embed inclusivity within their practice.
13. Roll-out of two student surveys on experiences of learning remotely in conjunction with Students' Union and Student Services (Dec. 2020 and June 2021)	To capture the lived experience of students in the move to online teaching.	To research and disseminate findings in the area of emergency remote teaching and learning by adding to the body of knowledge in this area and further informing future practice and the design of support initiatives.
14. Curation and creation of support resources on EDI made available on TLC Staff Hub.	To respond to staff members' needs in developing a more inclusive approach	Providing ongoing support for all staff and addressing specific needs in terms of

	to curriculum design and development.	their practice from an inclusive lens.
15. Re-design of the TLC Staff Hub.	To support all staff with the re-design of resources on TLC Staff Hub on Blackboard to make it more accessible.	To enhance the user experience of TLC Staff Hub.

Table 2.0.3.1   Teaching and Learning Centre Supports for staff 2020/21

2.0.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Through the Teaching and Learning Centre, the Institute supports all learners with a range of academic supports with details of the uptake for the reporting period given here:

Learner-faced Initiatives	Purpose	Contribution
1. Supplementary Academic Support • 50 requests for supplementary support responded to; • 409 hours of supplementary support offered to 342 students from all campuses.	To support learners who are, for various reasons, experiencing challenges within a particular discipline area. These requests came from lecturers, Heads of Departments, and directly from students via the Teaching and Learning Centre.	Supporting students who are experiencing difficulty in particular discipline areas to achieve their programme and module learning outcomes.
2. Academic Writing Centre • Year '20/'21: 119 individual students attending one-on-one sessions at least once in the term.	To support learners Institute-wide with the development of their academic	Ensuring that a high level of academic integrity is supported through the development of critical writing skills.

	writing and critical thinking skills.	
3. Provision of a series of themed academic writing sessions over 6 weeks (Term 1) - 12 different themes covered (all sessions recorded and made available on TLC Student Hub).	To support learners on a range of academic writing related topics.	Ensuring a high level of academic writing for learners across the Institute.
4. Roll-out of a Postgraduate Winter Writing Week	To support postgraduate learners with the development of their academic writing skills.	To enhance the learner experience for postgraduate learners.
5. Maths Support Centre • Year '20/'21: 67 individual students attending one-on-one sessions at least once in the term.	To support learners Institute-wide with the development of their mathematical and numeracy skills and comprehension.	Ensuring that all learners are afforded the opportunity to avail of additional, individual support in the area of numeracy skills.
6. Preliminary implementation of Blackboard Ally and development of supporting training resources.	To ensure online environment is highly accessible.	Ensuring that inclusivity is supported within all aspects of the curriculum.
7. Implementation of the March to Exams initiative - a series of supervised online study sessions to support students prior to exams.	To provide supervised study sessions for students online.	Supporting students to come together and study in a safe space.
8. Provision of an accredited professional development teaching and learning module to all research postgraduate students (32	To support research students engaging in teaching practice.	Providing continuous development in the area of pedagogy and effective teaching practices for

participants on the module in '20/'21).		teaching postgraduate students so that a quality learning environment was created for all undergraduate students.
9. Establishment of the Hear to Help Initiative, connecting PG students with UGs to support them on a personal, social and academic basis.	The aim of the initiative was to support all learners of the Institute by bringing undergraduate and postgraduate learners together in an effort to support each other through personal, social and academic stressors.	Raising awareness of the existing support systems that exist for learners within the Institute; supporting both social and academic integration in the current virtual learning environment; creating a support network for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
10. Provision of an Online Induction programme – Academic Success, Skills for Learning, Skills for Life, hosted through TLC Student Hub.	To support all students transitioning to higher education with the development of their study skills in a flexible manner.	As part of our student success strategy, providing a self-paced, online programme which supports students with the challenges of transitioning to higher education.
11. Establishment of the Ask and Answer sessions, in conjunction with the Students' Union.	To create support sessions for students where they can come together in an online environment and ask any nature of question, academic	Providing a regular forum for students to come together and seek support with any aspect of their college life.

	or otherwise, to enhance their learning experience.	
12. Establishment of the Ask and Answer sessions, for mature and lifelong learning students, in conjunction with the Students' Union.	To create support sessions for mature and lifelong learning students where they can come together in an online environment and ask any nature of question, academic or otherwise, to enhance their learning experience.	Providing a regular forum for students to come together and seek support with any aspect of their college life.
13. Development and roll-out of PACE – a bespoke, online Institute resource on Information Literacy, available to all students on TLC Student Hub and the Library website. Developed in conjunction with the Library.	To develop and provide a suite of online modules for all learners to assist them in their studies.	To support all learners to enhance their academic and information literacy competencies.
14. Re-design of the TLC Student Hub.	To support all learners with the re-design of resources on TLC Student Hub on Blackboard to make it more learner accessible.	To enhance the overall learner experience.

Table 2.0.4.1 Learner Supports provided by the Teaching and Learning Centre 2020/21

2.0.5 International Update

Carlow International College of Technology, located in the city of Zhengzhou in Henan province, has been approved for an annual intake of learners from September 2022. The new

college will initially deliver three degree programmes: a BSc (Honours) in Brewing and Distilling; a BSc (Honours) in Sustainable Farm Management and Agribusiness and a BSc (Honours) in Software Development.

Carlow International College of Technology will run in partnership with Henan University of Animal Husbandry and Economy (HUAHE). Its establishment, with the backing of the Chinese Ministry of Education, is the first ever endorsement given by the Chinese government to an Irish institute of technology. The cooperation and advice received from the Embassy of Ireland in China and from Education in Ireland was critical to the success of this application

Carlow International College of Technology is the culmination of a three-year due diligence process that saw a series of site visits by senior academics between HUAHE and Institute of Technology Carlow. The application process including meetings with a validation panel nominated by the Chinese ministry prior to application approval.

IT Carlow Vice-President for Development and Research Dr Declan Doyle and Donal McAlister, International Affairs Manager, led the application process and the Policy implementation was overseen by David Denieffe Vice President for Academic Affairs, while a number of site visits and the validation meetings were chaired by the Quality Assurance Team. This is supported by a robust Quality Assurance framework articulated in the Policies and Procedures for Linked Provision and Transnational Provision. This process demonstrated the integration of the Quality Assurance processes with the development of new initiatives internationally.

2.0.6 An Evaluation of the Efficacy of a Virtual Institutional Review Process- EQAF 2020 – Joint Project QQI and Institute of Technology Carlow

As Institute of Technology Carlow was the first HEI in Ireland to have a virtual Cinnte Review, this experience was captured. Reviewing what the impacts of a virtual review process with QQI, Marie Gould QQI presented the outputs from research undertaken at the EQAF 2020 conference. This can be viewed here.

2.0.7 Biennial Linked Provider Seminar

Pictured at the 2019 IT Carlow biennial seminar, from left: Lt Col Rory McCorley, Registrar, Irish Defence Forces; Anne Meaney, Head of Extended Campus, IT Carlow; Capt Emer O'Kelly, Assistant Registrar, Irish Defence Forces

In March 2021 Institute of technology Carlow hosted its Biennial Linked Provider Seminar. The *2021: Pivot in a Pandemic - Linking Education, Challenges and Opportunities* seminar explored the various challenges presented and experiences learned in higher education as the sector continues to deliver programmes of study via online platforms. This biennial linked provision series is an opportunity for Institute of Technology Carlow to further engage with its partners and provides an opportunity for our linked providers to speak about their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. Details of the Agenda can be found here.

2.0.8 Report to Governing Body

The inaugural *Annual Linked Provision Report* was presented to Governing Body in May 2021. As the number of linked providers continues to grow, this annual report ensures that Governing Body are informed and updated to ensure a quality learner education.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Section 43A of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 specifically empowers QQI to prosecute those who facilitate academic cheating. The legislation was commenced in November 2019 and it is now deemed to be a criminal offence to assist another person to cheat in an academic setting. The provisions are summarised on the QQI website https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx. This is a new statutory function for QQI and much work is required in this area for QQI as a regulator.

QQI has also established a National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) as a result of this new legal provision. The network is comprised of and driven by representatives from HE public and private providers, USI and other stakeholders. Dr William Kelly, DCU, is the Chair and Dr Yvonne Kavanagh, Institute of Technology Carlow; Aisling Reast, RCSI; Maegan O'Connor, USI; and Dr Violetta Morari, MTU, all chair active working groups. NAIN has published national definitions (a lexicon); tools to gather data on levels and types of activity in the broader sense of cheating; and is working on an interim set of guidelines as enhancement tools and initiatives to support education providers in preventing and dealing with academic misconduct.

In terms of supporting academic integrity in Institute of Technology Carlow, a number of initiatives have been implemented, including the provision of an extended number of academic writing sessions for all students, offered through the Institute's Academic Writing Centre. These one-on-one sessions were offered on all campuses during the reporting period and were widely publicised through the Institute's VLE. To support this, additional academic writing resources were both created and curated and made available to students on the VLE.

As well as one-on-one support sessions, bespoke group support sessions were offered to students, including those of our collaborative partners. An example of this was a session on Academic Writing for Dissertations, offered to students within the Defence Forces. A similar session was offered to final-year students in Engineering over a three-week period to support them in the drafting of their theses.

As part of the National Forum's SATLE 2019 initiative, the Institute secured funding two projects focussing on academic writing and information literacy. The focus of one of the projects, Fostering Deliberate Practice in Critical Analytical Writing for Postgraduate Learners, is on supporting postgraduate students with their academic writing. This Teaching and Learning initiative is a human-centred design (HCD) study in which an evidence-informed digital system to enable self and peer assessment and support a community of practice will be co-created

with students and supervisors attached to Institute of Technology Carlow's research centres in computer science (gameCORE) and applied social sciences (socialCORE).

The other funded project, is an Information Literacy project which centres on the development of a self-directed blended learning information literacy programme aimed at Institute of Technology Carlow students transitioning to higher education. Its aim is to support students to develop their literacy and information skills and empower them to improve their critical reading, writing, referencing skills. When completed, the programme will be available to all learners and on all campuses and hosted on our VLE platform, which will allow for a flexible approach. Both projects were reviewed by an international panel in 2020/21.

Extensive support on academic integrity and the drafting of alternative assessments was provided to staff from March 2020 and support sessions were offered to staff and students on conducting open-book and remote assessments. A range of guidance documents and supports on maintaining academic integrity were created and made available to both staff and students on the Institute's virtual learning platform.

The first National Academic integrity week took place in October 2020. Institute of Technology Carlow undertook a week of activities and talks to learners and staff informing them about Academic Integrity. The Keynote Speaker was Professor Thomas Lancaster who talked about The Business of Contract Cheating. This was funded under the National Forum for Teaching and Learning Seminar Series.

In conjunction with Academic Integrity Week, Institute of Technology Carlow ran a survey together with the ITCSU to see what students thought about Academic Integrity. The Word Cloud in Figure 2.1.1 summarises the outputs.

Figure 2.1.1 Summary of thoughts on 'What Academic Integrity means to you' survey with Institute of Technology Carlow learners in October 2020

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1   QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
1	Academic Delivery Framework	Work continues on the rollout of the new ADF with learner support key.
2	Review of Operations of Centres for Research & Enterprise (CORE)	CORE are fundamental research units within Faculties. The aim of the CORE is to foster and grow research clusters within a prescribed area. CORE's are aligned to specific research objectives and these will be reviewed in line with the Professional Research & Dev and Research (PSS) Strategic Review – June 2019 plan.
3	CORU	Work continues on alignment of policies and procedures associated with the Professional Social Care Practice Quality Management System
5	SocialCORE Level 10	As the research in the Field of SocialCORE grows, having progression routes for learners to Level 10 is required.
6	Technological University Alignment of Policies, Procedures and Processes	Work is ongoing on identifying and progressing key requirements in term of Policies and Procedures required for the new organisation.

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
Defence Forces Linked Provision Review	October 2021	2016
HEA Technological University Visit	January 2022	NA
CORU Site Visit	March 2022	NA
CORE Strategic Review	2021/2022	Professional Research & Development and Research (PSS) Strategic Review – June 2019

3.2.2   Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Due to designation as a Technological University, the review schedule will include an Institutional Review within 18 months of designation.

4.0   Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1:

Pandemic pedagogies: the impact of emergency remote teaching on part-time flexible learners in Ireland

Survey of part-time learners

From January to March 2021, the Faculty of Lifelong Learning at Institute of Technology Carlow undertook a study of part-time learners enrolled on our programmes. The purpose of this study was to gather and analyse data from our learners, to better understand their needs and to learn about how the shift to ERT (emergency remote teaching) affected them. This study has potential implications for our future delivery strategies, our instructional design, and our offerings beyond the pandemic. While the pandemic has made it clear that we must be attentive to the diverse emotions and life experiences of our students (Corbera et al., 2020), we tentatively suggest that remote teaching and learning offer some potential for increased inclusivity. Large volumes of literature suggests that the transition to online teaching can be successful, provided that teachers and students are adequately prepared and supported (Lemay et al., 2021). Studies have shown that there can be positive impacts from online learning, particularly for access to instruction in low socio-economic and developing countries (Smidt et al., 2017).

Every HE Institution will have its own myriad individualised needs; however, there is a common question that unites us all: how do we provide teaching and assessment to students in a manner that is accessible, fair, equitable, and provides the best learning whilst acknowledging the temporary nature of the pivot? We must learn from and share best practices across the sector. More than that, we aim to identify inclusive practices and approaches that can not only be used in any future emergency that would make on-campus teaching difficult but that may change part time HE for the better as part of the new normal.

Methodology and methods

The value of empirical research into adult learning cannot be underestimated, as it offers the possibility of a deep critical assessment of methods and strategies. An analysis of students' experiences, both academically and personally, is key to understanding the challenges and affordances of ERT during COVID-19 and beyond. In January 2021 we hosted an anonymous online survey and invited all part-time learners enrolled in our

faculty to respond. Our study was designed to ethically examine the experiences of our learners in a safe and inclusive way. We sent an email to all enrolled part-time learners with an invitation to participate. We clarified that participation was completely voluntary, anonymous, and not incentivised in any way. The survey included an invitation to follow-up focus groups. Over 400 respondents completed our survey. The participants were all enrolled as part-time learners, largely from the Southeast region where our Institute is positioned within an area of high demographic growth as detailed by Census 2016. A range of closed questions provided us with quantifiable data about the challenges of remote learning, while open-ended questions permitted respondents to provide detailed information and in-depth descriptions of their experiences. Two focus groups followed, which allowed respondents to comment in greater depth and to give more detail and context to their experiences.

We are keenly aware that in educational research, those who are the subjects of discussion are often excluded from the dialogue about themselves (Lynch & O'Neill, 1994). Rather than solely drawing inferences from our survey, and in that way having 'expert' interpretations of powerless research subjects, we wished to facilitate the voices of our learners and to empower them to be active participants of this research through the focus groups, therefore allowing respondents to participate more fully in this research and to discuss and share their experiences in detail.

This paper attempts to provide a qualitative analysis of our study's findings. A driving aim of qualitative work is to attempt to understand a social experience in the terms of those involved (Cooley, 2013). Our study was designed to help us explore the responses and narrative provided by participants and attempt to connect these to broader personal, social, and economic needs so that we can provide a deep insight into the strategies and action taken by the Faculty of Lifelong Learning to facilitate ERT and the transition to remote learning. The sample is limited to one institution, which limits the generalisability of the findings. However, the study provides important insight into learner experiences. In addition, while students were encouraged to discuss their experiences in greater detail in

the open-ended questions of the survey, and later invited to discuss them in focus groups, the extent to which they participated varied.

Findings

The information garnered from our study captures the essence of the challenges and opportunities presented by remote teaching and learning over the past academic year. Here we have successfully employed an empirical approach to investigate our institutional response to the COVID 19 pandemic and the real-life context and consequences for our part-time learners. Our analysis of the study has yielded five themes, based on the data from our survey and learners' comments in focus groups: quality of instruction on how to access online classes, engagement with or isolation from peers, benefits of remote learning, drawbacks of remote learning, and potential future institutional supports to assist in remote or blended learning.

Conclusion

This study has provided the impetus for our faculty to engage in a reimagining of our provision, as the benefits for remote and hybrid models become apparent. Our findings mirror large bodies of emergent research, which suggest that 'online teaching and learning may proffer certain added benefits that could even lead to better course outcomes, notwithstanding technological and socio-economic issues faced by disenfranchised and marginalised social groups that limit equitable access to education' (Lemay et al., 2021). The major difficulty of access experienced by our part-time learners was poor internet connection and while this is outside of our control in HE, the study has underlined the importance of facilitating learners in ways that work with poor internet connections; downloadable content, recorded lectures, asynchronous activities, etc.

Online, hybrid and blended learning demand that greater attention is paid to accessibility and inclusivity, two of our core concerns, and this study has highlighted that further research is needed into the perspectives and experiences of all our learners. Work is ongoing within and beyond our faculty to ensure that the needs of our part-time learners take centre-stage in the design of our teaching practice going forward. In the responses

to this study, our learners have foregrounded the importance of uniform policies across content design and delivery, communication, and supports.

While, as Williamson et al. (2020) have noted, 'Education has become an emergency matter, and along with it, educational technologies have been positioned as a frontline emergency service', the immediate focus of our efforts should be to promote the psychosocial health of our learners as they navigate the current emergency conditions. We suggest here that the embedding of digital technologies in our education systems must include care-full inclusion of the social aspect of student engagement and interaction.

This time provides an opportunity to foster a culture of care, where we can 'refocus on what is most important, redefine excellence in teaching and research, and in doing so make academic practice more respectful and sustainable' (Corbera et al., 2020). Much reflection in our faculty on the life experiences of our part-time learners and the conflicting emotions around the on-line experience has encouraged us to reconsider our teaching plans. In this paper, we wished to highlight the voices of our learners and report on the challenges and affordances of remote part-time learning. As one of the first wide-scale studies of part-time learners during the pandemic in Ireland, our contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning is centred on the unique praxis of emergency ERT. We hope that our findings contribute to a richer picture of part-time learners and their concerns, which may feed into dialogic teaching and learning, putting learners' needs to the forefront of our provision and planning.

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Case Study 2:

Implementation of the 'Hear to Help' Peer Support Initiative

Overview

The 'Hear to Help' Learner Support Initiative was developed as part of the Institute's suite of Covid-19 support initiatives. The aim of the initiative was to support all learners of the Institute by bringing undergraduate and postgraduate learners together, through a peer network, in an effort to support each other through personal, social and academic stressors. It was envisaged that the initiative would create the opportunity for more

experienced students to provide advice, guidance and support, using the Institute's supported online platforms.

Rationale for the Initiative

Findings from an Institute-wide survey conducted in December 2020, by the Students' Union, the Teaching and Learning Centre and Student Services, revealed that a large majority of students identified counselling as a one of the most required support measures. The Institute already offered a counselling service, the provision of which had moved online. As demand for this service had not increased significantly in the first term of the academic year, it was deemed that the request for counselling may have had a broader interpretation for students, and may have included such issues as wellbeing and resilience support. Based on this consideration, one of the actions and recommendations that emerged from the survey analysis was to put in place a more formalised support structure for students and from this the Hear to Help Initiative emerged.

Aims of the Proposed Initiative

The aims of the proposed initiative were as follows:

- To support and empower undergraduate students to overcome challenges presented by the pandemic restrictions;
- To create a safe space for students to voice their concerns with a peer;
- To further promote learner engagement and progression by encouraging students to be more active in their learning;
- To raise awareness of the support systems that existed for learners within the Institute;
- To support both social and academic integration during the online pivot;
- To create a support network for both undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- To mitigate aspects of social isolation created by the pandemic through the promotion and nurturing of a sense of belonging amongst both cohorts of learners;
- To offer specific academic support within a range of disciplines;
- To complement existing Institute practices to support learner engagement;
- To enhance the overall learning experience for all students.

Details of the Initiative

Coordinated by the Institute's Teaching and Learning Centre, the focus of the eight-week long initiative, which ran from 1st February to the 26th March, was to bring undergraduate and postgraduate learners together so as to support each other in a number of ways. At the outset, an invitation to be involved was issued to all postgraduate researchers within the Institute. Thirteen postgraduates signed up and each one was allocated between eight and nine undergraduate class groups. The initiative coordinator made use of the existing class rep network to connect the undergraduates with the postgraduates and 128 class groups were involved. For their involvement in the initiative, the postgraduates were paid 3hrs a week in accordance with tutor rates.

As part of the initial training for the postgraduate students, an induction session was held to explore issues such as confidentiality, support and trust and to work through the practicalities of the initiative. Each postgraduate was then tasked with meeting each class group online for 15 minutes each week, in what were termed 'micro-sessions'. The times for these meet-ups was to be negotiated between the class groups and the postgraduate students themselves. These 'micro-sessions' were deemed as safe spaces, in which undergraduates could relay any concerns they had, and the postgraduate students would listen and support them by addressing their concerns and navigating them to support resources available. In tandem, the thirteen postgraduates met with the initiative coordinator once a week for approximately one hour to relay challenges that had been raised by the class and to assist with arranging academic support where necessary and appropriate. The initiative coordinator was then able to follow up by notifying the relevant Heads of Department and functional areas of any issues that were coming through from the groups.

Outcomes of the Initiative

The success of the initiative was that it provided an extra channel for undergraduates to express their concerns and to get support from peers. Undergraduate students who, due to being offsite, may not have easily reached out to the relevant support structures, were now able to bring their concerns to a postgraduate who would then be able to advise them accordingly. Because of the way the initiative was implemented, it meant that

undergraduates had a direct line to the postgraduates and they knew that their concerns would be acted upon promptly.

Although the main aim of the initiative was to support and empower undergraduate students to overcome any Covid-19-related challenges, it also created significant benefits for the postgraduate students as the weekly check-ins with the coordinator became for them an important space to connect and to create a supportive community. The impact of this was felt long beyond the initiative itself as they continued to meet more informally and provide support for each other. The group of postgraduates have since presented their experiences of being involved in the initiative at the *GTA Developers Forum* [*online*], University of Warwick, on 22nd September 2021 and as part of Institute of Technology Carlow's CPD Week. In addition, a co-authored paper on their experiences of being part of the initiative has been accepted for publication in the [Postgraduate Pedagogies Journal].

Case study 3:

Development of the Lecture Recording Policy to enhance quality in the digital environment

Access to lecture recordings is both valued by, and of value to, learners. It is particularly important in the context of hybrid learning, the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities (as outlined in the *Learner Disability and Learning Support Policy*). It also supports Institute of Technology Carlow's *Strategic Plan 2019-2023*, including this aspect of Goal 3 of *Our Learners: Embrace new and emerging technologies and increase digital capacity and blended learning options on all relevant programmes and cross-campus*.

In order to ensure the quality of access a *Lecture Recording Policy* was developed by a working group of the Teaching, Learning and Support Services Committee of Academic Council, chaired by Damien Raftery. The policy was developed in order to enable the recording and sharing of lectures to flexibly support learners to engage with their studies by enabling lecturers to record online and face-to-face lectures and integrate this activity into their teaching practice. The policy applies to both online and face-to-face lectures (and recording of labs, tutorials other classes, as well as screencasts and videos for

asynchronous use). The appropriate use of technology to support and enhance a learner-centred experience in higher education is central to this aim. Recording lectures provides learners with useful learning resources which can be flexibly viewed both off campus and on demand. This has advantages for hybrid learning, accessibility, revision and re-use of materials. However, it supplements rather than replaces attendance at lectures, which provides the optimum learning experience, enabling engagement with the lecturer and other learners in real-time.

Process & Outcome

The working group consisted of academic staff and management, student services and student representatives. Having researched and consulted with staff and students, the group developed a draft policy which was debated at Committee level. Further wider consultation with reviews and discussions over evolving drafts led to the development of a nuanced policy approved by Academic Council and Governing Body, which aimed to balance the needs, safety and comfort of students and staff.

This policy provides guidance and clarity to both learners and academics on what to expect from engaging with the digital environment. It ensures that the primary focus is on pedagogy and real-time engagement with lecturers and peers, while providing a framework to support recording of lectures. Important principles include lecturer control of recordings and respect for copyright and data protection. The policy was instrumental in enabling the widespread recording of online lectures: from 1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021, there were approximately nineteen thousand, approximately 860 per week of term. These recordings corresponded to a total recorded time of approximately 17,000 hours. Most recordings were one hour or shorter, with a 52-minute average duration.

For more detail on this policy development journey, see a case study prepared for the National Forum for Teaching & Learning which can be accessed here.

APPENDIX A: ACCREDITED ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES 2020/21

Programme/Module(s)	No. Participants	No. of cohorts	Credits	Comments
Teaching and Learning 1 (Foundation)	47	4	10	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants and postgraduate research students
Teaching and Learning 2 (Advanced)	31	2	10	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants and ETB Laois-Offaly
Assessment and Feedback	11	1	10	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants
Curriculum Design	15	1	10	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants
Education Research Methods	6	1	10	Existing staff, new staff,

				external applicants
Technology-enhanced Learning	6	1	10	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants
Research Supervision	11	1	10	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants, linked providers
Masters Dissertation	8	1	20	Existing staff, new staff, external applicants
Total no. of participants/cohorts	135	12		

APPENDIX B: STAFF WORKSHOPS 2020/21

Workshop Title	Hours	Date	Participant

			Number s
Collaborate Overview	1	07/09/2020	22
Intro to Library Resources	1	07/09/2020	6
Collaborate Review	1.5	07/09/2020	23
Instructional Design for Inclusivity	1	07/09/2020	4
Online Quizzes	1.5	07/09/2020	21
Online Learning: the Learner Perspective	1	07/09/2020	6
Intro to Library Resources (LLL & EC)	1	07/09/2020	7
Flipped Learning	1	08/09/2020	22
Supporting Online Engagement	1	08/09/2020	23
Collaborate Breakout Groups	0.5	08/09/2020	22
Intro to Library Resources (Bus & Hum; Wex)	1	08/09/2020	3
Collaborate 1:1 Clinics	0.25	08/09/2020	4
Instructional Design for Inclusivity	1	08/09/2020	8
Collaborate Overview	1.5	08/09/2020	23
Maintaining Attendance in Bb	0.5	09/09/2020	21
Collaborate 1:1 Clinics	0.25	09/09/2020	6
TEAMS	1.5	09/09/2020	23
Screencasts	1.5	09/09/2020	23
Intro to Library Resources (Sci)	1	09/09/2020	5
Talking Teaching	1	10/09/2020	12
Sharing Good Practice & Experiences	1	10/09/2020	12
Collaborate 1:1 Clinics	0.25	10/09/2020	3
Collaborate Breakout Groups	0.5	10/09/2020	18
Intro to Library Resources (Eng)	1	10/09/2020	1
Supporting Online Engagement	1	10/09/2020	11
Reflecting on Engagement	1	02/11/2020	2
Promoting Online Engagement	1	02/11/2020	6
eBooks from the Library	1	02/11/2020	1
Learning from the Learners	1	02/11/2020	2
Reconnecting with Collaborate	1	02/11/2020	2
Promoting Online Engagement	1	03/11/2020	3
Good Practice in the Classroom	1	03/11/2020	5

eBooks from the Library	1	03/11/2020	3
Screencasting Experiences and Tips	1.5	03/11/2020	3
Reflecting on Engagement	1	03/11/2020	1
Intro to Collaborate (Overview)	1	04/11/2020	2
Revisiting OneNote	1	04/11/2020	8
Learning from the Learners	1	04/11/2020	6
Collaborate Clinics - 1:1	0.25	04/11/2020	5
Teaching Live Online	1.5	04/11/2020	3
VLE/CRS, Academic Integrity: Oxymoron?	1	05/11/2020	4
Collaborate Clinics - 1:1	0.25	05/11/2020	2
Talking Teaching	1	05/11/2020	3
Library: Online Resources	1	15/02/2021	13
NFSS - Internationalisation at Home	1.5	15/02/2021	9
Backward Design and Learning Outcomes	1	15/02/2021	24
Screencasting: Challenges & Opportunities	1	15/02/2021	13
Accepting and Grading Assignments Online with Turnitin	1.5	16/02/2021	31
Engagement and Learning with Bb Quizzes	1	16/02/2021	14
Learning from the Learners	1	16/02/2021	9
Library: eBooks & eJournals	1	16/02/2021	6
MCQ's: Multiple Choices of Good Design	1	17/02/2021	21
Inclusive Pedagogy: Teaching Tips	1	17/02/2021	12
Engagement, Assessment and Feedback of Practicals through Sound and Vision	1	17/02/2021	14
Assessment: Exploring Practice and Possibilities	1	17/02/2021	17
Library: Online Resources	1	17/02/2021	8
Online Quizzes with Bb Tests	1.5	17/02/2021	17
Engagement and Learning with Bb Quizzes	1	18/02/2021	9
NFSS: Beyond Traditional Assessment: Covid-19 CreateAthon of Eportfolio Assessment	2	18/02/2021	16
Strategies for an Inclusive Curriculum: Adopting a UDL Approach	1.5	18/02/2021	16
Inputting Assessment Results into WFF	1	18/02/2021	7
Online Engagement	1	08/03/2021	19
OneDrive	1	08/03/2021	9

Turnitin	1.5	09/03/2021	13
OneDrive	1	09/03/2021	8
	66.75	Totals =	695