

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
Munster Technological University
Reporting Period 2020-2021

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

**Annual Quality Report for
Munster Technological University**

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2020-2021

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

Submission Process and Timeline

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

Completing the AQR

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

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

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

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

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

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

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - <i>Internal QA Framework</i>	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - <i>Programme Development and Delivery</i>	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - <i>QA of Research Activities and Programmes</i>				
8.0 - <i>Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
5.0 - <i>Staff Recruitment, Development and Support</i>	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - <i>Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i>	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3.0 - <i>Learner Resources and Supports</i>	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - <i>Information and Data Management</i>	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - <i>Public Information and Communication</i>	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - <i>Programme Delivery and Development</i>	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - <i>Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>				
9.0 - <i>Details of Arrangements with Third Parties</i>			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - <i>Programme Development and Delivery</i>	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - <i>Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - <i>QA of Research Activities and Programmes</i>	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Munster Technological University for the reporting period **1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021**.

Note: Cognisant of the establishment of Munster Technological University, the reporting period for the final AQRs of the previous Institute of Technology Tralee and Cork Institute of Technology reporting period was agreed with QQI as 1 September 2019 - 31 December 2020. This, the first AQR for Munster Technological University, covers the reporting period 1 January 2021 - 31 August 2021.

This report is submitted on Friday 8th April 2022.

The AQR has been approved by Dr Áine Ní Shé and Dr Brendan O Donnell, Vice Presidents Academic Affairs & Registrar and is submitted by Anne Marie Flynn.

Munster Technological University (MTU) is a multi-campus technological university, contributing to the South West region through the provision of academic programmes which support student development and opportunities, education and research. MTU has an extensive and impressive regional footprint with six campuses in Cork and Kerry, and a student body of 18,000. MTU supports entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation, and serves the community and public interest.

Acting together, the former Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee have built on their individual strengths, their extensive experience and passion for education and entrepreneurship to create MTU. MTU was established on January 1st 2021. MTU has an ethos of excellence, an ambition to serve the needs of its community and region, and a vision of higher education provision that is innovative, responsive, entrepreneurial and forward-looking. The key characteristics of the University are outlined in Table 1.

The MTU campus locations consist of, MTU Bishopstown, MTU Crawford College of Art and Design, MTU Cork School of Music, National Maritime College of Ireland, MTU Kerry North Campus, and MTU Kerry South Campus.

MTU makes major higher education awards at all levels of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) to PhD (NFQ Level 10), as well as minor and special purpose awards. It also makes joint awards with University College Cork.

The statutory functions of the Institutes of Technology under the 'IoT Acts' 1992 - 2006 included provision of courses of study as well as research, consultancy and development work "for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the College". The mission of the Institutes was professionally orientated with a strong focus on technology, science and applied research.

The Technological Universities Act of 2018 continues to identify an emphasis on career education, technology and regional offerings as distinctive features and focal points of technological university provision in Ireland.

At the same time, driving forward internationalisation is central to MTU’s ambitions. The University’s vision for internationalisation is to develop its graduates as global citizens with the necessary abilities and confidence to live, work, achieve and participate fully in an international environment.

MTU				
Vision	Leading transformation through education			
Values	Inclusive	Engaging	Dynamic	Bold
Mission	To lead change and, through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world			
Key Characteristics	Person-centred	Open and outward-facing	Commitment to excellence and quality	Commitment to internationalisation
Functions²	- Provision of teaching and learning- Support entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation - Provision of research		- Support student development and student opportunities - Serve the community and public interest	

Table 1 MTU Vision, Values, Mission, Key Characteristics, Functions (as set out in *Establishing the Munster Technological University* (2019))

MTU’s professional focus is reflected in the broad spectrum of its provision which encompasses both academic programmes and craft and degree apprenticeship programmes leading to both further and higher education awards. This is further reflected in the remarkable extent of professional recognition and accreditation achieved by MTU programmes across all discipline areas and is also obvious in the manifold professional development offerings for mature, work-based learners, be it through bespoke delivery of modules and short courses at company premises or through the broad and varied portfolio of part-time and evening programmes. Continuous industry input was, and continues to be, a feature of programme design and emphasis on work placement in many higher education programmes across all academic fields.

Lastly, MTU’s research has achieved significant national and international impact, as evidenced by a range of recognised key performance indicators including success rates in competitive funding calls, citation rates of scholarly outputs, profile of international collaborators and number of research contracts with industry. The impact profile affirms the excellence of MTU’s research activity across the continuum from fundamental to commercialisation.

² As defined by the Technological University Act 2018

MTU Research Centres and Groups:

BIOEXPLORE research focuses on developing and applying the best platform technologies available to detect and treat both **human** and **animal** related diseases.

Website: [MTU BioExplore](#)

CAPPA research focuses on the next generation of **photonic devices, materials, and applications**.

Website: [MTU CAPPA](#)

Centre for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development (CEED)

Website: [MTU CEED](#)

Centre for Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID (IMAR)

Website: [MTU IMAR](#)

Clean Technology research focuses on promoting evidence-based **sustainability**.

Website: [MTU Clean Technology Centre](#)

Ed Tech and E-learning research focuses on the impactful interaction between **technology** and **learning**.

Website: [MTU Technology Enhanced Learning](#)

Halpin research focuses on opportunities in the global **maritime** domain.

Website: [MTU Halpin](#)

Hincks research focuses on **entrepreneurship** in all its forms.

Website: [MTU Hincks](#)

MeSSO research focuses on **mechanical** and **energy** systems and applications.

Website: [MTU MeSSO](#)

Nimbus research focuses on **Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS)** and **Internet of Things (IoT)** applications

Website: [MTU Nimbus](#)

NutRI research focuses on **Food Innovation, Food Microbiology** and **Public Health Nutrition**.

Website: [MTU NutRI](#)

Process Innovation Engineering Research Group (PiERG) research focuses on providing solutions to the **Pharma Engineering** sector through its combined expertise in the development of predictive models and industrial pharmaceutical processing.

Ríomh research focuses on the application of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to help solve some of our most pressing **Cybersecurity** challenges.

Website: [MTU Ríomh](#)

Enterprise Engagement and Experiential Learning Research Group (E3LRG) focuses on viewing the **workplace** as a valid and valuable centre for **learning**.

Website: [MTU Extended Campus - Enterprise Engagement and Experiential Learning Group](#)

Health Exercise and Sport Research Group (HEX-Spo) research focuses on **exercise** and **sports performance** optimisation.

Irish Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (IAHT)

Website: [MTU IrishAcademyofHospitalityandTourism](#)

Shannon ABC – Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre

Website: [MTU Shannon ABC](#)

Space and Astronomy Research and Policy Group (SARP) at Blackrock Castle Observatory focuses on public engagement and research through **astronomy** and **space**.

Website: [MTU SARP](#)

The **Software Innovation and Machine Intelligence Applications Group (SIGMA)** explores how Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning can be applied to solve real world problems.

Website: [MTU SIGMA](#)

The **Sustainable Infrastructure Research & Innovation Group (SIRIG)** research focuses on **sustainable** infrastructure developments.

Website: [MTU SIRIG](#)

The **V-LINC** research group focuses on enhancing regional competitiveness through **ecosystem mapping, analysis, and evaluation**.

Website: [MTU V-LINC](#)

UNESCO – UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation

Website: [MTU UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation](#)

This report was developed, collated and editorially overseen by the Registrar's Offices. Material from previous AQR submissions made by both former Institutions was brought forward into this submission, particularly for Part A, where it continues to represent the position of MTU during the reporting period.

Inputs for the individual sections are sought in the form of written, or in some few cases, oral contributions from the responsible head of function and/or functional specialists within particular areas as appropriate. While the material received is editorially prepared to ensure relevance to the purpose of the report and maximise overall coherence and flow, the AQR represents the view of the institution as a whole on its quality systems and activities as expressed by those of its members responsible for and most familiar with the implementation of its individual functions.

AQR 2022, the first quality report for MTU, covers the first eight months post-establishment, and thus a transitional phase immediately post-designation. As will be appreciated, an intensive programme of work on the development of policies, procedures, structures and processes got underway during this reporting period and has been ongoing during the drafting of this report. At this point, therefore, while this report captures the new governance and interim executive structures, it still largely reflects the inherited quality framework and procedures of CIT and IT Tralee. Where elements have changed following the transition to MTU, care has been taken to clearly describe the changes. Thus, while the presentation of the quality systems in place at MTU (Part A) is as up-to-date and accurate as possible at the time of writing, it is very much a snapshot in time. Certain of the features described in this AQR may therefore be no longer in place when the report is published.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

On 1 January 2021, Munster Technological University (MTU) was established under the Technological Universities Act (2018) through the merger of two former Institutes of Technology, CIT and Institute of Technology Tralee. With establishment of the new technological university, CIT and IT Tralee both stood dissolved.

While MTU is a new legal entity with a separate statutory role and a different governance and management structure, the TU Act 2018 provides for an initial transfer of functions (Section 37), programmes of education and training (Section 59), and quality assurance and access, transfer and progression procedures (Section 61) from the dissolved component institutions to the new technological university on designation day.

The first meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University (MTU) took place on 1st January 2021. At that inaugural meeting, MTU was formally established and Prof Maggie Cusack was appointed as President. Other items addressed at the inaugural Governing Body meeting included: Staff and Student representation on the Board; the approval of the Governing Body Standing Orders, the approval of MTU Code of Governance (not specifically intended to address academic governance); the establishment of the MTU Audit and Risk committee to independently ensure proper corporate governance of the University and the management of a Risk Register for the University; and the approval of the MTU Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure that applies to all staff and students at the University.

The MTU Governing Body ratified the continued application of the regulations, policies and procedures of the former Institutions to which they applied immediately before establishment of the MTU, in accordance with the TU Act (2018). The separate sets of regulations and policies are to remain in place until such time as they are altered by MTU by way of amendment or replacement.

In addition, MTU Governing Body ratified the establishment of a small Academic Council, in order to meet the legislative requirements to have an Academic Council in place from Establishment Day. The membership and responsibilities of this small Academic Council were legislated for under the Act.

The Governing Body later agreed during this reporting period on the establishment of a transitional MTU Academic Council in May 2021.

The MTU Academic Council's committee structures are currently comprised of an Executive Committee, two Academic Legacy Committees (the former Academic Councils of CIT and ITT) and six Integration & Development Committees. These Academic Legacy Committees (and, where necessary, their committees) only deal with legacy and operational issues during the term of this Academic Council and have significant delegated authority to manage quality assurance within the pre-existing QA framework.

See **PART B Section 1** for further detail on Governing Body and Academic Council for the reporting period.

At its inaugural meeting, 4th January 2021, the MTU Academic Council considered the Status and Interpretation of Academic Council Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures at the former Institute of Technology Tralee and Cork Institute of Technology under MTU.

On the recommendation of the Academic Council, the following principles were agreed and subsequently ratified by MTU Governing Body in relation to the interpretation of MTU academic regulations, policies and procedures.

- The core academic regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') are those that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) (hereafter 'MTU (Kerry) Regulations') and at Cork Institute of Technology (hereafter 'MTU (Cork) Regulations') immediately before the establishment of MTU. These remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU;

- MTU (Kerry) or MTU (Cork) Regulations apply to the modules and programmes which they did immediately before the establishment of MTU, and any students of those modules and programmes are subject to the MTU (Kerry) or MTU (Cork) Regulations in respect of the matters covered by those regulations;

- Oversight of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) Regulations and their implementation is provided by the Cork Academic Legacy Committee and Kerry Academic Legacy Committee respectively.

- Where reference is made in the respective Regulations to either of the former Institutes of Technology, this should be read as referring to MTU, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Where reference is to Academic Council, it should be read as referring to the respective Academic Legacy Committee, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Where reference is made to a particular Office or Post this should be read as referring to the Office or Post that previously applied at the respective Institutes of Technology immediately before the establishment of MTU;

- In the event that there is any doubt, uncertainty, or apparent conflict as to whether a particular regulation, policy or procedure applies in any given case, MTU determined that any such questions will be resolved by consensus between the two Vice Presidents responsible for academic affairs.

Refer to [MTU Policies](#) for further information on MTU Academic Policies and Procedures.

Refer to [MTU \(Cork\) Regulations](#) for further information on MTU (Cork) Academic Regulations.

Refer to [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#) for further information on MTU (Kerry) Academic Regulations.

Immediately post MTU establishment, all members of the executives of CIT and ITT retained their portfolios. The initial executive was a small one, with a focus on assisting the President in the day-to-day operational activity of the University. This team met on a weekly basis to consider ongoing operational, cross university requirements. Subsequently, a Planning Group was formed, meeting on

a fortnightly basis to plan the key aspects of MTU's endeavor during this interim period. Towards the end of the reporting period, the Operational Executive and the Planning Group were combined to form the current MTU Executive. The scope of the MTU Executive, as outlined in its Terms of Reference below, is to assist the President with operational direction and oversight and in decision making for MTU activities (executive matters as based on President's role under the TU Act) including, but not limited to:

- Academic and Student Activities
- Corporate Systems,
- Finance and Resourcing,
- Staff & Industrial Relations,
- Strategic Planning and University Performance,
- Research, Engagement with Statutory Bodies and stakeholders,
- Transformation Activities,
- Building, Estate and Capital Projects,
- Marketing & Media/PR.

The terms of reference of MTU Executive are to:

- Review and monitor the status and performance of key operational plans and provide information for President to report on to the Governing Body as necessary and appropriate;
- Ensure that risks are identified, managed and reviewed as relevant and appropriate, and provide information for President to report on to the Governing Body as necessary and appropriate;
- Ensure delivery of MTU's strategic vision through projects and TUTF funded initiatives to deliver MTU transformation via the Project Initiation Request process (PIR);
- Act as champions for the process and the outcomes;
- Communicate the outcomes of the University Executive to all relevant stakeholders, including staff and students;
- Other matters as deemed appropriate by the President.

The membership of the University Executive is determined by the President. The continuation and membership of the University Executive is a matter for the President and will be dependent on the eventual design and operation of MTU's executive organisational structure and strategy. The University Executive meets on a fortnightly basis.

The current membership of MTU Executive is as follows:

Prof. Maggie Cusack	President
Mr Tim Daly	Head of Strategy / MTU Project Director
Mr Paul Gallagher	Vice President Finance and Administration
Dr Michael Hall	Head of School of Health and Social Sciences
Mr Tim Horgan	Head of Faculty of Engineering and Science
Mr Michael Loftus	Vice President External Affairs
Ms Ciara Looney	Vice President Corporate Affairs
Prof. Hugh McGlynn	MTU Project Director
Dr Áine Ní Shé	Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr Brendan O'Donnell	Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar
Mr Gerard O'Donovan	Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities
Ms Mary Rose Stafford	Head of School of Business, Computing and Humanities
Prof Joseph Walsh	Head of School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

A visual representation of MTU Cork and Kerry campus organisational structures are provided in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below.

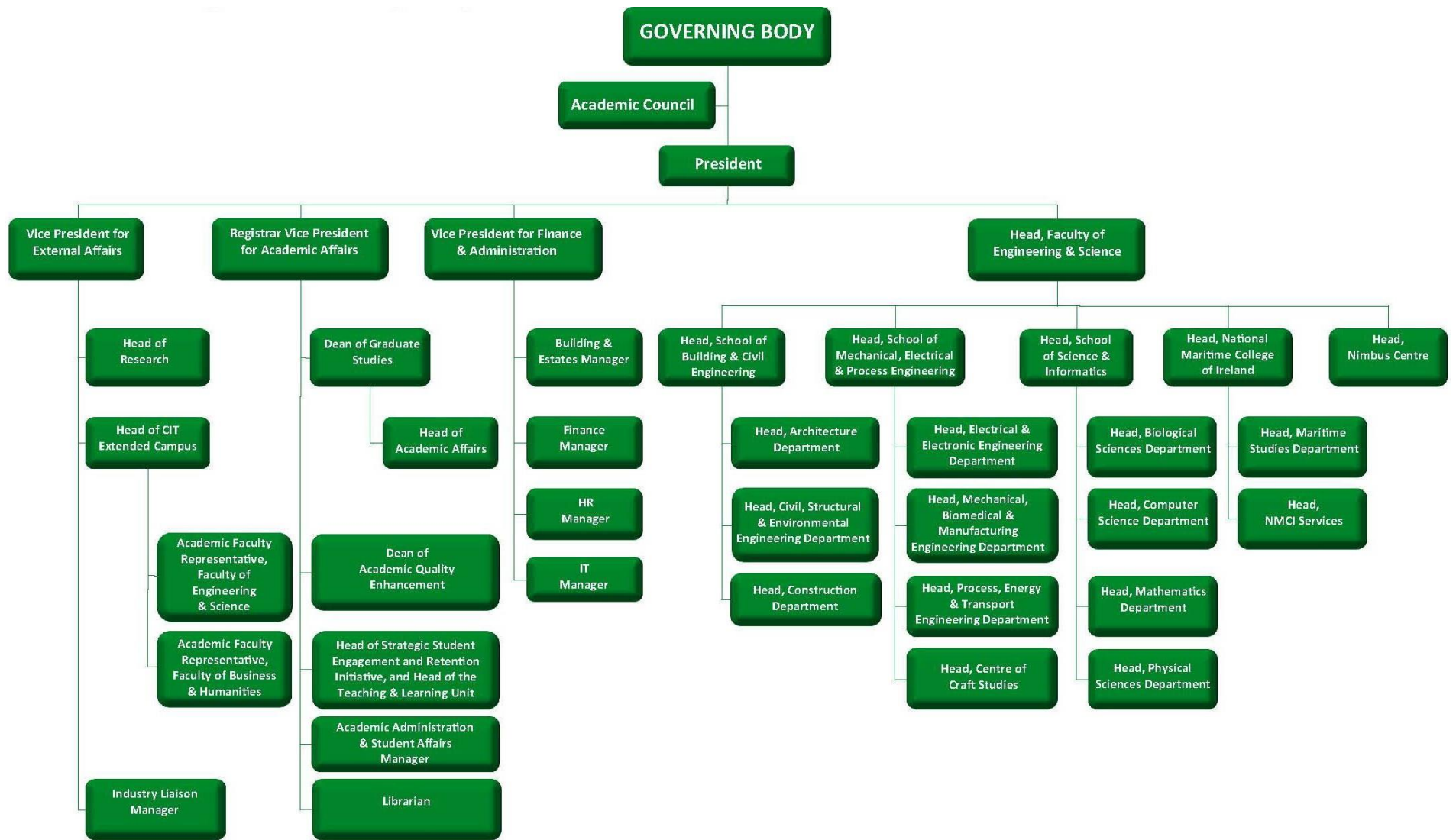


Figure 1: MTU Organisational Structure (MTU Cork Campus Part A)

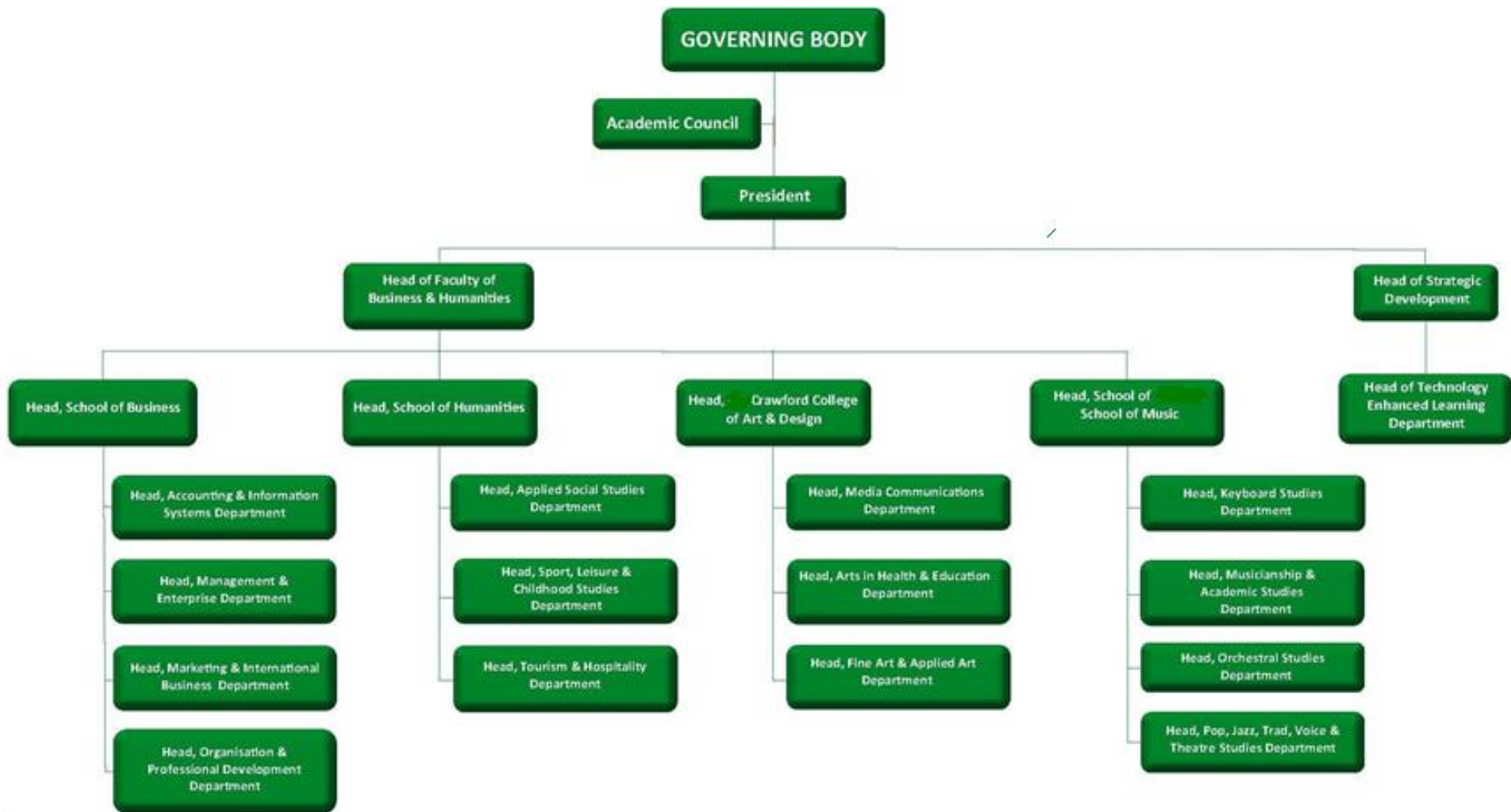


Figure 2: MTU Organisational Structure (MTU Cork Campus Part B)

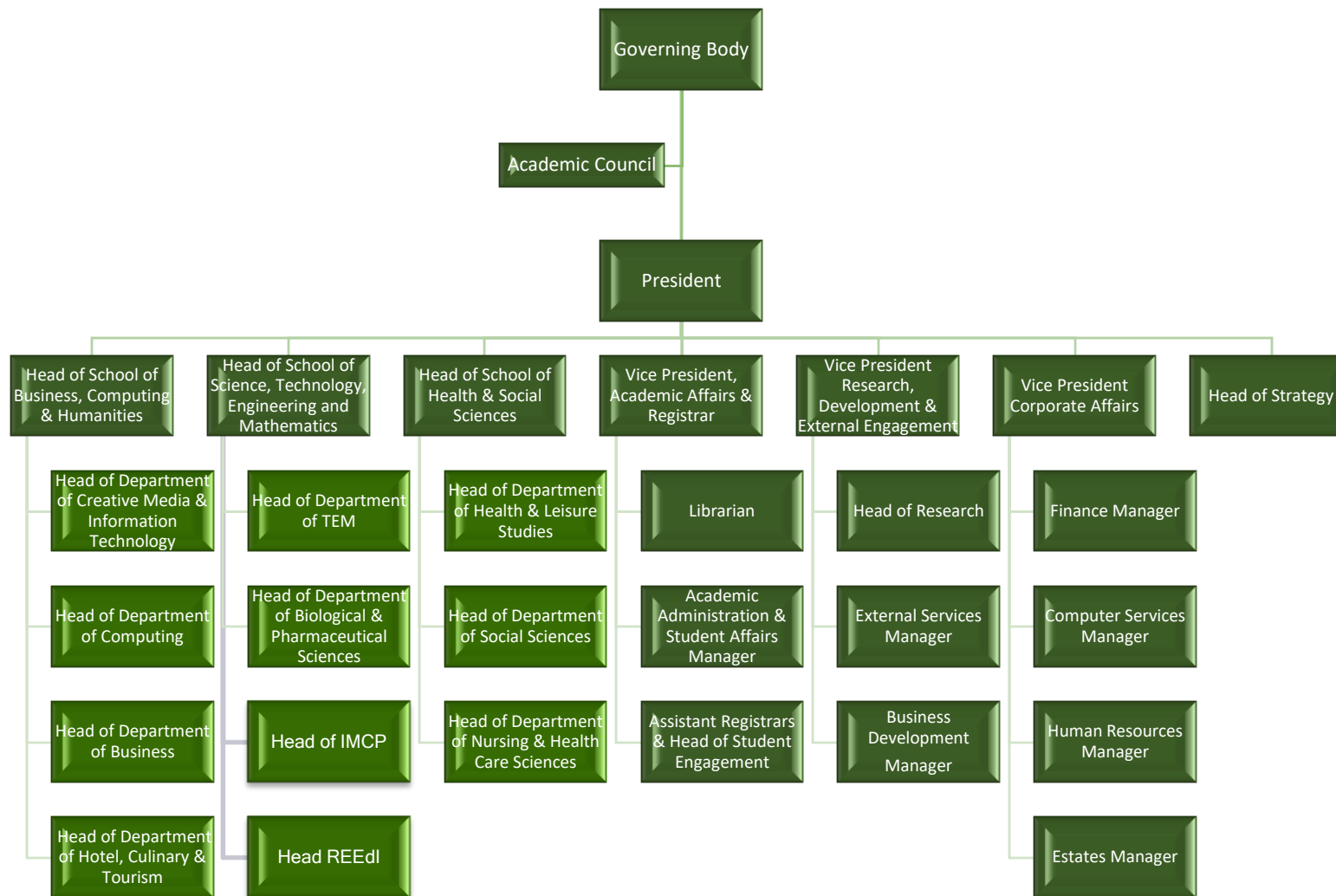


Figure 3: MTU Organisation Chart (MTU Kerry Campus)

Fig 3

The current policies and publications in relation to the MTU governance, including MTU Academic Council Policies and Procedures, can be found at [MTU Policies and Publications](#). The MTU Code of Governance provides the framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by MTU.

1.1.2 Governance and Quality Assurance of Academic Provision and Research

MTU is committed to the highest quality standards, to continuous quality improvement and enhancement and to the creation of a quality culture. The development of an integrated Academic Quality Assurance Framework for the University is being progressed as a matter of high priority. The responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with academic quality assurance policies and procedures rests ultimately with the MTU Executive and particularly within the remit of the respective Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrars.

At Faculty, School and Department level, Heads of Faculty, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Course Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality assurance policies and procedures. The academic management of a Department's programmes is the responsibility of Head of Department and the Course Board/Programme Board. A representation of MTU Governance and Management of Academic Quality Structure is presented in Figure 4. Further information in relation to the evolution of the Governance and Management Quality Structure during this reporting period is provided in Part **B Section 1.0** of this report.

[MTU \(Cork\) Academic Policy and Regulations](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#) contain the policies and procedures relating to the Cork and Kerry Academic Legacy Committees, including the policies and procedures that apply to learner and external stakeholder in relation to academic quality assurance. Relevant sections of these policies and procedures are referred to at relevant sections of this report.

Research degree provision at MTU is governed by [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#), comprehensive MTU postgraduate regulations for postgraduate research study. These cover all quality-relevant aspects of postgraduate education. Complementary policy documents covering, inter alia, ethical research practice, IP issues and conflict of interest establish a secure legal and ethical framework within which postgraduate education can take place.

See Section 4 below for further information on Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes.

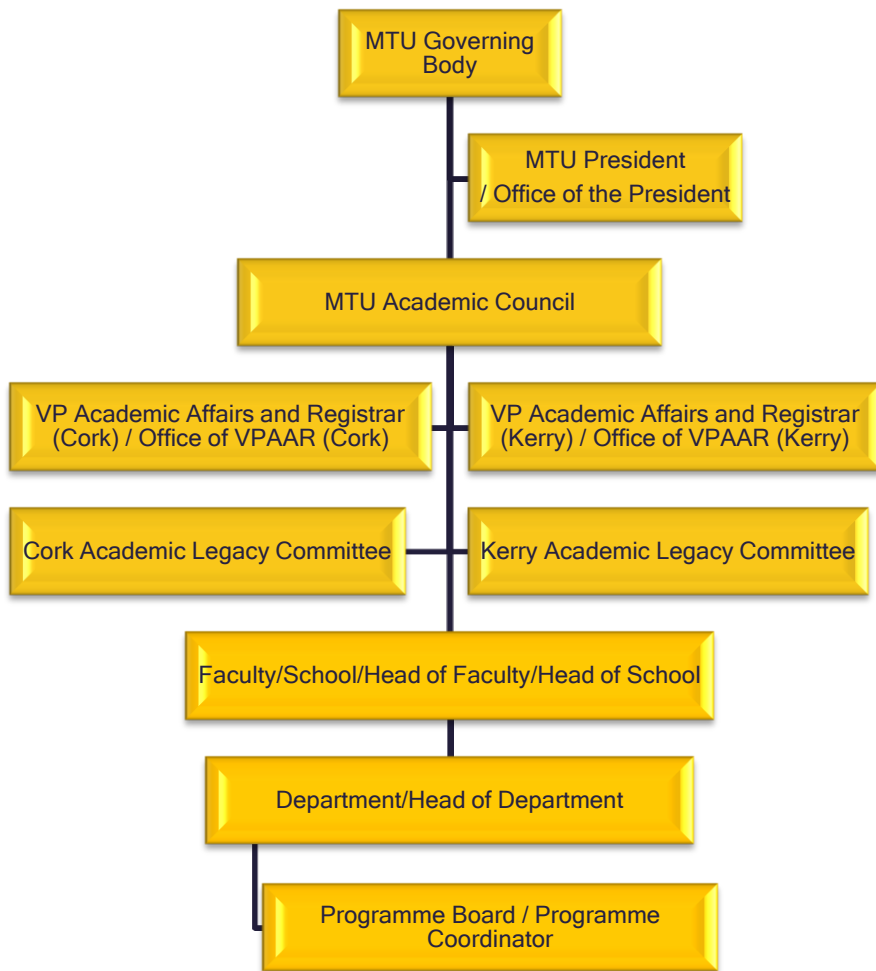


Figure 4: Governance and Management Academic Structure

1.1.3 Learner representation in Governance and Quality Assurance

Learner representatives are systematically included in MTU governance and management structures at all levels. MTU active and engaged Students' Unions on the Cork and Kerry campuses are the main vehicle through which learner representation is organised. During the reporting period, the Students' Unions for both Cork and Kerry remained in place, with work ongoing towards one MTU Student Union. The membership of the MTU Governing Body appointed in accordance with the TU Act includes both Students' Union Presidents and a postgraduate representative. The two Students' Union Presidents were also members of the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council, being joined by the two Vice Presidents for Education and a postgraduate representative on the current Academic Council. The two Students' Union Presidents also sit on the Executive Committee of Academic Council, and all Integration & Development Committees of the Academic Council contain student members.

Learner representatives (Class Reps) act as the main spokespersons for their cohort at Programme and Stage level. Class reps are elected at the beginning of each academic year to act as principal spokespersons for their cohort and liaise with academic and support staff on its behalf. Each class rep is a member of the Students' Union Council and reports back to the SU Executive at Union Council Meetings on issues of concern to the group.

Learner contribution to programme development and monitoring is systematically catered for through course board/ programme board participation. In addition, class tutor/programme coordinator/class rep meetings and academic workshops with programme coordinators or Heads of Department take place regularly across MTU to facilitate continuous monitoring of programmes and issues of concern to learners.

In addition to Governing Body, Academic Council, its Committees, and Course Boards, c.a. 60 university committees and boards of the University include student representation.

While not mandatory in new programme development, departmental consultation will often include surveys of existing students and recent graduates on various aspects of the prospective programmes.

1.1.4 External stakeholder representation in Governance and Quality Assurance

Over half the membership of MTU Governing Body are external stakeholders from a variety of sectors and organisations, including Education and Training boards, community, industry organisations, enterprise and Government.

A key mechanism for ensuring that external peer perspectives feed into academic quality management is the external examiner system. External examiners are approved by MTU Academic Council and provide oversight in relation to learner assessment and monitoring of programmes.

Additionally, all core processes in relation to processes for the approval and review of modules and programmes incorporate external stakeholder representation. A further layer of externality is added in that many MTU programmes are professionally recognised, accredited or regulated.

Pending the development of a MTU Strategic Plan, MTU strategy is guided by the [MTU Application for Designation as a Technological University](#) submitted to Higher Education Authority in February 2019. As part of the application process, the MTU consortium set out the Vision, Mission and Values of the University as well as key characteristics of the University in fulfilling its functions as defined under the section 9 of the [Technological Universities Act, 2018](#).

See also Table 1 at [Introduction and Overview of Institution](#). MTU is further guided by the [MTU Report to Minister for Education and Skills for Designation of the Munster Technological University 30 March 2020](#), in which the consortium outlines its strategic purpose is serving the South West region.

At the time of writing, the development of MTU's first strategic plan is well underway. The approach to this is a consultative and collaborative one which is seeking the views of MTU's students, staff and external community. To that end, MTU has established working groups tasked with developing and interrogating five key strategic themes to support MTU's mission and vision, these themes having emerged through strategy development work undertaken by the University Executive.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision have not been altered during this reporting period.

To date, MTU has not designated any linked providers.

MTU Governing Body delegated authority to the MTU executive to sign-off on behalf of MTU in relation to collaborations/agreements related to contracts with external parties, subject to Governing Body approval being reserved for three matters with a high level of associated cost, risk, or profile.

Formal Joint Awarding Agreements are in place for all joint awards made by MTU, with appropriate provisions covering continuing delegated authority conditions for doctoral programmes where applicable. All collaborative programmes, irrespective of whether they lead to an MTU award or a joint award, are subject to detailed agreements governing the arrangements for provision and quality assurance of the programme, including assessment standards, learner protection, and the making of the award. Under the existing process, each agreement requires prior approval of the MTU Academic Council and Governing Body before the collaborative programme can be validated.

With regard to the long-standing joint awarding arrangement of MTU with UCC, the institutions operate well-established joint mechanisms for the validation, operation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the relevant programmes. These include a Joint Board which has oversight of academic, management and resource issues for all joint programmes, and makes recommendations to the MTU Academic Council and UCC Academic Board. A (Joint) Board of Studies is also in place for each of the joint programmes.

Refer to the following sections to the QA procedures:

See [MTU \(Cork\) Regulations Academic Policy on the Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards](#)

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

Section A15: Collaborative Provision;

Sub Section A15.1: Procedures for the Provision of Collaborative Programmes and for the Provision of Programmes leading to Joint Awards.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

2.1.1 Programme QA Framework, development, and validation

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to Programme QA Framework, development and validation have not been altered during this reporting period.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

The core policy document regulating the design and approval of new programmes is the [Handbook for Module and Programme Approval](#), with a supplementary procedure for the [design and approval of Special Purpose, Minor and Supplementary Awards](#) specifically.

An 'omnibus' [Policy on Curricular Structure and Credit Profile](#) sets out the parameters and guiding principles for curriculum design and review under the framework for modular programme provision.

Amendments to existing modules and programme are also subject to approval, following a defined [procedure for module and programme changes](#). Any major or critical changes to programmes give rise to a differential validation process, which is treated as a new validation of a programme element or elements and – like all new validations – requires Academic Council approval.

The selection of independent internal and external experts for the review of new modules and programmes is also subject to a [Policy on Conflicts and External Work](#).

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

The programme design and validation process is carried out in accordance with the quality assurance procedures outlined below. These procedures outline a systematic approach to the development of new programmes, allowing sufficient time for internal and external consultations with stakeholders.

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules,

Sub Section A4.1: Overview of Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules,

Sub Section A4.2: Procedures for the Design and Validation of New Programmes,

Sub Section A4.3: Procedures for Modifications to Validated Programmes,

Sub Section A4.4: Procedure for Module Development, Modification and Validation

Sub Section A4.5: Appendices, including the following items: Item 1: New Programme Proposal Form for Major Awards; Item 2: New Programme Proposal Submission; Item 3: Assessors Guide for New Programme Evaluation; Item 4: Internal School Panel Review Report (New Programmes); Item 5: External Expert Assessors Report; Item 6: External Expert Assessors Report (Desk Review); Item 7: External Panel Review Report (New Programme); Item 8: Programme(s) Validation Report; Item 9: Programme Proposal Template for Minor/Supplemental/Special Purpose Awards; Item 10: External Expert Assessor's (Desk Review) guide for Evaluation of Proposed Major Modification-Restructuring of Validated Programmes; Item 11: Update to Module Descriptors-Major Changes; Item 12: Update to Module Descriptors-Minor Changes; Item 13.1: Desk Review/ External Panel Nomination Form; 13.2: Declaration of Interest Form; Item 14: Time Schedule for Planning of External Panels/Desk Reviews; Item 15: Tracking Log of Amendments to a Programme subsequent to External Panel/Programmatic Review; Item 16: Roles

and Responsibilities for Desk Reviews/External Panels; Item 17: School Audit of Programmes Validation Process; Item 18: Template for changes to current Approved Course Schedules.

2.1.2 Programme Validation and Professional Accreditation

Where fields of employment are subject to professional regulation, or where successful professional practice is predicated on professional registration, academic programmes may need to achieve and maintain recognition or accreditation from professional bodies or from statutory regulators, such as CORU, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), or the Marine Survey Office (MSO) in the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

While MTU is cognisant of the primacy of its obligations as a public provider of higher education and training under applicable HE legislation and academic quality frameworks, it also ascertains itself that the professional requirements of each field are taken into account to the requisite degree in programme validation or review processes. Conversely, even outside of regulatory contexts MTU endeavors to familiarise the relevant professional organisations with its academic quality assurance procedures and criteria. In addition to inviting engagement in the context of various industry liaison fora, where appropriate the Institute arranged for representatives of regulatory or professional bodies to sit in on academic review panels as observers or, for certain areas, invited representatives of such bodies to participate in academic review as a panel member. The programmes of MTU are currently recognised by ca. 30 separate professional organisations.

2.1.3 Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programmes

In line with its long-standing focus on regional provision and career-oriented education and training, MTU continues to offer both traditional craft and new ('post-2016') degree apprenticeship programmes.

MTU delivers apprenticeship training for a number of different trades. Apprenticeship programmes for the larger trades, such as plumbing or carpentry & joinery, are delivered in multiple locations, while other apprenticeships are delivered in one location only; thus, MTU continues to be the sole provider for apprenticeship programmes in construction plant fitting, pipe fitting and plastering. The BEng in Engineering Services Management is a part-apprenticeship programme which affords craftspersons the opportunity to gain a Level 7 degree. MTU is the coordinating provider for this industry-led programme which is led by the Confederation of Irish Industry (CIF)

Since September 2018, MTU has also been offering new degree apprenticeships in the area of hospitality.

In addition to apprenticeship provision per se, a broad – and expanding – range of academic degree programmes incorporate significant work placement, ranging from embedded service learning, a standard 5 ECTS-credit modules to full placement semesters worth 30 ECTS credits. Through a differential validation process, an apprenticeship pathway has been added to the MSc in Software Architecture & Design; this pathway, for the most part, parallels the existing project with workplace learning and is so labelled the 'apprenticeship' mode. The development of this pathway goes back to efforts made by a consortium in 2018 led by the LERO (Irish Software Research Center) in conjunction with the University of Limerick. This consortium was successful in obtaining HEA/SOLAS funding for this mode of delivery, part-time over 2 years, on the grounds that there was a clear and identifiable need for graduates of this sort. Subsequently, however, it emerged that MTU was a better prospect as coordinating provider as it had an existing matched programme and the expertise and experience to deliver a pathway of this nature.

a. Quality Assurance of Craft Apprenticeship Programmes

Traditional craft apprenticeships lead to further (rather than higher) education and training awards. At the point of writing, they are subject to a separate national quality assurance framework maintained by SOLAS, the state agency established in 2013 to oversee and manage further education and training in Ireland. The implementation of the National Plan for Apprenticeship (2021) will lead to far-reaching systemic changes which will fundamentally alter SOLAS' role in the process and will align and integrate the overall approach to the quality assurance of craft apprenticeships with the system for quality assuring higher education provision within the providing institutions.

In terms of curricular structure, craft apprenticeships are delivered in a phased manner over four years. Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7 are work-based, while Phases 2, 4 and 6 consist of 'off-the-job training' delivered by regional ETB Training Centres (basic skills training, Phase 2) and associated education providers, predominantly Institutes of Technology respectively Technological Universities. The trades apprentice calendar does not follow the academic year but consists of three terms spread across the calendar year. For that reason, the timetabling of staff lecturing across both further and higher education programmes and managing demand fluctuations for relevant facilities and equipment are some of the endemic challenges of concurrent provision of apprenticeship and academic programmes for the providing institution.

As it stands, the development of, curriculum and assessment design for, and review of apprenticeship programmes lie within the sole responsibility of SOLAS. While individual lecturers are frequently consulted by SOLAS in the context of these QA processes, this is in the capacity of individual subject expert rather than provider representative. The chief vehicle for interaction between SOLAS and the apprenticeship providers on programme quality issues is the – what is still termed – Institutes of Technology Apprenticeship Committee (ITAC), composed of representatives from providing institutions. Normally, SOLAS will first informally advise ITAC members about impending programme changes during tri-annual meetings with ITAC held at the start of each term. These meetings also provide an opportunity for provider representatives to give feedback on and discuss operational or curricular issues arising during the previous term. Subsequently, formal notification about any amendments to apprenticeship programmes is given to the providing institutions by SOLAS. Review of apprenticeship programmes is to take place annually, though for some trades the review intervals – and consequent changes to apprenticeship programmes – can on occasion be longer.

Underneath this top-level structure, cognate trades are organised into Institutes' Fields of Trades Committees, or 'IFOTs'. IFOTs are composed of representatives of all providers which offer apprenticeship programmes in the relevant field, and generally also meet once per term to discuss technical issues. Conclusions or suggestions arising from IFOTs meetings are reported onward to ITAC for further transmission to SOLAS.

All assessments are centrally set by SOLAS. While the timing of practical assessments is up to each provider, all written theory examinations are 'sat' at the same time nationwide. Marks are determined by local apprentice examination boards based on a common marking scheme set by SOLAS. Recent adaptations of the scheme now allow providers to return marks which represent a more detailed and accurate reflection of apprentice performance in the theory exam. Operationally, the existing, somewhat circuitous processes for apprentice assessment and results processing still present some challenges for providers. Apprentice marks are not released by the providing institutions directly, for instance, but are forwarded to the local Education & Training Boards (ETBs) for release to candidates on behalf of SOLAS. However, assessment appeals are to be dealt with under the appeals procedure of the provider. Where this foresees a specific timeframe for lodgement of an appeal tied to the release date, as is the case at MTU, but the provider is not privy to the release date information when the appeal is lodged, this can make it difficult to determine if an appeal is allowable.

b. Quality Assurance of ‘New’ Apprenticeships – Degree Programmes in Apprenticeship Mode

From September 2017 onwards, MTU has also been delivering ‘new’ apprenticeship programmes leading to higher education awards at Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) or Ordinary Bachelor (NFQ Level 7) level.

The delivery structure of degree apprenticeships varies; some delivery models combine days of workplace-based learning with days of academic study in one and the same week, while others are phased. However, in the case of phased programmes, certain academic projects may continue during workplace-based phases in order to retain apprentices’ connection with academic learning throughout.

Degree apprenticeship programmes fall under the quality assurance framework for higher education. By default, delivery and assessment, validation, continuous monitoring and review of the new apprenticeships thus follow the standard MTU QA processes as described in this report. However, in the case of consortium programmes (see next paragraph), it is frequently the regulations and procedures of the lead provider that apply, as governed by the individual consortium agreement. The involvement of SOLAS in the operation and quality assurance of degree apprenticeships is far more limited than in the case of trade apprenticeships, being generally restricted to apprentice registration.

Many new apprenticeships are developed for consortium delivery within the Institute of Technology and Technological University sector, with professional organisations also often involved in programme development and delivery of work-based elements in particular. The academic lead institution within a consortium normally takes responsibility for validation of the programme specification and for overseeing programme operation across the consortium partners, for instance by facilitating joint programme board meetings involving all participating providers. The arrangements for quality assurance and delivery are specified in a consortium agreement.

As degree apprenticeship is a relatively new model of provision, the quality assurance parameters for consortium delivery have not – yet – been standardised in all respects. This means, for instance, that the applicable delivery and assessment regulations and ownership of the award are currently agreed separately for each new degree apprenticeship. The resulting variations, even between apprenticeship programmes offered by one and the same consortium with the same lead institution, are tempered by the fact that the academic quality procedures across the IoT and emergent TU sectors remain strongly aligned to a common sectoral framework.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification (including policies on widening participation)

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to Access, Progression, Recognition and Certification have not been altered during this reporting period.

2.2.1 Student Lifecycle

a. Standard Application and Admission Procedures

Application for admission into Year 1 of full-time programmes of MTU, with the exception of international students, Springboard and part-time professional applicants, is made through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Application for entry into full-time post-Year 1 programmes is made directly to MTU.

Procedures for application and admission as well as general and programme-specific entry requirements are detailed in the [MTU Prospectus](#).

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

Admissions criteria and information on admission, registration and commencement of studies can be found in the [Student Admissions and Registration](#) area of the MTU Cork / CIT website. Admissions requirements and procedures for international students are outlined at [International Students](#) on the website. Procedures and guidelines for the admission of mature applicants are provided in the prospectus and on the [Mature Students](#) section of the MTU Cork / CIT website.

Student induction is organised by the [AnSEO Student Engagement Office](#) as part of the [Good Start](#) programme. [New Student](#) also provides clear and detailed information on MTU Cork / CIT specifically tailored to new students.

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

Section A14: Student Admissions, Progression and Recognition,

Sub Section A14.1: Garda Vetting Policy,

Sub Section A14.2: Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning,

Sub Section A14.3: Admissions Policy,

Sub Section A14.4: Progression Policy-Policy for Determining the Order in which Eligible Candidates are made Offers on Add-On Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes,

Sub Section A13.5: Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures,

Sub Section A13.5: Equity of Access and Participation Policy.

Information in relation to Admission, Transfer, Progression, Recognition and Certification is available to future and current students on the website:

See Current and Future student sections at: [MTU Kerry campus](#)

See the AY 20/21 Student Handbook at: [Student Handbook Section A](#) and [Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Information in relation to Access is available at: [Access Office](#)

Student induction is organised by the Admissions and Student Support Services, as part of the FYI Induction Programme for new students. [New Students](#) provides additional information for new students.

b. Progression

Eligible full-time continuing students are automatically enrolled for each new academic year. Eligible full-time students with programme options and graduates progressing to follow-on programmes at the next-higher NFQ level (e.g. from Level 7 to Level 8) are sent a registration form by the Admissions Office.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

General regulations for the progression between programme stages are contained in the [MTU Cork campus Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Marks and Standards\)](#). The general requirements and procedures for transfer and progression between programmes at undergraduate level (where the 'ladder' system remains) are contained at [full-time prospectus](#). Academic Council has also previously approved [Guidelines for Admission to NFQ Level 8 Degrees \(Post-NFQ Level 7 Award\)](#).

Following the introduction of Covid-19 adaptations to delivery and assessment arrangements, supplementary regulations for [stage progression](#) and [for admission of NFQ Level 7 graduates to Level 8 degrees](#) were approved by the CIT Academic Council for 2019/20 and – in a revised version reflecting the increased ability to plan for remote learning – for 2020/21 and [published together with the relevant 'baseline' regulations](#).

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

Section A14: Student Admissions, Progression and Recognition,

Sub Section A14.4: Progression Policy-Policy for Determining the Order in which Eligible Candidates are made Offers on Add-On Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes,

Information in relation to Admission, Transfer, Progression, Recognition and Certification is available to future and current students on the website:

See Current and Future student sections at: [MTU Kerry campus](#)

See AY 20/21 Prospectus at: [Prospectus20_21](#)

See the AY 20/21 Student Handbook at: [Student Handbook Section A](#) and [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

c. Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study

MTU has achieved national and international recognition for its work in the area of student engagement and communication. These successes are testimony to long-established collaborations between colleagues working in Student Engagement, academic departments/schools/faculties, Access & Disability, and Student Services in the first instance and an effective partnership with the Students' Union.

A focal area of work in MTU is the First Year Experience. Campus initiatives such as the Good Start programme and the FYI programme aim to build engagement and proactively identify and support learners in need of early-stage intervention during their crucial first few weeks in college. New students challenged by the academic environment or the competing demands of study, work and/or their personal life are supported in acquiring tailored personal and academic success strategies through academic success coaching available on both the Cork campus ([Academic](#)

[Success Coaching](#)) and the Kerry campus (Study Skills and Transitions Facilitator, Academic Success Centre). Unsure or wavering students are supported to systematically explore all available avenues, including alternative programme choices or viable alternatives to academic study, before they continue on a programme to which they are not well suited, limiting their chances of academic success, or else drop out without knowing what to do next.

In relation to learners experiencing other life issues, or creating such issues for others, which may fundamentally impede or negate their ability to continue in study or to safely and effectively practice their intended profession, [Fitness to Study](#) and [Fitness to Practice](#) policies have been implemented on the Cork campus and Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure and Policy and Procedure to Support and Determine a Student's Fitness to Continue in Study have been implemented on the Kerry campus (See Sections A13.8 and A13.6 at [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)).

The policy frameworks are complemented by a wide range of well-established academic and welfare supports offered to learners in addressing academic and life issues before they can cause disengagement and, ultimately, failure or non-completion of the academic programme. Targeted supports are furthermore available to international students. The range of MTU student services and supports across all campuses are outlined below in Section 3.

2.2.2 Widening Participation

MTU's commitment to the region and the social and economic welfare of all of its people means that fostering inclusive access to higher and further education has always been and remains one of MTU's key institutional commitments and strategic priorities.

For many decades, MTU has offered a broad and varied spectrum of programmes in a variety of delivery modes attracting an ever more diverse learner intake. A comprehensive set of policies and resources is in place to proactively widen participation in higher and further education in the region and beyond, and to enable every learner who enters a programme to successfully complete their studies and reach their full academic potential, irrespective of background or circumstance.

a. Equity of Access

Cognisant of its diverse student population, MTU is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment for all students. Long before the establishment of MTU, there has been rich and fruitful collaboration between the [Access Services](#) of both founding institutions, with frequent engagement in local and national groups, organisations and initiatives. Access, in collaboration with academic departments and schools and various central units, runs an extensive programme of outreach activities and a range of pre-entry, entry and post-entry support programmes (including personal; academic; and financial supports) for target under-represented groups.

MTU Access is committed to widening participation, increasing access and supporting positive educational outcomes for under-represented groups; and to providing a high quality, professional and student-centred service. This is achieved by a strong commitment to the principles of social inclusion and by working locally, regionally and nationally in partnership with key stakeholders.

MTU is a member of HEAR Scheme.

The [SOAR Project](#) (PATH 3), brings together the South Cluster (IT Carlow, MTU, UCC, and WIT) together with community partners to collaborate on strategies to increase access to higher education for under-represented groups. It has enabled the member institutions to build on existing access practice, consolidate community partnerships and develop new initiatives to further our collective ambition of widening participation for access target groups.

With the establishment of MTU in January 2021, access practitioners in all campuses are progressing the alignment of policy and procedure, both within the service itself, and also on relevant committees of the Academic Council of MTU.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

Spear-headed by its [Access Service](#), MTU (Cork) engages in an extensive programme of outreach activities as well as delivering a range of pre-entry, entry and post-entry support programmes for target under-represented groups. Through its dedicated [Disability Support Service](#) team, the Access Service also actively promotes and contributes to the implementation of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) agenda and advocates for inclusive practices within the institution.

Extensive information on MTU (Cork) access procedures and supports for learners from under-represented groups, including members of ethnic minorities and learners presenting with disabilities or learning differences, can be accessed through the [Access Service web pages](#).

Facilitated by the Access team, MTU (Cork) operates schemes for supported progression to higher education from designated 'DEIS' schools ([Linked Schools Programme](#)) and further education (FE) colleges (Cork Colleges Progression Scheme) in the region.

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

MTU has in place an 'Equity of Access and Participation Policy' (See Section A13.5 at [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)) that is designed to promote and facilitate entry to and participation in the academic programmes and student life of the University by groups under-represented in higher education in Ireland up to now. The particular groups targeted are:

- First time mature student entrants;
- Students with disabilities;
- Entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education;
- Irish Travellers;
- Further education award holders;
- Part-time/Flexible Learners.

Spear-headed by its Access Office and Disability Services team, MTU (Kerry) engages in an extensive programme of outreach activities as well as delivering a range of pre-entry, entry and post-entry support programmes. See [MTU Kerry campus Student Support Services Access Office](#) for information on Access Office and Disability Services

- To support access for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds: The University is part of the HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) national admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers under 23 years;
- To support to students with Disabilities: The University is part of the DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) national admissions scheme which can allocate reduced points places to eligible school leavers under 23 years old with learning difference, health conditions and disabilities;
- Mature learners' access to higher education: While the University continues to attract a high number of full-time mature entrants, it is experiencing a year-on year decline in the intake of this cohort. Mature candidates who do not progress to registration are surveyed and the University has committed to undertaking research in the wider community in collaboration with local partnership companies to inform relevant development;
- To support students with disabilities to participate fully in the academic life of the Institute: The University has developed Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures (See Section A13.4 at [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)), and the Equity of Access and Participation Policy. Through its enhanced pre-entry schools programme, the University is reaching out to students in a more meaningful and cohesive way. Through the National PATH Fund the University is working with its cluster partners in delivering an Enabling Transitions Initiative. This project is delivering an assistive technology resources to students, teachers and parents in the DEIS schools in Kerry;
- To develop teaching and learning practices that are effective in creating a positive learning environment: The University has worked to promote and embed inclusive teaching practice and universal design;
- To provide fair, regular and ongoing support through the work of the ESF Student Assistance Fund: The University has developed an online application form for students use which has assisted with reporting requirements and streamlined the administration of the fund;
- To facilitate students from all ethnic minorities, especially members of the Travelling Community: The University delivers both a Junior and Senior Cycle Programme;
- Access21 is a project that has been running for a number of years between the University and a number of DEIS schools in Kerry. The project, run in collaboration with the Trinity Access 21 programme, entails the running of a number of initiatives undertaken in collaboration with the schools, including, planning a calendar of events, mentoring, school visits, practioner-led workshops, campus visits, programme taster sessions, etc.

b. Flexible and Lifelong Learning Opportunities

One of the actions under MTU ongoing commitment to inclusive access to education opportunities and a diverse student body is to increase opportunities for mature, work-based, lifelong, part-time and flexible learners through part-time, blended or online programme delivery. MTU already has a sizeable population of learners who avail of learning opportunities later in life, either as returning or as first-time students, and is committed to further expanding its range of options for lifelong access to higher education.

One means by which MTU has been delivering on this commitment is the strategic expansion of flexible learning opportunities, in particular the distance learning portfolio. Building on e-learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology- Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [E-learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#), MTU offers a significant portfolio of flexible online programmes both degrees (at Higher Diploma and Masters level) and shorter certificate courses. The significant expertise built up by TEL and EDSU served MTU well in its move to predominantly or exclusively online delivery of its programmes following the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions across higher education institutions.

The online provision complements and extends the reach of MTU's traditionally strong suite of continuing education programmes and lifelong learning programmes with access and delivery mechanisms that are tailored to the needs of learners unable to participate in standard full-time programmes. A range of short courses developed in consultation with employers and delivered both online and in more traditional formats are furthermore offered under Springboard or in conjunction with local development projects.

MTU's Cork campus based [Extended Campus](#) works with numerous regional and national organisations interested in developing their workforce and adding to their employees' skills sets. Extended Campus services include Learning Clinics where Extended Campus staff and industry partners together identify organisational learning needs and the programme offerings and delivery strategies best suited to meeting these. Solutions identified may include existing, 'off-the-shelf' programmes as well as collaborative development of customised learning pathways which utilizing modular 'building blocks'; workplace or e-supported delivery; and the integration of learning gained at the workplace through MTU's well-established RPL and WBL mechanisms.

2.2.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Candidates wishing to apply for entry, advanced entry, exemptions, module credit or indeed full awards on the basis of prior learning – be that formal or non-formal/informal learning – can do so in accordance with [MTU's Policy Governing Recognition of Prior Learning](#) and Section A14.2 at [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

RPL can be applied for in any valid MTU programme or module. Recognition of prior learning claims are made against complete modules, and applicants must demonstrate that all learning outcomes have been satisfactorily met to gain exemptions (in the case of prior certified learning) or module credit.

A range of well-established RPL supports are available to candidates and academic assessors across the University through both the [MTU RPL Service](#) on the Cork campus and the Registrar's Office on the Kerry campus. This positions MTU at the forefront of RPL practice and policy nationally.

As part of the National RPL Project in HE (commenced in April 2021), MTU Kerry and Cork campus Project Leads have been appointed and are working together to play key roles in co-ordinating and implementing the project at university level and in engaging with key local/ regional stakeholders, including enterprise, to ensure that the potential of RPL is realised in Irish HE and in the labour market.

This innovative and ambitious collaboration between the Institutes of Technology, Universities and Technological Universities seeks to build a consistent and coherent approach to recognition of prior learning (RPL) within and across the entire public higher education (HE) sector. It has transformative potential for Ireland's education system to become an international leader in the field.

The 4-year project is driven and co-ordinated at national/ sectoral level by a Project Manager based in the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and funded under the Higher Education Authority's Human Capital Initiative (HCI). It will see the participating HE institutions engineer a significant shift in RPL policy, procedure and practice. Specifically, the project will build consensus among the HE institution partners and key stakeholders to develop and roll-out a National RPL Framework. The Framework will encompass a shared understanding of RPL, with agreed language, principles and reference points, in keeping with national quality

assurance arrangements, the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and QQI high-level policies on access and progression.

The National RPL Framework, both during its development and after its roll-out, will unlock and embed a culture of lifelong learning and support effective HE-enterprise engagement in skills development to contribute to a dynamic workforce. The project will play a central role in delivering on MTU – and the broader Irish HE sector’s – strategic ambitions in this area, as well as on a range of national and European policy objectives in lifelong learning and meeting skills needs.

2.2.4 Portability of Qualifications and Credit

a. Curricular Features Supporting Credit Transfer

MTU’s programmes are designed to ensure maximal portability of credit for their graduates, not just within Ireland, but within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Programme features specifically designed to support transferability include modularised and semesterised delivery and a standard module credit volume of 5 ECTS credits. Modules attracting multiples of 5 credits are allowable where the optimal learning experience demonstrably involves integrated learning and assessment, meaning that the learner is required to address complex authentic problems, synthesise previously acquired knowledge and skills, and largely self-direct her or his learning. Typical examples of larger modules are performance-based modules and final year theses or ‘capstone’ projects, which may attract up to 30 ECTS credits.

b. Alignment of Awards with the National Framework of Qualifications

MTU awards align with the National Framework of Qualifications, and alignment is confirmed through all standard programme quality assurance processes. This alignment underpins the recognition and thus portability of MTU qualifications within Ireland and – through alignment of the NFQ with the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) under the [Bologna Agreement](#) – within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

2.2.5. Certification

All student assessment performance and award records of MTU students are safely and securely stored by the Examinations Office in the central student records database, for which strict data access and protection protocols apply.

Achievement of an award of MTU will be certified through the issuing of a formal award parchment, bearing the University seal, and a transcript of award stage results (Diploma Supplement) to the successful graduate by the MTU Examinations Office.

Parchments for major awards will record the NFQ level of the award, the named award and detailed programme specialisation, the award classification and the date of the award. Parchments for non- major awards (special purpose or minor awards) presented the same information, as well as the credit value of the award and the title of the linked major programme in the case of minor awards.

Parchments for joint awards between providers and awarding bodies require the agreement of bespoke parchment formats between the providers and all relevant national authorities to ensure that the minimum requirements of each awarding authority involved were met. During the reporting period, the MTU-UCC joint parchment was agreed, following consultation between the relevant authorities in MTU, UCC, and NUI.

The award information on the formal parchment will be complemented by the detailed transcript of stage results, recording the academic year and examination 'sitting', full award and programme title and programme delivery mode, overall classification of the stage result, and the credit value and percentage grade achieved for each module completed within the stage. Learners of MTU Kerry campus were, and are, also able to request a statement of their award results in the form of a ['Europass' Diploma Supplement](#). With the upgrade of the Student Records System to Banner V8.5 on all MTU Cork Campuses now complete and in implementation phase, this facility will be extended to all learners of the University. In addition to the stage results, this provides contextual information on the qualification, awarding institution, grading scheme and applicable assessment and award regulations, as well as brief standardised summary of the national higher education and training system. Together, the award documentation issued will facilitate clear alignment of a graduate's award with the National Framework of Qualifications and indicate its transfer value for academic progression and, where applicable, professional status of the graduate within the European Higher Education Area.

As per national policy as well as custom and practice, successful graduates of Munster Technological University, will be formally conferred with their award at a public conferring ceremony at which prescribed academic dress is worn. Graduates of the joint MTU-UCC programmes are all conferred at an annual joint conferring ceremony, with the venue alternating between MTU and UCC.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act 2018 (hereafter 'MTU (Kerry) Regulations') remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations for making awards have not been altered during this reporting period.

2.3.1 Award Standards

The QQI award standards were adopted by the MTU Establishment Day Academic Council as the interim award standards of Munster Technological University, pending the development by MTU of its own set of award standards.

2.3.2 Development and Review of Module and Programme Learning Outcomes

a. Development of Graduate Profile and Programme Learning Outcomes

Academic staff typically employ a 'Backward Design' approach to programme and module design. This approach is a three-step process whereby the curriculum design team:

1. Researches and describes the desired knowledge, skills and competences to be gained by the learner upon successful completion of the programme or module. These are expressed as intended learning outcomes for the programme or module under development.
2. Develops an assessment strategy to measure achievement of these prescribed learning outcomes. For programmes, a curriculum map is developed which maps intended module learning outcomes (MLOs) to programme outcomes indicating how the achievement of programme learning outcomes is supported. For modules, based on the concept of constructive alignment, module assessment items are mapped to MLOs. Through purposeful design of module assessment strategies, the achievement of MLOs and hence programme learning outcomes is assured.
3. Describes the teaching and learning strategy to be employed in the curriculum unit. For programme design, the strategy will prescribe the approved programme schedule detailing the modules to be undertaken by the learner. For modules, the module descriptor details the balance of directed and independent learning and class contact hours.

When seeking to validate a programme, the proposers are required to undertake consultation with appropriate stakeholders (industry, professional bodies, regulators, alumni, learners) to determine a graduate profile for the programme under development. In revalidation, stakeholder consultation is conducted to ascertain that the graduate profile continues to meet current professional or progression requirements, and furthermore that the level of knowledge and skills shown by graduates in 'real world' contexts reflects the intended graduate profile.

Once determined, the intended graduate profile is expressed in terms of intended programme learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, and competences of the graduate of the programme. The intended programme learning outcomes are then mapped to the MTU award standards to ensure alignment with the target NFQ level and award descriptor for the programme. Programme development teams are supported through this process by the Registrars Offices.

b. Development of Module Learning Outcomes

The equivalent process at module level sees the module author determine the learning to be achieved by the learner upon successful completion of the module. The learning is described in a set of intended module learning outcomes. Depending on the starting point of module development, the MLOs are then evaluated to either establish the level of the prescribed learning, or to confirm that the volume and complexity of the intended learning as described match the target level of the module. This involves interrogating the learning outcomes to determine the nature of the ability/understanding described and the context in which the learning is to take place. The level of the expected ability/understanding is normally determined from the chosen verbs which are reviewed against appropriate taxonomies. The context is evaluated by considering the inherent complexity of the learning and the degree of autonomy and originality expected of the learner. Module authors are supported through this process by the Registrars Offices.

c. Review of Module and Programme LOs and their Alignment with the Award Standards

As part of the overarching quality assurance system, programme and module learning outcomes undergo both an internal and external review process. Particular attention is paid to the alignment of module and programme outcomes with the award standards in programme design and review in the context of collaborations with providers whose education and training provision is not in itself aligned to the National Framework.

2.3.3 Exit and Embedded Awards

In addition to the target award, many degree programmes offer a – generally embedded – exit award or awards. Exit awards may be applied for by learners who are not in a position to complete their studies towards the target award due to life circumstances. The majority of current exit awards are at Higher Certificate level, with some Ordinary Bachelors and Postgraduate Diplomas also offered as appropriate.

Arising from the ‘ladder’ system of programme provision which initially dominated the Institute of Technology sector, many of MTU’s long-standing Bachelor programmes retained the first award in the sequence, the Higher Certificate (120 ECTS credits), as an embedded exit award when they were converted to three- or four-year ab-initio programmes. For new degree programmes validated in the last number of years, exit awards are normally created and validated together with the target award. As a minimum, this entails submission of a set of programme outcomes and a statement of the professional value of the exit award to the new programme review panel as part of the review documentation for the target award.

Use of existing cognate lower-level awards as non-embedded exit awards is also possible. This requires a ‘differential validation’ based on a detailed demonstration of how the minimum intended outcomes of the exit award programme are met through successful completion of the relevant exit stage of the target programme.

Principles governing the provision, validation and making of embedded and exit awards are set out in the relevant MTU Cork and Sections 4 and 5 of [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) policy and procedure.

To safeguard the good standing of the University and the excellent reputation of its graduates now and in future, both Cork and Kerry campus Regulations have in place a policy on the Revocation of Awards (Policy on [the Revocation of MTU Cork campus Awards./ See Section A5.26 at MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

2.3.4 Validated Awards Register

A formal register/ Order in Council of all valid taught and research awards made by Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee was maintained by the Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs. This continues to be maintained by the Registrars Offices.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act 2018 (hereafter 'MTU (Kerry) Regulations') remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to teaching, learning and assessment have not been altered during this reporting period.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

2.4.1 Teaching and Learning

a. Pedagogical Principles in Module and Curriculum Design

When a new module is developed, the design of the formal module descriptor enforces the systematic capture and constructive alignment of fundamental elements of the module teaching and learning strategy from the outset. The descriptor thus defines, describes and encourages an interlinkage between the module learning outcomes, indicative content, the assessment and re-assessment formats and weightings, and the delivery formats, including the extent of independent learning expected.

At the curricular level, MTU's Cork campuses principles for modular programme design – summarised in the [Policy on Curricular Structure and Credit Profile](#) – embed a number of precepts fundamental to the mission and pedagogy of the institution. The attendant design features appear most pronouncedly in full-time undergraduate programmes, where they are aimed at supporting learners new to higher education in transitioning to third-level study and taking responsibility for charting and developing their own learning.

Each ab-initio undergraduate degree programme offered by MTU Cork campuses must include the common "CIT – Creativity, Innovation & Teamwork" module in its first semester. The CIT Module aims to equip learners with the skills and knowledge for a successful engagement in third-level education and subsequent life-long learning opportunities. Delivery of the CIT module is adapted by each department to the particular context of the discipline, so that no two instances will be exactly alike. Common to all deliveries however is the focus on developing independent learning, thinking and reasoning skills, team-working abilities, academic integrity precepts and basic academic writing and referencing skills as appropriate to the field of study. Learners also develop a vision of their ideal career path to start them out on the journey of taking ownership of their learning.

Most advanced programme stages include both a cognate elective or electives and a Free Choice option. The inclusion of Free Choice in the majority of undergraduate programme stages is designed to further encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and their personal and professional development. While many learners avail of cognate modules related to their own specialism as their Free Choice, others opt to broaden their educational experience by taking a module from outside their own field, be it in the form of a language or entrepreneurship module or in pursuit of a 'niche' interest, such as the choice of certain engineering modules on the part of music students. Though logistical or resource constraints will often limit the accessibility of modules offered by other discipline areas, the maintenance of the principle of choice as an enabler of competence

development is an important one in the pedagogy underpinning MTU Cork campuses' modular model.

b. Quality Assurance of Programme Teaching and Learning Strategies

MTU Cork campuses' processes for initial programme validation, as well as for periodic review, require departments to comment on the teaching and learning strategy for each programme in the programme self-evaluation reports submitted to the external expert panel. The information contained therein, and the qualitative feedback obtained by the panels from their meetings with learners, graduates and lecturing staff, is complemented by quantitative student performance data which give an indication of the success of the programme teaching and learning strategy in relation to the achievement of the learning outcomes by the different cohorts of learners.

The overall programme document provides a curriculum map showing where the relevant award standards are met and how the intended programme learning outcomes are achieved. Peer reviewers are asked to ascertain that each programme outcome is supported by a sufficient number of modules to ensure it can be achieved by the average learner, irrespective of elective choice. Furthermore, an assessment matrix for each programme is reviewed to ensure that the time and nature of the assessment tasks is appropriate. Reviewers will frequently address issues such as assessment clustering or over-reliance on one form of assessment methodology.

In addition to external peer review, MTU Cork campuses' QA processes also require that each programme and module undergoes a detailed internal moderation process, carried out by the Academic Quality Enhancement Unit in the Registrar's Office, before it is proposed for (re-) validation. Internal moderation amongst others aims to establish that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies, both within modules and cumulatively at stage and overall programme level, are pedagogically sound, coherent and optimally support achievement of the intended learning outcomes within the given programme delivery mode; that the individual teaching, learning and assessment elements within each module are consistent with each other and reflect the module level and credit weighting; and that learners receive appropriate formative feedback allowing them to improve their academic performance.

c. External Stakeholder Input into Development of Teaching and Learning Strategies

At an earlier stage of programme (re-)development, the appropriateness of the proposed teaching and learning strategies is investigated when academic units seek advice on their programme proposals from employer groups or industry advisory panels.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies may also be subject to review in professional accreditation or recognition processes. The professional organisation may wish to ascertain if the methodologies employed are suited to helping learners meet the requirements of the workplace in their chosen field, or it may require use of certain – particularly assessment – methodologies to grant exemptions from or admission to professional examinations. In some cases, professional accreditation processes may reveal a degree of divergence between the overall pedagogical philosophy of MTU and that of a particular professional body. This is another reason why the University continues to work closely with its professional partners in order to enable the partners to improve their understanding of each other's educational mission and aims, and to advance the development and promulgation of student-centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment for professionally-oriented higher education, guided by best current pedagogical theory and practice.

d. Learning through Extracurricular Engagement and Participation

Learning opportunities at MTU are not restricted to the – real or virtual – classroom. In keeping with its institutional mission and ethos, MTU Cork / CIT offers learners numerous opportunities to broaden their horizons and to develop their personal and leadership skills through participation in activities and initiatives beyond their academic programme, be it through societies, the arts or sport, [entrepreneurship competitions](#) such as the annual MTU [Prize for Innovation](#), [Innovation Challenge](#) or [APPrentice Competition](#), community engagement initiatives such as the [Volunteer Abroad programme](#), or indeed through participation in governance and programme management through the [MTU Cork Students' Union](#).

2.4.2 Assessment and Academic Integrity

Assessment is the means by which learners formally demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme, thereby earning academic credit and, eventually, the right to be conferred with a particular award. The quality assurance of assessment – from its design through delivery and operation to the evaluation of its outcomes – is thus critical to establishing and maintaining confidence in the standards of MTU awards.

Equally as important are measures to foster academic integrity and to prevent academic misconduct or address it where it does occur. While academic misconduct is normally understood as dishonesty in completing assessments, academic integrity is far broader than just 'not cheating'. It refers to a set of positive values which inform daily practice in academic endeavour, be it on the part of learners, lecturers or researchers, and which ideally both feed and are nurtured by an institutional culture of 'doing things right'.

a. Assessment Standards

MTU Cork campuses' assessment standards and regulations are rooted in the long-standing sectorial framework for determination of assessment grades and of progression and award standards set out in [QQI's Assessment and Standards](#), and should be understood before that backdrop.

The current standards, regulations and procedures for the assessment of programmes and the making of awards of MTU are set out in its [Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Marks and Standards\)](#). These regulations apply to all programmes of MTU Cork campuses. Supplementary regulations specific to the assessment of postgraduate research degree programmes are included in the MTU [Regulations for Postgraduate Study](#).

Following adaptations to MTU Cork campuses' delivery and assessment modalities as a consequence of Covid-19, a set of time-limited [supplementary regulations for the assessment of taught programmes](#) was approved for each of the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. In determining these, the guiding principle was to mitigate as far as possible the extra challenges arising for learners while absolutely maintaining academic quality and standards.

b. Assessment Design and Review

The format, general design and weighting of continuous assessment tasks and final examinations undergoes rigorous internal and external quality review when modules and programmes are first developed, when the [assessment design is amended in any significant way](#), and during periodic review. Adaptations to the assessment design are routinely proposed by the relevant module lecturers, based on the operational experience of delivering and marking assessments or on external examiner feedback. Assessment design issues may also be picked up by the programme boards in the course of their ongoing programme performance monitoring activity.

c. Assessment and Examination Procedures

Operationally, the organisation of final examinations and the preparation of stage results, records of achievement and award certificates is the remit of the MTU Cork campuses' Examinations Office. The website of the [Examinations Office](#) provides students and staff with extensive information and guidance on the assessment and examination process, assessment regulations, and academic honesty and integrity.

The published policies, procedures and guidelines of MTU Cork campuses on the operation and conduct of examinations and continuous assessment set out and regulate

- The [conduct of candidates during examinations](#);
- [Institutional policy on academic honesty](#), and a [supplemental policy](#) approved following the move to remote teaching, learning and assessment in 2020, defining different types of academic dishonesty and misconduct and outlining the follow-up process for potential instances of misconduct;
- A [process for formal inquiry into allegations of misconduct related to examinations and assessment, and a supplemental procedure to provide for online hearings of the Assessment Infringements Board](#); and
- A process for submission of [extenuating circumstances](#) related to non-completion of examinations and assessment tasks.

Candidates are furthermore furnished with a published [process for notifying observed correction errors and appealing the outcomes of examinations and assessment](#).

With regard to the external moderation of assessment and examinations in taught programme provision, MTU Cork / CIT has published policy sets out the principles for the selection and appointment of [external examiners](#) and set out the rights and duties of externs. The procedures for selection and duties of external examiners in research degree programmes are incorporated in the MTU [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#).

d. External Moderation of Assessment in Taught Programmes

A key piece of the quality assurance of assessment is the external examiner system which ensures external moderation of both the design and the outcomes of assessment and examinations.

Taught MTU programmes whose curriculum is largely drawn from a single field or a small number of cognate fields of study are moderated on a per-programme basis, with two 'externs' – one academic and one professional examiner – normally appointed for each programme. Assessment in service-in areas such as mathematics, languages or business skills, by contrast, is moderated by 'subject externs' who review modules in a particular

specialism delivered across a variety of programmes. Selection of external examiners for multi- disciplinary programmes looks to ensure reasonable coverage of the main disciplines represented.

Nominations for external examiner are formally approved by the MTU Academic Council for a three-year term, following vetting by the Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs which considers the proposed extern's experience and expertise as well as any potential conflict of interest issues. Re-nomination is possible where a suitable new extern is not available but is not encouraged.

External examiners are responsible for reviewing all draft examination materials – including marking schemes and model solutions – and for considering the appropriateness of the internal marking in a representative sample of submitted learner work. In some subjects the latter function may also encompass presence during a percentage of oral or performance examinations. Externs are normally expected to conduct at least one visit to the institution to coincide with the meeting of the Progression & Awards Board for the respective programme and also provide an annual summary report of observations and recommendations to the Registrar which feeds into ongoing programme monitoring and programmatic review.

The bespoke MAX^e digital exam paper management system, introduced in 2018/19, has simplified communication and reduced the administrative load for both externs and MTU Cork campuses in relation to scheduled final exams. Ways of obtaining maximum utility from MAX^e to support the external review of continuous coursework, now the dominant form of assessment in many programmes and with an increased adoption post the onset of the pandemic, are being actively explored. Due to the diversity of disciplines and assessment formats, which amongst others include artefacts and recordings, and the sheer volume of assessment, the external moderation of 'continuous assessment' remains subject to greater local variation than is the case for final examinations.

For an outline of the role of external reviewers in postgraduate research degree study, see Section 4 below.

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#) Section A5: Assessment of Learners,
Sub Section A5.3: Preparation and Production of Examination and Assessment Material,
Sub Section A5.4a: Project and Dissertation Procedure,
Sub Section A5.4b: Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline,
Sub Section A5.5: Access by Candidates to Relevant Examination and Assessment Material, Sub Section A5.6a:
Procedures for the Marking of Examinations and Assessments and Recording of Results,
Sub Section A5.6b: Entry of Examination Results,
Sub Section A5.7: Pre Examination Board and Meetings, Sub Section A5.8: Board of Examiners and Meetings,
Sub Section A5.9: Recording Decisions of Boards of Examiners Meetings,
Sub Section A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit,
Subsection A5.9b: Classified Awards for Repeat Students,
Sub Section A5.10: Amendment to a Results Broadsheet,
Sub Section A5.11: Review of Provisional Examination Results,
Sub Section A5.12: Recheck of Provisional Examination Results,
Sub Section Sub Section A5.15: Analysis of Examination Results,
Sub Section A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures (Taught Programmes),
Sub Section A5.17: Assessment and Standards Revised 2013,
Sub Section A5.18: Invigilator Guidelines,
Sub Section A5.19: Procedure for the Management of Certified Absence relating to CA Events,
Sub Section A5.20: Solas Assessment Regulations,
Sub Section A5.21: Protocol for Students Representing the Institute,

Sub Section A5.22: Application for Use of a Bilingual Dictionary During Exams,
Sub Section A5.23: Student Feedback on Continuous Assessment (CA),
Sub Section A5.24: Staff Student Meeting Guidelines for Students and Academic Staff,
Sub Section A5.26 Examinations and Assessments Review Committee EARC and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee EAAC.

Validation and Monitoring of Programmes

All new programme proposals, and the evaluation and validation of same, and reviews of existing programmes (Programmatic Review), require consideration of programme delivery, with particular focus on curriculum design and teaching, learning, assessment and feedback strategies. This serves to quality assure same and support a student-centred approach to same. Statistics on student progression within programmes are reviewed annually and barriers to progression are reviewed at programme level by Course Boards. External Examiners in their roles are required to review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures, range and type, and flowing from this consider subsidiary module assessment strategies. External Examiners are also required to determine whether the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. External Examiners must report their findings to the University and the University must respond to same. Programme validation is granted for five years, after which time a review of the programme (Programmatic Review) is completed to establish eligibility for validation renewal and/or retirement.

Refer to Part A, Section 2.1 of this report on Programme Development and Approval in relation to validation of Programmes. See Validation Reports available at: [MTU Kerry campus Procedures Plans and Reports/](#)

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules,

Section A5 Assessment of Learners,

Sub Section A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures, Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes,

Sub Section A6.1: School Boards,

Sub Section A6.2: Course Boards,

Sub Section A6.4: Course Programme Handbook;

Sub Section A6.6: Students on Course Board,

Sub Section A7.1 Procedure and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes (Programmatic Review)

Structured involvement by students on Course Board(s) is through the following mechanisms:

Representation on Course Boards; Scheduled Joint Academic Workshops (JAWS); Scheduled Class Tutor/Class Representative meetings.

Student Support

Student Support Services cater for the needs of a diverse student population. The aim of this service is to provide the necessary support to enable students to successfully transition to third level, offer advice and assistance with retention issues and support the students to develop both academically and professionally. MTU Student Affairs professionals across a range of student services are dedicated to supporting the academic, professional and personal development of students from pre-entry to graduation. The support services are also listed in the student handbook, web site and internally through the virtual learning environment.

MTU (Cork) Information

[Fitness to Study](#) and [Fitness to Practice](#) policies have been implemented on the Cork Campuses. The 'portmanteau' regulations combine general regulations and guidelines on appropriate and responsible learner conduct and discipline with regulations for the usage of facilities and services and key learner-facing academic regulations and procedures.

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#):

Section A13: Learning Resources and Student Support,

Sub Section A13.3: Student Charter,

Subsection A13.4: Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures,

Sub Section A13.6: Policy and Procedure to Support and Determine a Students Fitness to Continue in Study,

Sub Section A13.7: Student Code of Conduct and General Discipline Policy,

Sub Section A13.8: Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedures.

See [Student Handbook Section A](#)

Academic Integrity

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act 2018 (hereafter 'MTU (Kerry) Regulations') remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to Academic Integrity have not been altered during this reporting period.

All MTU students are expected to approach their academic work with honesty and integrity. Fostering academic integrity and the prevention of academic misconduct, or its detection and the implementation of appropriate consequences for same, are the cornerstones of maintaining trust in the assessment system of a higher education institution and the awards that are founded on this.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

Academic Integrity and Prevention and Detection of Academic Misconduct

MTU Cork campuses' academic integrity and misconduct [policy and procedures](#) are publicly available and widely promulgated to learners and staff via emails from Registrar's Office and academic departments, communications from Students' Union, and through the [academic integrity webpage](#) which also contains information on the supports available to students in this area. Learners have their attention drawn to the requirement for academic honesty at various points of their academic journey, including in the context of the foundational "[CIT \(Creativity, Innovation & Teamwork\)](#)" module common to all standard undergraduate degree programmes. Students submitting final theses/dissertations or projects, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, are required to sign a declaration confirming the originality of their work and the absence of unauthorised collusion, but module lecturers often require similar declarations to accompany other coursework submissions as well. With the move to fully remote online teaching and assessment post-Covid-19, a standard declaration of originality was developed and introduced for all written submissions across MTU Cork / CIT.

To limit the incidence of academic misconduct from the first, [the MTU Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) and the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) jointly offer assessment design training for staff which, amongst others, demonstrates ways in which careful assessment design can minimise opportunities for ‘cheating’. The TLU also collaborates with the MTU Cork / CIT Library in offering ‘disseminator’ training for lecturers to help their students avoid plagiarism and access useful online referencing resources.

Practical advice and training for students at all levels on assessment literacy, good academic writing and referencing practice and the avoidance of plagiarism is offered by a number of MTU Cork / CIT services, such as the [Academic Learning Centre](#), the [Academic Success Coaching](#) service and the [Library](#). The annual “[Just Ask! About Results](#)” campaigns of [AnSEO](#), the [Student Engagement Office](#), also aim to raise awareness of poor assessment practices.

MTU currently uses plagiarism detection software, which is fully integrated with the VLE. Not least given the variety of assessment types and purposes, use of plagiarism detection software is not mandatory in MTU, though department-level usage policies are in place in several academic departments. Even where no such departmental policy exists, many academic staff members use plagiarism detection software to both prevent plagiarism in written coursework – by encouraging students to check drafts for similarity matches and/or requiring submission of assignments through the software – and to support the detection and confirmation of plagiarism in submitted work. The TEL Department runs frequent workshops for staff which also cover aspects of institutional academic integrity and misconduct policy and of assessment design. A number of help articles on the TEL staff ‘knowledge base’ (<https://telhelp.eu.helpdocs.com/>) provide basic information on how to set up assignments and interpret originality reports.

Minor instances of academic misconduct are dealt with at the departmental level by the Module Examination Boards (MEBs). Suspected infringements of a serious nature or repeat infringements are referred to the Assessment Infringements Board (AIB), which reviews the evidence in each case, hears from the students and staff members concerned, and determines an appropriate course of action in line with [University policy](#). The AIB reports to Academic Council on its activities and also makes recommendations on the further development of academic integrity and misconduct procedures.

Should credible suspicion of serious academic misconduct on the part of an MTU graduate arise post-graduation, to the extent that this casts doubt on the entitlement of the graduate to their award, the [MTU Cork Policy on Revocation of Awards](#) may be evoked. This foresees an investigation of the suspected historic misconduct by a high-level institutional committee with the primary aim of determining if, on balance of the evidence, the award conferred upon the graduate was deserved, or was not deserved and should be revoked. The final decision on revocation lies with the Governing Body of MTU.

(With regard to academic integrity and research ethics in postgraduate research education specifically, see also Section 4 of this report.)

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#):

Section A5: Assessment of Learners,

Sub Section A5.2: Anti Plagiarism Policy and Procedure,

Sub Section A5.13: Processing of Alleged Infringements related to Examinations organised by the Examinations Office,

Sub Section A5.14: Processing of Alleged Infringements of Examination Regulations Relating to Continuous Assessment (CA) and Final Examination Other (FEO),
Sub Section A5.25a: Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism,
Sub Section A5.25b: Request for Approval to Depart from Institute Referencing System,
Sub Section A5.26: Examinations and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC).

Refer to the following sections of the Student Handbook: Section B: Student Rights and Responsibilities, Sub Section 2: Academic Conduct.

See Student Handbook available at: [MTU \(Kerry\) Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Library](#) for supporting detail for students on academic integrity:

Complaints

Based on previous work done by the founding Institutes, the first common policy approved by Munster Technological University following designation has been its [Dignity & Respect Policy](#) and associated [Procedure](#). This policy aims to foster a positive culture which values the contribution of each member of the MTU community, be they staff or student, promotes respectful and professional behaviour, fosters inclusion, and addresses bullying and harassment where it does occur.

The scope of this new, university-wide policy intersects with a number of policies of CIT/IT Tralee still in force in MTU Cork/MTU Kerry (pending further development of the overarching MTU policy framework), which are set out below.

The appointment of a [Student Ombudsman](#) has proven to be a critical element of resolving student grievances, particularly at informal stage. The post holder will be an experienced member (or retired member) of academic staff. The Student Ombudsman now operates on a pan-University basis. The purpose of the post of Student Ombudsman is to advise and assist students with the resolution of difficulties, complaints or grievances involving staff or services of the Institute in an informal manner.

The services provided by this post are complementary to a range of existing student services and the Student Ombudsman may refer relevant student issues for resolution by those services as appropriate.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

The [Student Grievance Procedure](#) gives learners recourse to a sequence of both informal and formal steps to resolve grievances. The following are examples of matters that may fall within the scope of this Procedure:

- Student grievances against members of staff of the Institute in relation to bullying and harassment.
- Student grievances in relation to discrimination by the Institute or members of staff.
- Student grievances in relation to the delivery of academic programs and courses of study by the Institute or members of staff.
- Student grievances relating to the professional conduct of members of staff.
- Student grievances relating to student services, academic or non-academic, including the Students' Union.

- Student grievances relating to Institute facilities.

The overall approach is to ensure that the majority of grievances are resolved as near to their source as possible. It is for this reason that the Procedure provides for a number of stages, both informal and formal in the handling of a grievance. The purpose of the Procedure is to ensure that grievances are resolved amicably in so far as possible and to the mutual satisfaction of both complainant and respondent. It is expected that the majority of grievances will be resolved at the informal stage.

The Student Ombudsman's main functions relate to Stage 1 (informal grievance) and Stage 3 (grievance review) of the process. Throughout the different stages of the process, the Ombudsman acts in a mediatory or advisory capacity, rather than as an arbitrator. The vast majority of grievances are satisfactorily resolved the informal stage, but occasionally a grievance escalates to Stage 2, and a resolution is formally determined and recorded. If this resolution is subsequently appealed, the Ombudsman will convene a Grievance Review Panel to conduct a final hearing. In such a case, the Ombudsman (or her/his nominee) will act as Secretary to the panel meeting.

The CIT / MTU postgraduate regulations govern the different stages of the postgraduate research student lifecycle, monitoring and supervision, submission and examination, and award classification. They also set out appeals and grievance procedures for postgraduate research students. The frameworks for structured PhDs and for professional doctorates are included in appendices.

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

Students have available a user-friendly avenue through which complaints regarding academic modules, programmes of study and student services and facilities can be addressed in a meaningful and constructive way.

See [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Regulations](#)

Section A10: Complaints Procedure,

Sub Section A10.1 Student Complaints Policy & Procedures.

Sub Section A10.2 MTU Dignity and Respect Policy

Subsection A10.2 MTU Dignity and Respect Procedure

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act 2018 (hereafter 'MTU (Kerry) Regulations') remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to Learner Resources and Support have not been altered during this reporting period.

MTU is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inspiring academic environment which enables and encourages all learners to reach for and achieve their full academic and personal potential. This section describes the policies, structures and services in place to support both the individual learner and the community as a whole to thrive and succeed.

3.1 Policies and Procedures Related to Student Welfare and Community Standards

Links to key policies for MTU learners regarding learner welfare and standards of conduct are collated and prominently displayed on the [MTU Cork Campus Student Portal](#) homepage and on the Current Student section at [MTU Kerry campus](#)

a. Community Standards and Student Discipline

The standards of conduct expected of learners specifically are collated in the [MTU Cork campus Student Regulations](#). These 'portmanteau' regulations combine general regulations and guidelines on appropriate and responsible learner conduct and discipline with regulations for the usage of facilities and services and key learner-facing academic regulations and procedures. The MTU Cork / CIT disciplinary regulations are also published in a separate section of the [MyCIT Student Portal](#). MTU Kerry/ ITT disciplinary regulations are published in the student Handbook at [MTU Kerry Campus Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

b. Dignity and Respect

Based on previous work done by the founding Institutes, the first common policy approved by Munster Technological University following designation has been its [MTU Dignity & Respect Policy](#) and associated [MTU Dignity and Respect Procedure](#). This policy aims to foster a positive culture which values the contribution of each member of the MTU community, be they staff or student, promotes respectful and professional behaviour, fosters inclusion, and addresses bullying and harassment where it does occur.

The scope of this new, university-wide policy intersects with a number of policies presently still in force in MTU Cork and Kerry campuses (pending further development of the overarching MTU policy framework, in particular, a MTU Student Grievance Procedure) which give learners recourse to a sequence of both informal and formal steps to resolve grievances.

While the [Fitness to Study / Practice](#) policies (see Section A 2.2.1 c above) support the institution in addressing concerns over the suitedness of learners to academic study and professional life, the [Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy](#) aims to direct and inform learners looking for mental health supports as well as staff members concerned about learners with acknowledged or suspected mental health issues.

3.2 MTU Libraries

a. Library Policy and Infrastructure

MTU Library significantly contributes to the achievements of MTU's education, research and lifelong learning strategies by offering exceptional expertise, scholarly resources, spaces and technologies to all MTU's community, regardless of location or mode of learning. Ensuring equality of access to, and full use of, all library resources and facilities is a critical aspect in the role of library services, and especially in the context of a new Technological University. Standardizing policies, procedures, and practices across MTU Libraries to ensure parity of user experience was a key priority during the reporting period. Some of the key Policies approved in April 2021 included Membership and Lending, Collection Development, Usage, and Inter-Library Loans Policy. All MTU library policies developed during this 2020/2021 reporting period are available to view [MTU Policies](#).

Physical library facilities are spread across MTU six campuses and are designed to enhance opportunities for study and reflection while efficiently housing over 170,000 print items and several key collections of artefacts held in the [Special Collections](#) category. The library materials cover all subject areas represented in MTU and provide access to titles in Science, Engineering, Business, Social Studies Nursing & Health Care and Humanities. All physical library material is publicly searchable from the [MTU Cork campus Library](#) and [MTU Kerry campus Library websites](#) by using the Online Public Catalogue module of *Koha*, the Library Management System.

A variety of over 1,300 well-proportioned, abundantly lit study spaces are available across all the MTU libraries, with WIFI access throughout. Libraries offer flexible and inclusive social learning spaces that provide users with comfortable areas for collaborative and group study. In addition to 'hot desk' study spaces for short-term occupancy, PC workstations and a number of height adjustable motorised desks, students can avail of bookable group study hubs, an Audio-Visual Resource room, and an Assistive Technology room with specialized hardware and software. Self-service kiosks are provided in five of the six MTU libraries. Plans are underway to implement RFID technology into the John Holland Library at NMCI during 2021/2022 Academic Year which will include the installation of a self-service kiosk.

As outlined in the library's Collection Development Policy, MTU Library seeks to be a hybrid library, i.e. having the optimum combination of varied and in-depth in-house collections while delivering access to premium online resource content to all of the academic community. Both physical and electronic materials are mapped to a sophisticated discovery layer, a mega-aggregate of disparate content. This surfaces results of all of the library's indexable content into a single search box, retrieving a broad scope of material via a faceted and relevancy-ranked search functionality with ability to drill down instantly to any native database. The physical library holdings are complemented by a range of digital resources, encompassing 200,000+ e-books accessible through [Ebook Central](#) and a significant collection of both broad-based and specialist [e-journal and standards databases](#). The multi-disciplinary databases provided currently include Science Direct, Emerald Insight and EBSCOhost (with subsections - Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, MEDLINE Complete, OmniFile Wilson Web, SportDiscus, SOCINDEX, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) and MathsciNet). Subject-specific databases include ACM, IHS, SAI Global (NSAI, ISO, EN Standards) ARTSTOR, IEEE, CINAHL, Proquest Health Research Premium Collection, Nexis Uni, SAGE Business Cases, Sage Research Methods, and Scopus.

The [TURN](#) report (p.31) recognises the scope for sharing resources between TUs and other HEIs in relation to electronic resources and publications. As blended learning becomes the new norm, access to premium electronic resources becomes ever more urgent and a vital lifeline to our staff and students. MTU Library is currently compelled to approach publishers at a local level where publishers are applying inconsistent pricing models and proposing exorbitant price increases in a TU setting. [Irish Research eLibrary](#) (IREL), is a key driver of teaching, learning and research resources at University level in Ireland and access to IREL's information infrastructure and

centralised purchasing is paramount in order to effectively fulfil the role of MTU in driving social, regional and economic development. MTU IReL membership would advantage the University in three key ways: Firstly MTU's e-resource portfolio would expand considerably, secondly the purchasing power of a single National consortium would ensure leverage and value for money in acquiring resources from global suppliers, such as JSTOR. Finally, the nature of the deal that IReL achieves – *Read and Publish* is superior to the current Read Only subscription model. This type of deal flips the subscription payment to fund researcher Article Processing Charges from MTU at no cost to the authors and is part of worldwide activism towards full Open Access for academic outputs. Membership to IReL is also key to equitable knowledge access with University peers and undoubtedly would enhance cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary research. Parity of access to premium academic e-content for our new University by availing of IReL's centralised purchasing power is now the most pressing need for MTU Libraries.

b. Library Services and Supports

As student learning modes expand and diversify, the Library resources continue to adapt and grow in response to developing user expectations. The Library websites, with integrated mobile device compatibility, offer a continually expanding range of [video tutorials](#) and online [subject guides](#) created by library staff in collaboration with academic staff from relevant departments. Library staff have created their own dedicated [YouTube channel](#) which hosts a large selection of instructional videos designed and produced by members of the library team.

The Library also utilises a '24/7' virtual assistant chatbot built on IBM's [Watson Assistant](#) platform. Implementation of this AI support tool has allowed the Library to build, train, and deploy conversational interactions with immediate responses to the most frequently asked library queries, regardless of time and user location. Library staff are able to regularly update conversation starter topics, a feature which proved especially useful during the rapidly evolving pandemic crisis as the chatbot can immediately reflect operational changes and new services, such as ['Click & Collect'](#).

In the reporting period the Library also introduced a Lib Chat service on the Springshare platform. This allows Library staff to interact online with library users and answer questions in real-time via the Lib Chat interface on the Library website. The service was particularly useful during COVID and is used in conjunction with the regular library support services. A FAQ resource has also been developed on the [Lib Answers Homepage](#).

The highly qualified, experienced and skilled staff of the MTU Libraries – without a doubt the Libraries' greatest resource – continually demonstrate significant capacity to deliver innovative library services combined with a passion for engagement and outreach within MTU and the wider community. There is a clear commitment to enable students to discover and utilize resources for their study and future career, become independent and self-motivated learners and to learn the necessary skills to become independent life-long learners. The MTU Libraries cater for information literacy requirements at all levels, i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level, as well as academics and researchers. Presentations and workshops for members of the MTU academic and research community are delivered either face-to-face or online as requested and range from individual support to small group and larger class tutorials and are complemented by 'outreach' offerings, such as workshops for regional DEIS schools or as part of life-long learning community events in the region.

The MTU Library is committed to promoting and supporting scholarly communications via its Institutional Repository, SWORD (Southwest Online Research Deposit). SWORD repository records, preserves, and disseminates MTU research outputs and also features publishing capabilities and a conference hosting infrastructure. Between January 2021 and August 2021, 147 MTU affiliated works were posted on SWORD, which attracted 11,498 downloads from 806 recognised institutions, spanning 141 countries worldwide (verified statistics available here). The Library is actively developing Open Science infrastructures that support the data management needs and research integrity agenda of the research community and manages MTU's membership of the [Irish ORCID consortium](#).

3.3 Digital Environment

MTU Quality Assurance and enhancement policies and procedures in relation to programme design, teaching, learning and assessment in digital environments are guided by QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. MTU is guided in particular by QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes. See Part B Section 4 of this report for more detail in relation to the infra-structure and supports provided to staff and learners provided by the University in support of these guidelines.

a. Information Technology Services

MTU sets out to further enhance an engaging, high-quality, flexible and inclusive learning experience for all students and to provide them with excellent, modern educational resources and infrastructure. The infrastructure across the MTU campuses has served the University well during the Covid-19 emergency period.

The IT Services Team works to provide high quality IT services and solutions to students and staff across all campuses, thus enhancing student experience and supporting academic delivery across University, in collaboration with relevant technical staff in the academic units. A strong focus is placed on staff development and empowerment through effective IT governance processes and appropriate IT staff training programmes, accompanied by regular awareness-raising campaigns through various media on critical topics such as cybersecurity. Comprehensive information on available IT supports can be accessed through the [IT Services Tab](#) on the [MTU Cork Campuses \(MyCIT\) Student Portal](#) and the [MTU Cork campus IT Services website](#) and via [MTU Kerry campus Computer Facilities](#)

IT Service Desks, both physical and virtual, respond to a wide range of computer-related queries across the MTU. Issues can be related in person, by email, online or by phone are available to staff and students. Services are available to both staff and learners.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

All new MTU Cork campus students receive their [myCIT.ie](#) and [Web4 Student](#) account details on registration, along with their MTU Cork campus SmartCard. MyCIT email accounts are based on Gmail, with online tutorials supporting learners in setting up and fully utilising their myCIT email account. Students use Single SignOn (SSO) authentication to log into all relevant IT services, including email, Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) and WiFi. A Microsoft Office plan is available free to current MTU students which permits learners to install, at no cost, the latest version of the MS Office suite (including MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps) on up to five personal devices, use MS Office online on any device and avail of 1TB Cloud storage on OneDrive.

Apart from being the primary form of campus identification, the MTU Cork SmartCard provides access to Library facilities and services, restricted-access laboratories and campus car parking facilities. It also acts as a personal electronic 'purse' for use at 'Smart' campus locations including photocopiers, print and reprographic services, food services and campus shops.

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

All new MTU Kerry campus students receive their MTU Kerry campus computer network account details and [Web4 Student](#) account details on registration, along with their MTU Kerry campus T-Card. Online tutorials supporting learners in utilising the campus IT computer facilities are available via the campus Virtual Learning

Environment, Blackboard. Students use Single SignOn (SSO) authentication to log into all relevant IT services, including email, Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard)) and WiFi. While the T-Card acts as the primary form of on-campus identification, it also provides access to various facilities and laboratories, and is used for reprographic services.

b. MTU Virtual Learning Environment

MTU has long-established expertise in the use of technology for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Building on e-learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology- Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [E- learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#), MTU offers a significant portfolio of flexible online programmes. The significant expertise built up by TEL and EDSU served MTU well in its move to predominantly or exclusively online delivery of its programmes following the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions across higher education institutions and to continue to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the period of the pandemic.. These units are supported by the MTU IT Services, who provide further networking, software and hardware support. More detailed information on the current environments on the MTU Campuses is provided below. Plans are in train to move to Canvas as a single platform in the short to medium term.

Information in relation to the development of MTU Virtual Learning Environments is provided in Part **B** Section 4 of the report.

c. Information Technology Services and Supports

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

Canvas Virtual Learning Environment

MTU Cork campus has long-established expertise in the use of technology for teaching and learning and has, for many years, now offered a suite of fully online programmes. MTU Cork campus also has a [rich e-learning infrastructure](#) in place, at the heart of which sits the [Canvas Learning Management System](#) (also called a Virtual Learning Environment). Canvas is a cloud-based platform with a range of features to support important online teaching and learning functions with respect to assessment, content sharing, communication and collaboration, class management and learning analytics. Canvas is managed by the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) on the MTU Cork campus and is integrated with the Banner student record system, so that staff and students are automatically ‘enrolled’ on the relevant modules based on the most up-to-date information.

Canvas was originally chosen as MTU Cork campus Learning Management System – following an extensive and inclusive procurement process – because of the quality of its user experience, mobile support, learning analytics capabilities, ease of use, and ease of integration with other platforms and tools. The latter point has been a key one in allowing TEL to selectively release new tools and functionality and to mainstream new integrations in a systematic and evidence-based way.

Since its introduction, Canvas has been reframed as the central hub and access point for all components of online learning at MTU Cork campus across the full continuum of delivery modes, from its use as a complement to traditional face-to-face delivery to its central function in supporting fully online programmes and modules. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, such flexibility together with in-house experience in TEL allowed the institution to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of emergency remote teaching (ERT). The Canvas platform was the primary – and often exclusive – way in which staff engaged with learners throughout this period, and the

system supported a number of different ERT approaches, both through its out-of-the-box platform features and in the way in which TEL were able to integrate the system with a number of other ed-tech components and tools. Such integrations include, at present, a plagiarism detection system, e-learning authoring systems (H5P and Screencastomatic) and a digital badging platform (Badgr).

The key integrated platform, however, particularly in the ERT context, is the video conference platform Zoom which was used previously in support of online programmes but which was rolled out across MTU Cork campus in its entirety to support ERT.

Canvas and Zoom together have, finally, been a source of powerful learning analytics, giving lecturers and programme co-ordinators valid, reliable and actionable insight into online learner engagement and performance which has been particularly important in the ERT context.

The IT Services Department also provides support to the Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning and other academic departments involved in the delivery of online or blended programmes. This work has informed the implementation and ongoing development of MTU Cork / CIT's Emergency Remote Teaching Model in response to Covid-19, which was first put in place in March 2020.

Given the academic portfolio of MTU Cork campus, Covid-19 has presented particular challenges for the attainment and assessment of learning outcomes related to laboratory work. Following extensive work on the MTU Cork campus Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), which had previously mainly supported programme delivery in Computer Science and Mathematics, both the range and functionality of the VDI were massively extended in time for the 2020/21 academic year. Several additional areas – including Engineering, Life Sciences, Business and Music – are now enabled to avail of virtual desktops for remote delivery purposes. Furthermore, remote 'labs' are integrated with the timetabling system, so that any laboratories scheduled are automatically aligned to the class timetable. The VDI permits lecturers to collaborate with students during remote lab sessions, complementing the use of MS Teams to facilitate screensharing and provision of individual assistance to students during class time.

3.4 Academic, Welfare, and Career Services and Supports and Student Life

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

Information on available learner services and supports can be accessed amongst others under the [Student Life](#) tab on the MTU Cork / CIT home page and the [myCIT student portal](#).

On the main Bishopstown campus, the principal student services hub is the Nexus Student Centre. This houses most of the services outlined in the sections below, as well as a Student Common Room, meeting rooms and 'high-street' services such as a mini-market, bistro and banking service. A more limited range of comparable services is available in each of MTU Cork / CIT's constituent college campuses. The Nexus also hosts many key events of the MTU Cork / CIT annual calendar, including graduation ceremonies.

A key role in maintaining ongoing links between the main campus and the 'satellite' campuses is that of the Campus Liaison Officer, who visits each constituent college on a weekly basis and provides information about supports available to all students.

a. Academic and Career Support Services

Key services and supports related to aspects of programme access and entry, academic study and graduate career

development are provided by MTU Cork campus's [AnSEO, the Student Engagement Office](#), the [Access & Disability Service](#) and the [Careers Service](#), in addition to the core administrative services and supports of the MTU Cork campus [Admissions](#) and [Examinations Offices](#).

In addition to its work around First Year engagement, the Student Engagement Office delivers or coordinates student success initiatives such as the [Just Ask!](#) campaigns or [Academic Success Coaching](#), which offers one-to-one or group coaching sessions intended to improve the ability of learners at all stages to identify academic goals and to develop strategies and skills to meet these. Another core strand of AnSEO's work revolves around building student partnership in quality through different project strands recently brought together under the banner [Le Chéile](#).

AnSEO also incorporates the [Academic Learning Centre](#), which offers individual or group-based advisory sessions and tutorials support in academic writing as well as a range of STEM areas in which learners traditionally experience a level of difficulty, particularly Mathematics.

b. Student Life and Welfare Support Services

MTU is a student-centred university, with a strong focus on student support and student engagement. In keeping with its institutional mission and ethos, MTU offers learners numerous opportunities to broaden their horizons and to develop their personal and leadership skills through participation in activities and initiatives beyond their academic programme. MTU Student Affairs is made up of professionals across a range of student services who are dedicated to supporting the academic, professional and personal development of students from pre-entry to graduation, hence contributing to the fulfilment of MTU's mission 'to lead change, and through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world.'

MTU's Clubs and Societies play a vital role in helping students build friendships and support networks, open themselves up to new possibilities and perspectives and develop a sense of belonging, engagement and pride. In turn, positive integration into the MTU community contributes to improved engagement and retention in the students' chosen academic programme.

Learners facing economic hardship may apply for financial support through the Student Assistance Fund. A critical element of this for the duration of the Covid-19-related remote delivery arrangements is the [Government Laptop Loan Scheme](#) and the special HEA COVID-19 funding package for Access aimed at enabling equitable access to necessary digital devices for disadvantaged learners.

Supports and services related to students' physical and mental health and welfare needs are provided by the relevant [Medical/Health Centre](#), [Counselling Service](#) and [Accommodation Office](#), while the Chaplaincy has an open door policy, welcoming learners and staff of all faiths and none.

MTU Cork Information

MTU Cork campus student supports (including [Sports](#) and [Societies](#) Offices, [Medical Centre](#), [Counselling Service](#) and [Accommodation Office](#)), are funded through a devolved budget managed by the Student Finance Committee. Reporting to the Finance Committee of Governing Body, the eleven members of the Student Finance Committee include representatives of the institutional executive and relevant services as well as four representatives of the Students' Union. Devolution of service funding to this committee thus ensures that learners, through their formal representational structures, are enabled to play a critical part in the governance and management of the services provided to them. Any funds remaining once allocation of funding to the regular student services is complete are utilised to support various student-focused special projects, such as the Health & Wellbeing initiative outlined above.

Responsibility for the management of the two ESF funds, the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities, lies with the Access Funding Committee. Chaired by the Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Access Funding Committee is tasked with the following responsibilities: evaluation and revision of policies and procedures regarding these funds, and preparation of internal and external audits of these funds. It includes representatives from Finance, Student Services, Access & Disability, and relevant senior managers, as well as representation from the Students' Union.

The [Student Assistance Fund](#), is administered by the MTU Cork campus [Access & Disability Service](#). A critical element of this for the duration of the Covid-19-related remote delivery arrangements has been the [Government Laptop Loan Scheme](#) aimed at enabling equitable access to necessary digital devices for disadvantaged learners. In addition to its role in institutional governance mechanisms, the MTU Cork campus [Students' Union](#) (SU) also offers students many practical supports and services 'at eye level'. On the main Bishopstown campus, students can access the permanently resourced SU Office in the Nexus Student Centre for day-to-day necessities such as low-cost college supplies, bus passes and a phone charging station, as well as to arrange meetings with the SU sabbatical officers to discuss issues or concerns. While not available during Covid-19 restrictions, a free weekly SU ['Shopping Shuttle'](#) bus service operates between the suburban Bishopstown campus and its adjacent student residences and the closest major shopping centre. Finally, during the academic year the Students' Union publishes its monthly [expliCIT Magazine](#), written and produced by MTU Cork campus students with student interests and information needs in mind.

In addition to its role in institutional governance mechanisms (see also [Section A 1.1.3](#)), the MTU Cork / CIT [Students' Union](#) (SU) also offers students many practical supports and services 'at eye level'.

c. Services and Supports for International Learners

The International Offices provide end-to-end support to incoming and outgoing learners embarking on an international experience.

In line with the National Strategy for Higher Education, the University recognises that different groups of students need different and uniquely tailored academic, life and cultural supports to enable successful integration and participation in their new living and learning environment. The International Offices aim to support incoming students of different cultural origins to have the best possible life and learning experience at MTU, as well as preparing outgoing students for a successful period of living and studying abroad.

MTU Cork Information

Information topics such as the application process, programme entry requirements, orientation and registration, fees and scholarships, living in Ireland, visas and health insurance is readily available to international applicants on [MTU Cork/CIT's International Office website](#), grouped to address the differing needs of [Incoming Erasmus](#), [Non-EU Full Degree](#) and [Study Abroad/Exchange](#) students. Post-registration, incoming international students are issued with an [International Student Handbook](#) which is updated annually.

To ensure continuity of support post-Covid-19, the MTU Cork campus [Virtual International Office](#) was launched. This allows learners and staff to 'drop in' virtually via a Zoom link with queries or requests for advice.

Furthermore, a new International Student module is now accessible on Canvas, CIT / MTU's virtual learning environment. This module provides practical information on living in Ireland specific to the needs of current

international learners (on topics such as PPS Numbers, bank accounts and the immigration process). It is also used as an additional channel for the university to communicate with and distribute information to international learners specifically, improving the reach of targeted information provision outside of emails.

Registered international learners at MTU Cork campus have access to the same broad range of student services and supports as local students, of course, outlined amongst others in the preceding [Section A 3.2, The MTU Cork Libraries](#), and [Section A 3.4, Academic and Welfare Services and Supports](#). International students may also draw on the supports of the Students' Union, of which they are members for the duration of their registration with MTU Cork campus.

In addition to service provision to students, the International Office is engaged in advocacy for internationalisation within the institution, working closely with MTU Cork campus's other support offices – such as the Careers, Accommodation and Societies Offices, the Counselling Service or the Chaplaincy – and academic departments to ensure that the additional needs of international learners are understood and supported.

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

There are a range of learning resources and student supports in place to meet the needs of the diverse student population, including:

- Academic success Centre-Study skills and Transitions Facilitator;
- Access Office;
- Office for Learning Difference;
- Counselling;
- Medical Service;
- Pastoral Care Service;
- Careers Service;
- International Office;
- Sports and Recreational Facilities;
- Sports Office;
- GAA Games Development;
- Societies Office;
- Student Services Officer;
- Financial Support (Student Assistance Fund/Benevolent Fund);
- Sports Scholarships;
- Admissions and Examinations Office;
- Library Services;
- Students' Union;
- Student Orientation and Induction Programme;

Further support is provided at academic department/programme level through class tutor, peer mentoring, tutor support.

Categories of Generic Institute Supports for all **first year** students:

- Orientation and Induction Programme – Institute Orientation and Department/Programme
- Induction;
- Social Events;
- Family Induction Information Evening;
- FYI 4-week Induction Programme.
- IT Skills Workshops;

- Sports Clubs and Societies Days;
- Refresher Student Support Information Days (pop-up stands in main student thorough fair (north and south campus) reminding students of services but also 'Ask us anything' theme);
- Student Handbook & ITT Study Skills Guide;
- Academic Writing – 'You're Actually a Good Writer' (Ahead publication);
- Library Orientation;
- Time and Study Management in preparation for Examinations;
- Targeted academic department support;
- Health Promotion and Retention Project and initiatives.

Prospective students are informed of the resources available to them via Institute open Days/Information Sessions, the website at [MTU Kerry campus](#) and the [MTU Prospectus](#). Existing students are informed via their Orientation and Induction Programme to the Kerry campus, the website at [MTU Kerry campus](#), internally via the Institutes Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard), and the Student Handbook,

See [Student Handbook Section A](#)

And [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

The Institute library, based on both the North and South Campus, provides support to all students to support their learning experience. See the Institute library website:

[MTU Kerry campus Library](#)

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#)

Section A13: Learning Resources and Student Support,

Sub Section A13.1: Bereavement Policy,

Sub Section A13.2: Substance Abuse Policy,

Sub Section A13.3: Student Charter,

Sub Section A13.4: Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures,

Sub Section A13.5: Equity of Access and Participation

Policy,

Sub Section A13.9: Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy; Section

A10: Complaints Procedures,

Sub Section A10.2: Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

At a meeting of MTU Academic Council on February 23rd 2021, the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#) that applied at the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) were adopted and approved as interim 'MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study' to be applied in the context of students across all MTU campuses registered on new postgraduate programmes after January 1st 2021 (including students who will transfer from a level 9 to a level 10 programme). On the Kerry campus, postgraduate students registered on a research programme prior to January 1st 2021 remain subject to MTU (Kerry) regulations or would be supported in transitioning to MTU regulations, depending on the stage of their studies.

A supplementary document which sets out how these regulations are operationalised on the Kerry Campuses has been developed. During the reporting period, the University's Postgraduate Research Studies Board was established. As set out in the regulations, the Postgraduate Research Studies Board (PRB) advises on matters relating to academic standards in postgraduate academic formation in the University, reviews and makes recommendations to the Academic Council on the University's Postgraduate Research Regulations and liaises with the Academic Council and its committees (including the Research Council) concerning matters pertaining to postgraduate academic formation.

In the event that there is any doubt, uncertainty, or apparent conflict as to whether a particular regulation, policy or procedure applies in any given case, MTU has determined that any such questions will be resolved by consensus between the two Vice Presidents responsible for Academic Affairs.

Please see the relevant MTU (Kerry) regulations outlined below at: [MTU Kerry QA Procedures](#)

Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management,

Sub Section A2.10: Role and Function of the Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC); Section A11: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes, Sub Section A11.1: Introduction, Sub Section A11.2: Project Proposal Approval and Student Registration, Sub Section A11.3: Research Degree Programme Supervision and Monitoring, Sub Section A11.4: Thesis Submission and Examination, Sub Section A11.5: Procedure for the Approval of New Research Areas; Section A12: Research Ethics, Sub Section A12.1: Research Ethics Policy, Sub Section A12.2: Ethical Review of Undergraduate or Taught Masters Postgraduate Research, Sub Section A12.3: Ethical Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes and Professional Research, Subsection A12.4: External Research Requesting Access to Research Participants at IT Tralee.

In the event that there is any doubt, uncertainty, or apparent conflict as to whether a particular regulation, policy or procedure applies in any given case, MTU has determined that any such questions will be resolved by consensus between the two Vice Presidents responsible for academic affairs.

MTU (Cork) Policy and Information

Comprehensive information about postgraduate study opportunities, available supports and key policies and supporting documents can be accessed via the web pages of the [MTU Graduate School](#) Cork campus.

Complementary policy documents covering, inter alia, ethical research practice, IP issues and conflict of interest establish a secure legal and ethical framework within which research and postgraduate education can take place. Thus, the quality assurance policies and procedures for postgraduate research study are embedded into the wider research policy infrastructure.

MTU (Cork) policy on research integrity and guidelines for ethical research conduct are set out in the [Code of Good Practice in Research](#). A [Protocol on Research Misconduct](#) outlines the steps to be taken in the event of a serious breach of research integrity. Towards the end of the reporting period, the Executive completed the recruitment of a Research Integrity & Compliance Officer for the University

Dedicated academic integrity and research ethics training for research degree students is provided. Postgraduate students also have access to other training offerings available within MTU (e.g. the Library).

With technological university designation, MTU has full awarding powers for all award types and levels, across all academic disciplines. Within the context of MTU, overall responsibility for the quality assurance of postgraduate research education continues within the remit of the School of Graduate Studies on MTU (Cork) campus and the Registrar's Office on MTU (Kerry) campus, while strategic development of the institutional research environment continues to fall primarily within the remit of the MTU Cork and Kerry Research Offices, led by Heads of Research. Innovation and knowledge transfer activities arising from the research activity are coordinated and supported by the Innovation & Enterprise Office (Cork Campus) and the Development and Research Offices (Kerry Campus).

Most research income is competitively generated, through funding applications to national and international funding agencies for specific research projects under relevant funding calls. Through the RFAM budget, provided as additional funding via the HEA and based on a transparent rubric which takes account of PG graduations, research income and knowledge transfer metrics, the Research Offices are enabled to support research activities targeted at building sustainable capacity in the MTU R&I ecosystem. The Research Offices and the Innovation & Enterprise Office (Cork campus) and Development Office (Kerry campus) provide support for the research community with regard to the dissemination of funding opportunities and the completion of funding applications. The Research Offices and the Innovation and Enterprise Office (Cork Campus) and the Development Office (Kerry Campus) also endorse applications to funding agencies taking due account of eligibility criteria and terms & conditions of the call. Contracts with all external parties are checked by internal specialists for adherence to relevant national and MTU internal policies.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

5.1 Recruitment and Professional Development of Staff

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act 2018 (hereafter 'MTU (Kerry) Regulations') remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The policies and procedures relating to HR have not been altered during this reporting period with the exception of a number of MTU HR policies and procedures available at the HR section of [MTU Policies](#)

a. Policy and Procedures for Staff Recruitment, Induction and Progression

As approved by MTU Governing Body on the 1st of January 2021, where no new MTU policy/procedure has been approved, and until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU, MTU confirms that the HR and other non-academic policies and procedures that applied at the Cork and Kerry campuses shall continue to apply in respect of MTU staff and facilities at those locations. The existing Recruitment and Selection Policies in the Cork and Kerry campuses continue to apply until work on alignment for an MTU Recruitment and Selection Policy, which is currently underway, is completed.

MTU HR has a detailed plan in place for development of aligned processes for the recruitment, induction, progression and professional development of its staff. As an outcome of the CoreHR system merger project, work has been completed on the alignment of recruitment processes, and MTU has a unified online job application process in place. Recruitment and selection procedures are currently under review in the technological higher education sector, with a view to simplifying the process and making it more efficient.

Members of internal interview boards are provided with a guidance manual designed to facilitate the interview process, for instance by outlining appropriate interview questions.

In order to 'gender-proof' recruitment, selection and promotion procedures and practices, MTU Cork has provided unconscious bias training to all staff who are routinely called upon to sit on interview boards, including Heads of Department and Heads of School. Originally provided by an external organisation, the unconscious bias training programme is now being rolled out by MTU Cork staff following upskilling and the plan is to roll this out to MTU Kerry under the Train-the-Trainer initiative.

b. Continuous Professional Development for Academic Staff

MTU makes provision for staff development for all categories of staff, and its staff development programme is available to staff. Each academic unit is allocated funding for staff development, which is generally used to fund attendance at conferences and seminars for staff members of that unit.

Staff may apply for funding to pursue further, part-time academic studies in MTU or in other higher education institutions, mainly on Masters, or doctoral programmes. All staff development funding applications require the approval of the head of the relevant academic or administrative unit. Academic units and central university functions may also apply for funding for dedicated short courses, workshops and seminars designed to meet specific identified staff development needs. Depending on the nature of the requirements, these may be confined to a particular department or may be interdepartmental.

The MTU Staff Doctorate Scheme is open to staff and staff employed as researchers. Normally, a call is issued once per annum and is subject to an assessment process. The scheme funds tuition fees and a small budget for consumables / conferences.

Finally, the continuous development of the professional and pedagogical competence of academic staff forms an important part of the activities of the Teaching & Learning functions within MTU. CPD offerings in this space range from accredited level 9 teaching and learning qualifications to a wide range of short staff development seminars/workshops/guest speakers and seed funding for teaching & learning initiatives. MTU also facilitates learning communities and networking events, all offered in formats designed to maximise ease of access.

c. Recruitment and Development of Researchers

MTU is a two-time holder of the EURAXESS HR Excellence in Research Award (in 2017 and 2019 respectively), recognising the institutional commitment to the adoption and realisation of the 40 principles of the European Charter for the Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers ('Charter & Code'), and showcasing MTU internationally as a favourable working environment for researchers. The HR Excellence in Research Award will recognise MTU's progress in supporting researchers at all career stages.

MTU requested the merger situation to be recognised for the purpose of this award. EURAXESS has agreed to extend the deadline to renew the award to 28 April 2024 which will give time to MTU to harmonise the HR practices and submit the renewal as MTU. MTU will be assessed based on the updated action plan where relevant information about how the HRS4R process has been cascaded must be included.

In line with MTU's strategic goals of strengthening and extending research activities and engaging and empowering staff, the university recognises the need for research units to be in a position to recruit talented researchers as expeditiously as possible while adhering to best practice in recruitment, selection and provision of opportunities for professional development.

A significant milestone towards full implementation of the EC 'Charter & Code' was the adoption of an 'OTM-R' (open, transparent and merit-based) Researcher Recruitment Policy for MTU, detailing every step of the recruitment process, from advertising to appointment. Other recently completed actions include appointment of a HR staff member dedicated solely to researcher recruitment, provision of MTU graduate internships for research positions, and provision of paid student work placement opportunities in one of the research centres or groups.

5.2 Staff Wellbeing and Support

MTU offers ongoing support for the mental wellbeing of its staff members through its Employee Assistance Service (EAS), now provided by Spectrum.Life. The assistance service is designed to support employees with personal or work-related concerns through telephone support, specialist information and face-to-face counselling. Beyond fully anonymised usage level data, no information on service use is shared with MTU. Information on the service and the associated wellbeing platform/app is available in the MTU Staff Wellbeing space on the internal Workvivo staff portal.

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

a. EDI Policies, Procedures and Awareness-Raising Activities

As an employer and education provider, MTU not only has the responsibility of adhering to legislative requirements regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, but – as importantly – of doing so in a manner that is visible to all. Relevant pieces of legislation include the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005), the Equal Status Acts

(2000-2018), the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015), and the Gender Recognition Act (2015), which are inform all aspects of staff recruitment and management.

Increased training, policy development and communications activities and greater student and staff participation in EDI research support MTU in communicating legislative requirements and acceptable behaviours and in fostering active support for 'living' EDI principles among the members of the university. Due to the requirement for physical proximity in EDI training, training activities themselves have had to be suspended post-Covid-19, but are intended to recommence for both staff and students as soon as the environment allows for them to be provided safely. Meanwhile, other activities designed to raise awareness for equality, diversity and inclusion issues could continue, however, such as a new online [EDI Awareness programme](#) jointly organised by a number of MTU services and the MTU Students' Union (see also Section 2 on Widening Participation).

The [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) team plays a key role in ensuring the promotion and mainstreaming of equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout MTU. It drives key equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, projects and events while also working with colleagues within and outside of MTU on the implementation of the MTU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. The EDI team collaborates on regular basis with Access Offices, Student Counselling, Teaching & Learning functions, and Students' Union on these areas of work, including training and awareness activities around sexual consent, gender-based violence and sexual assault, and the [Code Red](#) Period Dignity Pilot Project.

b. Gender Equality

Following successful application, MTU now holds a legacy Athena SWAN Bronze Award. CIT applied successfully for the Institutional Bronze award in 2019, and MTU's successful application for the legacy award recognizes MTU's ongoing commitment to addressing gender barriers and advancing the careers of women and trans people. Adoption of the [Athena Swan Charter](#), launched in the United Kingdom in 2005 and extended to Ireland in 2015 with funding from the Higher Education Authority, commits higher education and research institutions to removing barriers that contribute to gender-based underrepresentation and to taking a targeted approach to address issues of both internal and external origin. Initially focused on STEMM areas (science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine), the Charter has since expanded to include many other fields. Achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze Award requires a thorough analysis of institutional data, policies and procedures, identification of key issues, and the creation and implementation of a three-year action plan to address the issues identified.

Female staff members have been supported to avail of the Advance HE [Aurora Leadership Development Initiative](#).

Support from Advance HE (the UK non-profit agency that manages the Athena SWAN Charter) furthermore enabled MTU Cork campus to fund a group of female staff members to avail of its [Aurora Leadership Development Initiative](#). MTU is committed to continue participation in the Advance HE Aurora programme on an annual basis to support female leadership among its staff going forward.

The national Gender Equality Taskforce has noted that engagement with the Athena SWAN process has been transformative for Irish HEIs, and has encouraged institutions to work towards obtaining a Silver- and, eventually, Gold-level award by demonstrating progressive levels of achievement in relation to the embedding and promotion of gender equality and evidence of impact against challenges from actions implemented. While cognisant of the growing momentum around Athena SWAN certification, the taskforce has also recognised that, owing to revised application requirements which have increased the workload involved, the original timelines may not be achievable for institutions.

Now that MTU has successfully completed the legacy process, future work will include the progression of Bronze Award for the TU as a whole, and departmental awards. Application for an Athena SWAN Silver award application is intended in the medium term.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Core learner, graduate and staff data are collated in MTU's Banner Student and CORE HR Staff Records Systems. Relevant Banner and CORE data are made available to authorised users in the faculties, schools and the central administration for purposes of managing and quality assuring the provision and related supports as necessary. At the time of writing, the Banner Project Team is working towards the upgrade to Banner V9 in 2022, together with the subsequent merger into one student records system for the University. The HR CORE merger was completed during the reporting period.

Implementation of GDPR across MTU is overseen by a Data Protection Officer both on the MTU Cork and Kerry campuses. In addition to the GDPR-related duties, the Data Protection Officer also processes any freedom of information requests made to MTU Cork / CIT. A log of FOI requests and FOI Model Publication Scheme are accessible on the [Freedom of Information section](#) on the public website.

In the first six months of 2021, MTU Governing Body approved a suite of policies in relation to Information and Data Management.

The [Information Governance Policy](#) provides direction on the classification, ownership, deletion and retention of data and information for the University as well as clarifying accountability for data and information. Data and information as pertaining to this policy includes electronic and non-electronic data. The University is reliant upon the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data and information to successfully conduct its operations, meet student and staff/faculty expectations, and provide services. All staff, students, and external parties of the University have a responsibility to protect University data and information from unauthorized generation, access, modification, disclosure, transmission, or destruction and are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy. University data and information is an important asset and resource. All data and information is categorised according to appropriate needs for protection, handling and compliance with regulatory requirements. The purpose of classification is to ensure that data and information is managed in a manner appropriate to the risks associated with ensuring that it remains reliable, trustworthy and available for appropriate use. It is also provided to make staff aware of their responsibilities for the protection of sensitive/confidential data and information and that access to such data and information should be restricted to appropriate authorised personal that require this access and that personal information is only disclosed to third parties as it applies

The University is committed to complying with all applicable Data Protection, privacy and security laws and regulations (collectively referred to as requirements) in the locations in which it operates. In Europe, the Data Protection requirements the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), came into effect on May 25, 2018. The University has adopted this [Data Protection Policy](#), which creates a common core set of values, principles and procedures intended to achieve a standard set of universal compliance parameters based on GDPR.

The [Data Retention Policy](#) ensures that the University applies retention periods appropriately and retains data only for the period for which it is allowed.

The security and protection of University assets, facilities and personnel are fundamental to the efficient and effective operations of the University. The [Data Handling and Clean Desk Policy](#) policy is to establish the minimum requirements for handling data and maintaining a "Clean desk" - where sensitive/critical information about University employees, students, University intellectual property, and University vendors is handled correctly, is

secure in locked areas and out of sight. The [Data Protection-Breach Response Policy](#), approved in May 2021 applies throughout the Organistaion in the event of a personal information/data breach.

The [Data Access Management and Privileged User Policy](#) was approved in June 2021 to ensure processes and tools are in place to manage secure access to critical information, manage the lifecycle of systems and application accounts, and to manage administrative privileges on computers, networks and applications.

IT Systems Policies

The [Infomation Security Policy](#) sets out the overall approach to information security and provides a security model aimed at: implementing best practices to protect information assets from unauthorized use and provides the required controls by protecting the confidentiality of data, where sensitivity warrants this. In addition the policy is concerned with the Integrity of data, to ensure its completeness and accuracy regardless of confidentiality and criticality; the Availability of data, so that it is accessible as and when required, and protecting the work and study environment of staff and students and the good name and reputation of the University.

The [Third Party IT Engagement Policy](#) sets out the conditions that must be met to ensure the security of University data and resources are maintained when a third party is engaged to provide a service while the [Staff Machine Replacement Policy](#) ensures that the machines connecting to the University's network are not posing an increased risk to the University's staff and students.

Core learner, graduate and staff data are collated in MTU's Banner Student and CORE HR Staff Records Systems. Relevant Banner and CORE data are made available to authorised users in the faculties, schools and the central administration for purposes of managing and quality assuring the provision and related supportsas necessary.

Implementation of GDPR across MTU is overseen by a Data Protection Officer both on the MTU Cork and Kerry campuses. In addition to the GDPR-related duties, the Data Protection Officer also processes any freedom of informationrequests made to MTU Cork / CIT. A log of FOI requests and FOI Model Publication Scheme are accessible on the [Freedom of Information section](#) on the public website.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The main repository for public information about MTU is [MTU Web Site](#). Amongst others, this offers a [Find a Course](#) section allowing prospective students to obtain the current approved specifications for MTU programmes and modules. The MTU web site links to the former Institutions' web sites which will be iteratively phased out as the MTU web site continues development on a phased basis.

MTU also makes available a range of policies and reports related to the governance, management and quality assurance activities of the University, including Governing Body, Academic Council, Policies and Publications at [MTU Governance](#).

These online resources are complemented by information provided through a variety of printed or downloadable programme literature, including the [MTU Prospectus](#).

The [Research, Innovation & Enterprise](#) tab of the public website is the gateway for initial information about research activity, research degree provision and innovation and technology transfer activities at MTU Cork / CIT.

Information on the Institute and its portfolio of programmes is also disseminated via different social media outlets (including for instance [MTU Facebook](#), [MTU Twitter](#), [MTU LinkedIn](#), [MTU Instagram](#) and [MTU Youtube](#)) and regular information events held both on campus and in an outreach format, such as the Open Days, Postgraduate Fair, Mature Student Evenings or Roadshows.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

The regulations, policies and procedures specific to Munster Technological University ('MTU') that previously applied at Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) immediately before the establishment of MTU under the Technological Universities Act remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. The regulations in relation to Monitoring and Periodic Review have not been altered during this reporting period.

The internal quality assurance system of MTU is linked into external quality assurance cycles at the national level systematically through a number of mechanisms.

Chief amongst these are the annual reports – including the present Annual Quality Report – to the two statutory agencies with legal and regulatory responsibilities for Irish further and higher education, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The reports are complemented by cyclical dialogue meetings with each agency and a schedule of external institutional audits (commissioned by the HEA) respectively major cyclical institutional reviews (overseen by QQI). The engagement of MTU with each agency is governed and bounded by the statutes, national strategies and government policies which determine the remit of each authority vis-à-vis the Irish higher education providers.

The effectiveness of MTU quality assurance policies and procedures are due for review as part of the CINNTE review cycle within the first 18 months of the establishment of the University.

The ongoing formal and semi-formal engagement of MTU with the HEA, the statutory planning and development body for further and higher education, encompasses an annual programmes & budgets process and strategic dialogue as well as other HEA-sponsored programmes, initiatives and functional audits.

The key instrument for the evaluation of the student experience is the annual Student Survey.ie in which all public higher education providers in Ireland have been participating since its inception in 2013. The outcomes of the student survey are analysed by the University and discussed by the Academic Council and other relevant units. Through funding awarded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, the recently launched [SUCCEED - Standardising the Use, Communication and Capability of StudentSurvey.ie Data](#) project aims to make StudentSurvey.ie data more accessible at academic unit and programme level and therefore provide an evidence-based mechanism to close the feedback loop.

The HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey is also carried out by the University, and the results are made available to the faculties for analysis.

MTU (Cork) Regulations and Information

a. Periodic Review of Programmes

The periodic review of programmes at MTU Cork Campus is governed by the MTU [Academic Policy on Programmatic Review](#). Programmatic review encompasses, as a minimum, a thorough self-evaluation of the academic unit hosting the complement of programmes under review, followed by a site visit from a panel of independent external experts with representation from the Registrar's Office. Each review stage generates a

detailed report. A positive overall recommendation in the report of the peer review panel forms the basis for revalidation of the programmes by Academic Council.

External members of programme validation and review panels are selected for the experience and expertise they bring to a panel, as well as for their ability to effectively participate in or – in the chair's case, lead – a criteria-based academic peer review.

b. Annual Programme Status Review (Programme Monitoring)

Continuous monitoring of the academic programmes is carried out by the individual programme boards. The boards report annually on programme development and enhancement measures, guided by [MTU Policy and Procedure for the Annual Programme Status Review \(APSR\)](#). To support and guide programme boards, the Institute's Enterprise Reporting Portal provides authorised users with a standardised report template for each programme. Each template is pre-populated with key performance data for the relevant programme drawn down automatically from the Banner student record system (see [Policy Appendix B: Sample Template for Programme Review Report \(CAO\)](#)). In their analysis, the boards consider qualitative feedback from different sources – such as external examiner reports – as well as a range of quantitative performance indicators (applications and acceptances, enrolment and retention, student and graduate performance).

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information

On the establishment of MTU, the Procedures and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes, which outlined the policies and procedures in relation to programmatic review based on QQI core statutory Quality Assurance, were retired and are part of the process of Interpretation and Status of Regulations of the amalgamated Institutions. All three schools on MTU (Kerry) campuses, School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, School Health and Social Sciences and The School of Business, Computing and Humanities had undergone programmatic review in the Academic Years, 19/20, 19/20 and 16/17 respectively. It is anticipated that equivalent MTU regulations will be developed in time for the next Programmatic Review of these schools. As part of the programmatic review process undertaken, all programmes contained on the University Order in Council were revalidated for a further five-year period.

The primary policies for ongoing monitoring of programmes are contained in QA Section A6 Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#). This suite of policies contains the functions of the Course Boards (Sub-Section A6.2) regarding, inter alia, the academic standards, including the examinations, assessment, delivery, content of the programmes, and the monitoring of learners.

See [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#):

Section A6: Procedures for the Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes;

Sub Section A6.1: School Boards;

Sub Section A6.2: Course Boards;

Sub Section A6.4: Course Programme Handbook;

Sub Section A6.6: Student and Course Boards;

Programme Validation Reports, Programmatic Review Reports, Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Reports and Institutional Review Reports, Annual Reports are available publicly in the Reports section at [MTU Kerry campus Procedures Plans and Reports](#)

Engagement with Professional and Other External Quality Assurance Frameworks

As described earlier in this report, MTU systematically engages with a number of other external quality frameworks.

Some of these are engagements sought by MTU to streamline and certify particular function- or area- specific management processes. These include certification of MTU' s energy management system under ISO 50001 and certification of the management and quality system of NMCI under ISO 9001-2015.

MTU also engages with the discipline-specific external QA frameworks for regulated professions under the remit of CORU (Social Care Work, Biomedical Science, Nursing) or the International Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) overseen by the Marine Survey Office (Nautical Science, Marine Engineering, Marine Electrotechnology). In certain joint postgraduate programmes with University College Cork, the QA procedures of the Teaching Council also apply (Art & Design Education). Even where professional registration is not mandatory, the desirability of professional accreditation for graduates in fields such as Engineering, Architecture or Accountancy means that MTU regularly engages with many different professional QA frameworks maintained by representative professional bodies or associations, both national and international. The engagement of the university with these professional quality frameworks may take different forms, but more often than not implies regular external review or audit of curricula, arrangements for programme delivery and the overall academic quality framework of the University by the regulator or relevant professional body.

Internal Audit and Other Quality Reviews

The Governing Body of Munster Technological University (MTU) established the MTU Audit and Risk Committee to assist the governing body in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities as set out in the MTU Code of Governance January 2021 (re: Risk Management/ Internal Control/Internal Audit) and the Technological Act 2018.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	7
Awarding bodies	
QA bodies	

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Honours) in General Nursing and BSc (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing BSc (Hons) in General Nursing BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	17 th December 2017
Date of next review	11 th October 2021

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architectural Technology.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT759</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT859</p> <p>https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/how-to-become-an-architectural-technologist</p> <p>https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/education/accredited-programmes</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	5 June 2019
Date of next review	2022

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Association for Nutrition (UK)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nutrition & Health Science</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CR333</p> <p>https://www.associationfornutrition.org/degree-accreditation/accredited-programmes</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	Day(s)-Month-2019
Date of next review	Tbd

4. Type of arrangement	
(PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Higher Certificate in Science in Nautical Studies; Bachelor of Science in Nautical Studies; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nautical Science; Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Electrotechnology.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.nmci.ie/undergraduatecourses; https://www.gov.ie/pdf/81536/?page=null</p> <p>(Marine Notice No. 28 of 2020 / Schedule of Examinations for Certificate of Competency for Deck Officers, Marine Engineer Officers, Skippers and Second Hands in the year commencing 7th September 2020);</p> <p>https://www.gov.ie/pdf/19838/?page=1</p> <p>(Marine Notice No. 19 of 2019 / Schedule of Examinations for Certificate of Competency for Deck Officers, Marine Engineer Officers, Skippers and Second Hands in the year commencing 2nd September 2019).</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	n/a
Date of next review	n/a

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Chemical and Biopharmaceutical Engineering</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT838</p> <p>https://www.icheme.org/education/find-a-degree-programme/</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	3 September 2020 (preceded by site visit in May 2020)
Date of next review	Tbd (dependent on completion of remaining condition; site visit due Spring 2022)

6. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Engineering.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT739</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT839</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT736</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT836</p> <p>http://www.engineersireland.ie/services/accredited-courses/charteredengineer.aspx</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	30 April 2021 (postponed from 2020 due to Covid-19)
Date of next review	2021/2022

7. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Structural Engineering (Environment and Energy); Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering; Master of Engineering in Structural Engineering (Environment and Energy).</p> <p><i>(Note: Last accreditation of the standalone 90-credit MEng in Civil Engineering and MEng in Structural Engineering (Environment and Energy) programmes. New intakes from Sep. 2021 will be into the 5-year integrated Masters.)</i></p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT731 https://www.cit.ie/course/MT831 https://www.engineersireland.ie/Professionals/Membership/Become-a-member/Accredited-third-level-courses</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	30 April 2021 (postponed from 2020 due to Covid-19)
Date of next review	2021/2022

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	3 <i>Note: Total of 15 individual PhD agreements under 3 joint research degree programmes</i>
Joint/double/multiple awards	6 <i>Note: Includes taught and research degrees</i>
Collaborative programmes	20 <i>Note: Includes programmes leading to joint awards; excludes prog. leading to exit awards only</i>
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI), Castel International
Programme titles and links to publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Biomedical Sciences – International Medical Commencement Programme – Medical Stream And • Foundation Certificate in Medical Commencement with Physiotherapy
Date of last review	2019
Date of next review	2021

2. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Bologna, Italy University of Burgundy, Dijon, France AgroSup, Dijon, France Institute of Technology, Tralee
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in International Agricultural Engineering See validation reports for Academic Year 2018/2019 at: MTU (Kerry) campus Procedures Plans and Reports
Date of last review	11 th September 2019
Date of next review	11 th September 2024

3. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	CPA Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> Master of Science in Applied Accounting <i>Links to Publications</i> https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2009 https://www.cpaireland.ie/become-a-student/CPA-Qualifications/CPA-Accounting-Masters-Qualification/Cork-Institute-of-Technology
Date of last review	9 May 2019
Date of next review	2024/25

4. Collaborative provision	
(Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	IoT Consortium in conjunction with BioPharmaChem Ireland (Lead Provider: TU Dublin, Tallaght)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i></p> <p>Higher Certificate in Science – Laboratory Technician [Apprentice Mode].</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2354</p> <p>https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/learn-more/logistics/logistics-associate-l6</p>
Date of last review	Programme specification validated by TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus in 2018/19. Approval of CIT instance by the AC Exec. Committee on 19 June 2019 after approval of the Consortium Agreement.
Date of next review	2023/24

5. Collaborative provision	
(Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	IoT Consortium in partnership with the Logistics Associate Apprenticeship Consortium (Lead Provider: TU Dublin)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i></p> <p>Higher Certificate in Science in Logistics [Apprentice Mode].</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2354</p> <p>https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/learn-more/logistics/logistics-associate-l6</p>
Date of last review	Programme specification validated by TU Dublin in 2018/19. CIT Academic Council approval of CIT instance on 5 Feb 2020, following approval of the Consortium Agreement.
Date of next review	2023/24

6. Collaborative provision	
(Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Global Business and Pilot Studies</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/MT946</p> <p>https://afta.ie/</p>
Date of last review	Approved by the Cork Legacy Committee of the MTU Academic Council on 5 March 2021, subject to approval of the Consortium Agreement by the MTU AC and GB. Consortium Agreement approved by MTU AC on 26 March 2021 and by MTU GB on 9 April 2021.
Date of next review	2025/26

7. Collaborative provision	
(Type of collaborative provision)	Joint research degree (double degree)
Name of body (/bodies):	Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) / Munster Technological University (MTU); Politecnico di Bari (POLIBA); Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (UNIBA); Technische Universität Wien (TU Wien); Université de Montpellier (UM).
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i></p> <p>OPTAPHI (European Joint Doctorate Programme on Optical Sensing using Advanced Photo-Induced Effects)</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p>https://www.cappa.ie/portfolio-items/optaphi/</p>
Date of last review	Overarching Consortium Agreement dated 8 Sep. 2020.
Date of next review	2023

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	41
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1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Sir Stanford Fleming College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts Travel & Tourism Management BA in Travel and Tourism Management Sir Stanford Fleming College Pathways
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	June 2017
Date of next review	October 2021
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Sir Stanford Flemming College graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review

2. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Wuhan Polytechnic, China
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Animation, Visual Effects and Motion Design BA (Hons) in Animation Visual Effects and Motion Design
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	February 2019
Date of next review	July 2028
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Wuhan Polytechnic College graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review

3. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Durham College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business (Honours) - Marketing Stream BBs (Hons) Business Studies Durham College Pathways
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	February 2018
Date of next review	February 2023
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Durham College graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review

4. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Algonquin College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Care and Education BA in Early Childhood Care and Education Algonquin College Pathways
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2018
Date of next review	March 2022
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Algonquin graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review

5. Articulation agreement:	Outward
Name of body (/bodies):	University College Cork
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Articulating programme:</i></p> <p>MTU Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Home Economics and Business (3 years, 180 ECTS credits)</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CR930</p> <p><i>Articulates with:</i></p> <p>UCC Professional Master in Education (Home Economics)</p> <p>https://www.ucc.ie/en/pec01/</p>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	<p>The MTU BA (Hons) in Home Economics and Business currently constitutes the only initial teacher education programme in Ireland combining Home Economics with Business as a 2nd subject. Achievement of a Second-Class Honours Grade 2 or higher entitles graduates to progress, through a protected pathway, to the UCC Professional Master of Education in order to qualify for entry into the post-primary teaching profession. Certain programme design features of the BA have been determined by Teaching Council requirements and as a consequence deviate from the standard MTU Cork curricular model, including duration and the derogation from elective choice.</p>

[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

Governing Body

The first meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University (MTU) took place on 1 January 2021. At that inaugural meeting, MTU was formally established and Prof Maggie Cusack was appointed as President. The first, 'Establishment Day' Governing Body comprised of an external Chair and four further members, three of which were external (with the fourth being the MTU President):

Mr. Bob Savage	Chair
Prof. Maggie Cusack	President
Mr. Denis Leamy	Cork ETB (previous member of CIT GB)
Mr. Jerry Moloney	Enterprise Ireland (previous member of ITT GB)
Dr Sigbritt Karlsson	Rektor, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

Soon after designation, MTU Governing Body commenced the process of expanding its membership, this to be completed within a six-month timeframe, in accordance with the Technological Universities Act 2018. This was to enable the appointment of both student and MTU staff members to Governing Body. The external membership provided for under that legislation is an external Chair, 3 – 8 external members nominated by a committee of Governing Body, three members nominated by the Minister, and one member nominated by the relevant Education and Training Boards.

Between Establishment Day (1st January 2021) and the first meeting of the expanded Governing Body (30th June 2021), there was an extended consultation phase in relation to the process for appointment of staff members, student members, and external members of Governing Body.

Staff members

Soon after the establishment of MTU, Governing Body set out establishing procedures relating to the conduct of elections and appointment of staff members.

This included communications and updates to staff, requests for feedback, and formal engagement and consultation with all staff unions.

In terms of membership and to agreeing the regulations/criteria, Governing Body recognised that MTU is a multi-campus University and acknowledged the need to develop a balanced approach so as to ensure that broad representation was achieved from as many campuses as possible.

Under the TU Act (2018), there was to be at least one but not more than 3 members of the academic staff of the technological university on Governing Body, as determined, and elected by, the academic staff of the technological

university. Feedback was sought from academic staff, and there was also consultation with the academic staff union.

Governing Body determined that there would be three panels for academic staff:

- Panel A – Academic Staff – Kerry;
- Panel B – Academic Staff – Bishopstown; and
- Panel C – Academic Staff – Other Campuses (CCAD, CSM, NMCI).

Governing Body further resolved that candidates for these panels must belong to the relevant campus but that all academic staff would be eligible to nominate and vote in all three panels.

Under the TU Act 2018, Governing Body has one member of the non-academic staff of the technological university, elected by the non-academic staff of the technological university. This category was named *Panel D: Professional, Management and Support (PMS) Staff* at the request of Governing Body).

The TU Act (2018) provided that Governing Body would also include one member of the academic or non-academic staff of the technological university, i.e. all staff, elected by the academic and non-academic staff of the technological university. During the consultation phase, staff were invited to submit proposals on how this new category of would be elected. Feedback was also sought from all staff on gender balance, geographic or other relevant constituencies in advance of the decision on constituencies by Governing Body.

Ultimately, Governing Body determined that a fifth panel, *Panel E 'All Staff'*, be established for the purposes of electing this fifth and final staff member to Governing Body. Governing Body also agreed that the election processes for Panels A to D inclusive would be completed ahead of that for Panel E. This would allow for the inclusion of a possible parameter of a gender specific election should the need arise.

The outcome of the election processes for Panels A to D inclusive meant that there was no need for a mechanism to redress possible imbalance in terms of gender or representation, and so it was not necessary for the election for Panel E to be gender specific on this occasion.

Student members

Three student members were appointed to the expanded MTU Governing Body. During the reporting period, the pre-existing students' unions continued to exist but progressed work towards a single students' union for MTU. Governing Body noted the position under the Act in relation to recognition of a single students' union. An MOU with the two Students' Unions was approved by Governing Body; this MOU set out a clear path forward in relation to establishing a single students' union. As part of this, an interim overarching structure (Joint Executive Committee) was established and this facilitated recognition for the purposes of the Act and Governing Body.

Nomination and election process

The elections were conducted using the single transferable vote system, the counting of votes in accordance with the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Acts, 1947 and 1954.

Arising from the ongoing Covid-19 situation, it was necessary to implement online systems and processes to carry out this nomination and election process. This included the procedure to view and check the provisional Register of Electors and an online voting system.

Furthermore, given the geographical scope of the University and the public health restrictions, online 'Hustings' events were held. This afforded candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves to staff across all campuses and to explain their motivation for seeking GB membership, and to participate in a Q&A.

External members

Unlike the IoT Acts, the TU Act does not prescribe specific areas of society to be covered in the selection of external Governors. A Nominations Committee of Governing Body was formed soon after designation. During the reporting period, Governing Body and its Nomination Committee progressed the appointment of 3-8 external members of Governing Body in accordance to section 12(1)(h) of the Technological Universities Act 2018.

This was done through a publicly advertised expressions of interest process. A candidate brief was developed, and public awareness of the expressions of interest process was increased through an advertising and social media campaign.

By the end of the reporting period, 12 external members had been appointed, with the final Ministerial appointment to Governing Body pending.

Term of office

The Term of Office of the Governing Body is two years from the date of appointment. In relation to the term of office of the staff and external members of Governing Body, their term of office is for a two period from 30 June 2021 to 29 June 2023. Student members have a one year term.

Committees

The reporting period saw the establishment of a number of committees of Governing Body. These were as follows:

The Audit & Risk Committee was established on 1 January 2021. The Governing Body decided that, as a matter of good governance, neither the President, nor the Chair would be members of this committee, but can attend as required. It was also decided that only an 'external member' (as defined in section 12(6) of the TU Act (2018) can be a member of the Audit & Risk Committee. Pending the establishment of a Finance Committee, the Audit & Risk Committee had responsibility for finance. At the time of writing, the Finance Committee is in place.

The Nominations Committee was established early during the foundation phase and had an intensive programme of work in relation to the expansion of Governing Body in line with the Act.

Governing Body also determined that an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDI) be established. This committee remained to be populated at the end of the reporting period but is being populated at the time of writing.

The Governing Body also discussed proposals for other committees, with support from the Executive by way of drafting proposed Terms of Reference. At the time of writing, Governing Body has agreed that the following will be the Committees of Governing Body.

- Arts, Sport & Culture Committee;
- Audit & Risk Committee;
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee;
- Finance Committee;
- NMCI Committee; and
- Strategic Development Committee.

Meetings

Due to continuing restrictions, Governing Body meetings over the reporting period took place via video conference. However, Governing Body, did agree that when restrictions allow, meetings will revert to in person, rotating between the Cork and Kerry Campuses, with options on blended meetings being made available to facilitate Governors' personal circumstances.

Chair

Mr Bob Savage was appointed inaugural Chair of the Governing Body of MTU. Following the public process undertaken by the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science, Minister Harris confirmed the appointment of Mr Jimmy Deenihan for a term of eighteen months from 1st June 2021 to 31 December 2022, this being the unexpired portion of the first two years of MTU Governing Body, for which the Minister has a role under the Act in selecting the Chair.

Induction

A 12 month induction plan is in place for Governors, to include two induction training sessions, MTU specific induction and additional training/workshops as required.

Governors also welcomed the proposal to have specific briefings on the activities across the University from the various departments/faculties/schools at each of their meetings from September 2021. It was also agreed to facilitate tours of the campuses, subject to public health guidelines and restrictions, and whenever in-person meetings can recommence.

Refer to [MTU Governing Body](#) for further information in relation to Membership of, Minutes of Meetings and Schedule of Meetings held by MTU Governing Body during this reporting period.

Academic Council

On Establishment Day, Governing Body decided to establish a small, time limited, Academic Council. Thus, an Academic Council was put in place for MTU with immediate effect in accordance with the Technological Universities Act (2018). This also ensured business continuity, particularly in regard to the processing and ratification of Semester 1 2020/2021 examination results. While the five-member inaugural Governing Body did not include students, student representation was maintained on the Establishment Day Academic Council, with the two Students' Union Presidents of MTU Cork and MTU Kerry among its nine members.

The membership of the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council was as follows:

- President of MTU;
- MTU Vice President Campus Integration and Senior Registrar;
- Two Heads of Faculty Cork;
- One Head of School Kerry;
- Two VP Academic Affairs and Registrar Cork and Kerry; and
- Two Students' Union Presidents Cork and Kerry.

A three month term was initially envisaged, and this was extended by one month to allow time for the completion of the nomination/election procedure for the current Academic Council.

The 'Establishment Day' Academic Council agreed that the former Academic Councils of Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee would continue to exist as legacy academic committees of the MTU Academic Council (Cork Academic Legacy Committee, Kerry Academic Legacy Committee) with their subcommittees dormant but intact and in place to meet if and when required. Furthermore, soon after its establishment, the Academic Council recommended to Governing Body two policies which set out the regulations for the roll over of the pre-existing academic QA Policies and Procedures from both CIT and IT Tralee. Governing Body subsequently approved those policies.

Over the period January to March 2021, the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council approved Standing Orders, approved the adoption of the MTU Cork Campus Postgraduate Regulations for MTU as a whole, and approved the adoption of the QQI Award Standards for the University, as an interim measure pending the development and approval of a bespoke set of award standards for MTU.

The Establishment Day Academic Council, supported by the two Registrar's Offices, also progressed the expansion of the Academic Council to its current membership, drawing on work and consultation carried out prior to designation. During the final stages of the TU application process, the MTU Academic Council Working Group, set up in December 2019, had developed proposals for a 'transitional' Academic Council. These proposals had been considered by two Academic Councils of CIT and IT Tralee when they met in joint session in February 2020 and November 2020, with two membership models ('large', 'medium') emerging as the preferred options. The proposals had also been presented to the Joint Governing Bodies Steering Group in December and to the inaugural meeting of MTU GB on 1st January 2021.

Regulations for a 'medium' membership model were approved by Governing Body on 12 February 2021. This transitional body is formed in accordance with the Technological University Act (2018) but with time limited arrangements (18 months from the commencement date), for the matters set out in the Act.

The President chairs the Academic Council, and its membership comprises 89 members as follows:

- President (1);
- Ex officio members, including Registrars (17);
- Elected academic staff (non-management grade) (42);
- Research staff members (4);
- Members elected from academic management grades (20); and
- Student Members (5).

The Governing Body has also approved the delegation within the Regulations for Academic Council: pursuant to Section 9(7) of the Act, Governing Body has delegated to the Academic Council the function of approving all regulations, policies and procedures concerning the academic affairs of the technological university. Under its Regulations, the MTU Academic Council may delegate the discharge of any of its functions to any of its committees, as it sees fit. MTU Governing Body has reserved the right to revoke any delegated authority provided for under these regulations at any time.

As per the Regulations approved by Governing Body, the membership of the current Academic Council drew from the Academic Councils of CIT and IT Tralee (as on 31 December 2020) in the first instance, with the exception of certain ex officio positions. Elected non-management academic members and elected members drawn from the research staff together form a majority.

With a total of 90 members, the size of the MTU Academic Council was smaller than the aggregate of the pre-existing Councils. Thus, a nomination/election procedure needed to be developed. A paper developed by the MTU Academic Domains Working Group over the period November 2019 – March 2020 had developed proposals for the Academic Domains of MTU. This work had been referenced in the MTU Consortium's March 2020 Report to the Minister for Education & Skills, with five academic domains then proposed: Engineering; Science & Informatics; Business; Health & Social Sciences; and Creative & Performing Arts & Media. Under the Regulations for the 'transitional' Academic Council, these five academic domains defined the constituencies for this selection process, with two per domain, one for non-management grades and the other for academic management grades (SL2/SL3).

The detail of the nomination/election procedure was approved by the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council, in accordance with s.16(5) of the Act, and an online nomination/election process took place in March/April 2021.

In accordance with the Regulations, the Academic Councils subsequently determined that the filling of any vacancies still existing after the first instance would be opened up to all eligible MTU staff and students. A number of seats of the Academic Council have been filled in this manner both before and since the expanded, 'transitional' Academic Council commenced on 7th May 2021.

The two Academic Legacy Committees continue to be in place, but are dealing only with legacy and operational issues, and with significant delegated authority to manage quality assurance according to the existing QA frameworks. A significant portion of their business during the reporting period was the development of principles and guidelines for Semester 2 Teaching, Learning & Assessment, in the context of the rapid deterioration of the COVID-19 situation in December 2020/January 2021 and the consequent need for much activity which had been restored to onsite mode in Semester 1 2020/2021 to revert to online for at least part of Semester 2.

The first business of the 'transitional' Academic Council included arrangements for the establishment of six new 'Integration and Development' committees, aligned with the functions of the Academic Council under the TU Act (2018), which focus on the development of a unified academic quality framework for the university and planning for the 'steady state' Academic Council. These committees are as follows:

1. Academic Planning & Review Integration & Development Committee;
2. Admissions & Student Affairs Integration & Development Committee;
3. Learning Resources/Infrastructure & Student Supports Integration & Development Committee;
4. Regulations & Quality Assurance Enhancement Integration & Development Committee;
5. Research Council Integration & Development Committee; and
6. Standing Orders Integration & Development Committee.

Membership of these committees was opened up to all staff of the university through an online nomination and election process which was completed in June 2021. The nomination and election process for academic staff ensured inclusion of both management and non-management academic grades on each Committee. Each committee also has 'Heads of Function' members, PMS staff members, and student members, with Cork and Kerry Campuses represented for each category.

At the time of writing, these committees are now populated and functioning. Chairs were elected and appointed by the Academic Council, in accordance with Standing Orders, in September 2021. Each of the six committees has an intensive and substantial programme of work under way. This commenced with each Committee reviewing and finalising its Terms of Reference for subsequent approval by Academic Council.

When Governing Body approved the Regulations of the current Academic Council in March 2021, it noted that it was proposed to establish an Executive Committee of Academic Council to order and manage the agenda for each meeting of Academic Council and to carry out certain delegated functions at times when a meeting of the full council is not feasible. For Summer 2021, as the Executive Committee of the MTU Academic Council had not yet been constituted, the Academic Council agreed to delegate, for Summer 2021 only, 'summer powers' to a group based on the composition of the original small 'Establishment Day' Academic Council. At the time of writing, the Executive Committee is fully constituted and functional, following the election of the Chairs of the six Integration & Development Committees and the election of six members drawing from the Academic Council as a whole.

Over the reporting period, work was also done on enhancing communications within Council and its effectiveness going forward. An Academic Council dashboard has been developed; this is essentially a single repository of information and documentation (including membership list, regulations, standing orders, minutes, Committees' Terms of Reference) which can be accessed by the whole university community. The meeting pack for each Academic Council meeting is circulated to all Council members one week in advance of the meeting and, at the same time, is circulated to all academic managers, with feedback invited in advance of the meeting. There is also a focus on how significant responsibilities and decision making might be delegated to committees, in the interests of balancing inclusivity with effectiveness and efficiency.

Quality Assurance Updates

While MTU is a new legal entity with a separate statutory role and a different governance and management structure, the Technological Universities Act 2018 provides for an initial transfer of functions (Section 37), programmes of education and training (Section 59), and quality assurance and access, transfer and progression procedures (Section 61) from the dissolved component institutions to the new technological university on designation day. As noted in a previous section, the MTU Governing Body, in one of its first acts, ratified, on the recommendation of the MTU Academic Council, the continued application of the regulations, policies and procedures of MTU Cork and MTU Kerry respectively to those modules and programmes to which they applied immediately before establishment of the MTU, until such a time as they are altered by MTU by way of amendment or replacement. This was given effect by the approval of two policy documents which set out the status and interpretation of Academic Affairs QA procedures at CIT / MTU (Cork), IT Tralee /MTU (Kerry) respectively, that pre-dated the establishment of MTU. These documents were published on the university's website, and a 'must read' statement was published on all relevant university webpages.

The development of an integrated Academic Quality Assurance Framework for the University is being progressed as a matter of high priority. In developing the new technological university, the MTU Governing Body and Academic Council have been mindful of the central importance of quality and the pursuit of excellence. Merger and designation provide an opportunity to enhance existing quality through the creativity facilitated by the new mix of Governing Body members, management and staff, both academic and professional services staff.

On 13th January 2021 the interim Academic Council agreed to adopt QQI award standards as MTU standards as an interim measure, pending the development by MTU of its own set of awards standards.

The first common policy adopted by Munster Technological University following designation has been its [Dignity & Respect Policy](#) and associated [Procedure](#). This policy aims to foster a positive culture which values the contribution of each member of the MTU community, be they staff or student, promotes respectful and professional behaviour, fosters inclusion, and addresses bullying and harassment where it does occur.

The Dignity & Respect Policy and associated Procedure and the MTU Code of Governance were approved by Governing Body at its inaugural meeting. A number of others have been approved in the meantime, including the university's Safety Statement, Protected Disclosures Policy, and policies in the areas of Data Protection and IT, Governing Body has resolved that where no new MTU policy/procedure has been approved, and until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU, HR and other non-academic policies and procedures that applied at CIT, IT Tralee, respectively immediately before the establishment of MTU on 1 January 2021 shall continue to apply in respect of MTU staff and facilities at MTU Cork / MTU Kerry respectively. In the case of any MTU staff appointed from 1 January 2021, the policies and procedures that are applicable will depend on where the primary place of work is.

The approach to quality assurance (QA) and enhancement in MTU aligns with the principles set out in the Technological Universities Act, 2018, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (QQI) Act 2012, as amended and extended by [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) \(Amendment\) Act 2019](#), the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG), and QQI published guidelines.

MTU is a designated awarding body, with the authority to award to make awards from NFQ level 6-10, in all academic disciplines.

MTU will continue to develop, validate, review, maintain and improve the quality of education, training and research it provides. Building upon the current effective policies and procedures, Detailed in Section A of this report, MTU will ensure that all QA processes are in line with the mission and vision of the new technological university.

As mentioned in Part A of this report, MTU Academic Council considered the Status and Interpretation of Academic Council Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures at the former Institute of Technology Tralee and Cork Institute of Technology under MTU at its inaugural meeting on the 4th January. This resulted in the retention or retirement of those policies and procedures as MTU regulations, policies and procedures. The retained policies and procedures are being managed by the respective Legacy Academic Councils until such a time as they are replaced by new University Policies and Procedures. MTU policies and procedures are approved and managed by MTU Academic Council. Corporate policies and procedures are managed by the relevant MTU Executives and are approved by Governing Body or the Executive, as appropriate.

Part A of this report outlines the core regulations, policies and procedures as developed and existent during this reporting.

Building on the existing MTU School of Graduate Studies, the Research Offices and the Registrars Offices, MTU will oversee quality enhancement in the research and innovation arena. Recognition of the commitment to the development of a quality framework has been endorsed through obtaining the HR Excellence in Research.

MTU has strengthened the student voice as a key stakeholder in quality assurance and enhancement. Students are represented on MTU Governing Body, MTU Academic Council and related committees. Student feedback and student satisfaction is monitored through regular feedback including the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and locally through engagement with the Students' Union, Student Affairs Personnel, the implementation of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) and Students as partners in quality (Sparq). Through funding awarded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, the recently launched [SUCCEED - Standardising the Use, Communication and Capability of studentSurvey.ie Data](#) initiative aims to make StudentSurvey.ie data more **accessible** at academic unit and programme level and therefore provide an evidence-based mechanism to close the feedback loop. The establishment of a high level University Working Group to progress action on the outcomes of the survey is also being progressed at the time of writing.

Through the quality processes MTU will continue to embed a quality culture across all aspects of the technological university for the benefit of students, staff and relevant stakeholder communities.

MTU reviewed its Policy Framework documents in June and July of 2021. The purpose of the review was to provide clarity and consistency on the development and review of draft policies for consideration by the Academic Council and Governing Bodies. The review included consideration of the policies of the founding Institutes as well as other Institutions. Twelve workshops with stakeholders were conducted and feedback from each session was considered. The framework assists MTU develop, consult, and implement key policies, ensuring a safe, inclusive, and functioning University for all stakeholders. As part of ensuring consistency, a Definition Repository and a Policy Style Guide were developed for the University. These resources are now available to all staff of the University on the Workvivo portal.

Further Updates on QA Policies and Procedures

The following updates were made by the respective Legacy Academic Councils during this reporting period

MTU Kerry Academic Legacy Committee

- The following updates to QA procedures were approved by the Institute Academic Council during the reporting period,
 - A5.9b Classified Awards for Repeat Students
- Other items approved/noted included:
 - The Programmatic Review process for the Department of Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Volume 2) was noted by the MTU Kerry Academic Legacy Committee;
 - Examination Results for Academic Year 2020/2021 were approved/ratified by the ITT Academic Council/MTU Kerry Academic Legacy Committee;
- The following items referred by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee and approved by the Kerry Academic Legacy Committee Approval included:
 - Contingency Plan Semester 2 Academic Delivery Assessment and Examination: Guidelines;
 - 'Teaching Session Recording Policy for Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)';

- Guidelines for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Semester 2, 2020/2021.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	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	Strategic Management Framework (see <i>AQR 2019</i> , 2.1.1, p. 4f, on adoption of new CIT Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023)	Now superseded by development of MTU Strategic Plan
2	AnSEO – Graduate Attributes Framework / Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning	<p><u><i>Graduate Attributes Framework</i></u> Ready for piloting by end of reporting period. At the time of writing, the EDGE programme has been piloted with targeted cohorts of students. https://edge.mtu.ie/</p> <p><u><i>Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching</i></u> There have also been many Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Student Engagement (TLASE) developments funded under SATLE 2019 and SATHLE 2020 (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning), addressing assessment, student success, active learning with many collaborative projects across MTU. All of this work is informing the emerging TLASE Strategy of MTU. The MTU TLASE Working Group which developed a draft strategy in 2019/2020 is being re-established, this time within the Academic Council Committee Structure. During the reporting period, allocation of academic affairs functions has remained unchanged. It is envisaged that the executive structure for the University will be developed in 2021/2022.</p>

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates	
MTU Governing Body	1 st January 2021 6 st January 2021 15 th January 2021 22 nd January 2021 29 th January 2021 5 th February 2021 12 th February 2021 19 th February 2021 12 th March 2021	19 th March 2021 9 th April 2021 23 rd April 2021 21 st May 2021 4 th June 2021 10 th June 2021 28 th June 2021 30 th June 2021 22 nd August 2021
MTU Academic Council	4 th January 2021 13 th January 2021 23 rd February 2021 26 th March 2021	21 st April, 2021 7 th May 2021 31 st May 2021 16 June 2021
Operational Executive	1 st February 2021 8 th February 2021 15 th February 2021 22 nd February 2021 1 st March 2021 8 th March 2021 15 th March 2021 22 nd March 2021 29 th March 2021 12 th April 2021	19 th April 2021 26 th April 2021 10 th May 2021 17 th May 2021 24 th May 2021 31 st May 2021 14 th June 2021 21 st June 2021 28 th June 2021 12 th July 2021
University Executive	27th July 2021	
Planning Group	13 th April 2021 27 th April 2021 11 st May 2021 25 th May 2021	8th June 2021 22nd June 2021 6th July 2021
Academic Planning Group	19th August 2021	
Cork Academic Legacy Committee	28th January 2021 5 th March 2021	19 th May 2021 18 th June 2021
Executive Committee of Cork Academic Legacy Committee	9 th February 2021, 26 th February 2021 24 th March 2021,	14 th May 2021, 17 th June 2021
Kerry Academic Legacy Committee	1 st March 2021 18 th June 2021	
Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee of Kerry Academic Council Legacy Committee	25 th January 2021 15 th February 2021	19 th April 2021 8 th June 2021

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

The changes to the leadership and governance structures that took place during this reporting period, are outlined in Part A. The structures and managers that further support MTU Governing Body, MTU Academic Council and MTU Executive, including Heads of Faculty, Heads of School, Heads of Department, and Professional Management remained as existed in the former Institutions.

Unless otherwise noted, all members of senior staff, including new appointments during the reporting period, have continued in their posts in MTU post-designation, pending introduction of a new institutional management structure for Munster Technological University. Changes to senior leadership roles during this reporting period included the following appointments,

- President of MTU, 1st January 2021;
- Vice President Campus Integration and Senior Registrar, January 2021 to May 2021 (fixed-term contract of President of IT Tralee re-titled and re-purposed following establishment of MTU)
- Head of Department of Arts in Health & Education, 1st July 2021;
- Head of MTU Cork School of Music, 1st July 2021;
- Head of MTU Crawford College of Art & Design, 1st August 2021;
- 2 Heads of Implementation- Academic Planning and Policies, Autumn 2020.

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

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

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	29				29		
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews	10				9		1
Virtual processes	19				19		
Average panel size for each process type*	4				5		

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

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	21	9	12		4	17				18	3
Secretary	5	4	1		5						
Academic/Discipline Specific	33	20	13		7	23	2		1		
Student Representative	0										
QA	2	1	1		2	0					
Teaching & Learning	9	3	6		4	5				5	
External Industry /Third Mission	36	24	12			36					

MTU (Kerry) Regulations and Information:

*as per our QA procedures the composition of external panels is as follows:

For new programme development:

- 1) Three academics:
 - Two from the IoT sector;
 - One from University sector;
- 2) One from industry/services or professions sector;
- 3) Chairperson will normally be a Registrar from IoT/University sector; and
- 4) ITT Registrar/Registrar's Nominee (who will also act as Secretary to the Panel).

For desk reviews:

- A senior academic from either the Institute of Technology sector or University sector who will act as chairperson; and
- A senior individual from industry/services/professions.

MTU Cork panel composition set out [here](#) for programmes leading to major awards and [here](#) for programmes leading to minor or special purpose awards.

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

- **Governance and Management of Quality**

See **Part A Section 1.1** and **Part B Section 1.1** for update.

- **Programmes of Education and Training**

The following major awards were validated during this reporting period.

Title	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits
Master of Arts in Arts and Engagement	9	90
Master of Science in Bio-Analytics	9	90
MSc in Building Information Modelling and Digital AEC	9	60
PGDipSc in Building Information Modelling and Digital AEC	9	60
MSc in Software Architecture & Design <i>(Apprenticeship pathway added to pre-approved programme)</i>	9	60
BSc (Hons) in Coaching Science & Sports Pedagogy	8	240
BSc (Hons) in Global Business and Pilot Studies	8	240
BSc (Hons) in Pharmaceutical Operations	8	60
BA (Hons) Home Economics & Business	8	180
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (Cloud Infrastructure)	8	60
BA in Food Business Innovation	7	180
Higher Certificate in Arts in Culinary Arts	6	

The following minor and special purpose awards were validated during this reporting period.

Title	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits
Certificate in Principles of Integrated Care	9	15
Certificate in Inflammatory Bowel Disease	9	10
Certificate in Socially Engaged Theatre	9	10
Certificate in Secure Software Development	9	20
Certificate in Secure Systems Architecture	9	15

Certificate in Corporate Strategy Implementation	9	10
Certificate in Gambling Addiction	8	10
Certificate in Palliative Care	8	20
Certificate in Secure Network Operations	8	20
Certificate in Eco Arts Practice	9	10
Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace	8	20
Certificate in PLC Based Automation	7	20
Certificate in Digitised Automotive Operations	7	20
Certificate in Brewing and Distilling Science	7	15
Certificate in Process Operations	7	10
Certificate in Mentoring in Education	6	15
Certificate in Professional Food and Beverage Service	6	35
Certificate in Inclusive Music Performance	6	10
Certificate in Accommodation Supervisory Management	6	25
Certificate in Introduction to PLC Based Automation	6	20
Certificate in Instrumentation and Calibration	6	30

- **Staff Recruitment, Management and Development**

See **Part A Section 5** for update.

- **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

See **Part A Section 2.4** for update.

- **Supports and resources for learners**

MTU established a Learner Resources and Support working group during this reporting period. The group examined a number of areas including, Access and Disability, Library, Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practice, Academic Integrity Policy, Student Grievances and Exams Office. The group consulted with relevant stakeholders and established further working groups across the MTU campuses with the objective of drafting MTU policies and procedures. A summary of the work completed during the reporting period is provided below.

Access and Disability

The following draft policies were completed for further consideration and approval by MTU Academic Council;

- [MTU Equity of Access and Participation Policy](#)
- [MTU Reasonable Accommodations Policy](#)

At the time of writing, these two policies have been approved by Academic Council.

Drafting of procedures in relation to ACCESS via Second Level Initiatives, HEAR, DARE, Star Pupil, Sanctuary Scheme also commenced.

Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

Following consideration of the existing student regulations of the former Institutes, a further working group was established to draft a MTU Student Code of Conduct during this period. This group reviewed codes of other Higher Educational Institutions, seeking permission from one Institution to adapt some of its code in the drafting of the MTU code. The draft was completed for further consideration and approval by MTU Academic Council during this period.

A mapping exercise to identify similarities and differences in the regulations of the former Institutes in relation to student disciplinary procedures was completed by the working group. A draft MTU Student Disciplinary Procedure was subsequently developed during this reporting period. This will require legal consideration in the first instance, ahead of consideration by the Admissions & Student Affairs Integration & Development Committee of the MTU Academic Council and subsequent approval by the Academic Council.

Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise

A mapping exercise to identify similarities and differences in the regulations of the former Institutes in relation to Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise Policies was completed by the working group. Drafting of MTU Policies commenced during the period.

Academic Integrity Policy

A working group was established to consider existing anti-plagiarism and academic integrity policies and procedures of the former Institutes. In addition, the group considered policies and procedures of other Higher Education Institutions as well as the work and outputs of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). Drafting of MTU policy and procedures commenced during this reporting period.

Student Grievances

Drafting of MTU Student Grievances Policy and Procedures commenced in April 2021. The draft Policy and Procedures will require legal consideration and consultation with student and staff stakeholders before finalising and approval by Academic Council. The role of MTU Student Ombudsman is built into this policy and procedure. The appointment of the first Student Ombudsman for the University was progressed during the reporting period. The current role and responsibilities of the Student Ombudsman are in line with current procedures, pending the approval of the new MTU procedure.

Examinations Office

The Examinations Offices began work on aligning Examination Regulations across the MTU campuses in March 2021. Drafting of MTU Examination Regulations commenced during this reporting period.

Library Developments

Library Support and training for learners

An [Assignment Toolkit](#) was developed by the Library Learning Community throughout the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years. See Part B Section 2.1 for further detail.

Library Management System (Koha) - Work on a single shared Library Management System (Koha) continued throughout 2021. Intercampus loans circulation rules were built into Koha, tested and rolled out for Intercampus loans with a soft launch in March, due mainly to the fact that the library catalogues are not yet merged. Work was also completed on borrowing-rights and subsequent parameters on the system were successfully tested and went live on Koha in this period - in parallel with the Lending policy being published on the website.

The MTU Library Systems Sub-Group recommended the merging of both Cork and Kerry campus catalogues on KOHA. Progress on the decommissioning of the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) layer in MTU Kerry campus and the extending the Cork Campus Summon layer was presented by the MTU Library Systems Group in June.

MTU Library staff continued to engage in collaborative work in progressing a single shared library management system (Koha). In parallel to this, Systems Librarians progressed the roll-out of the web-based discovery platform, Summon, across the Kerry campuses over Spring/Summer 2021. This advancement ensures a common, seamless access solution via a single search box that surfaces results of all of the library's print and electronic indexable content.

Impact of Library Quality Measures

Koha was upgraded to version 20.11 in July 2021. The upgrade did not bring any significant improvements to the system. Shortcomings in Koha have been addressed in previous AQR reports. The time required of library staff in the annual upgrade process is significant, particularly given the limited improvements which each upgrade brings. There remains a lack of confidence, both locally and sectorally, that Koha will ever deliver the functionality and scalability to the levels required by a Technological University as would have been envisaged in the [Technological Universities Research Network](#) (TURN) Report (2019).

A new [A to Z](#) of e-Journals search feature was added to the library homepage in July 2021 facilitating a journal level search of all e-Journals currently subscribed to and indexed in Summon. The welcomed feature enables patrons to search for a specific e-Journal title or to browse subscribed journals by subject area and an overview of the A to Z listing has been incorporated into workshops provided by Library staff on library resources.

Summer 2021 saw a significant capital works [ICT infrastructure upgrade](#) take place in the Bishopstown Library. The project included the replacement of IT structured cabling with new 10 Gigabit Cat6a solution, the implementation of new high density WiFi solution and the installation of a new electrical system to support personal devices at all study desks.

The Library Reading Room on the MTU Kerry South Campus was upgraded in September 2020 with the purchase and installation of a self-issue Library Book Cabinet. The book cabinet allows for the self-issue and return of text books by staff and students; the book cabinet can store approximately 150 books and the material stored in the cabinet is agreed in conjunction with academic staff and students and constantly updated. The Book Cabinet complements the main collection of material in the North Campus Library by facilitating on-demand access to key short loan high demand text books.

The delivery of identical teaching and research peer reviewed e-content across all campuses in MTU was a strategic priority during the 2020/2021 reporting period. Following extensive resource re-negotiations and/or parallel consortium subscriptions upgrades, MTU Libraries completed a substantial amount of work throughout 2020/2021 to ensure the successful roll-out of twenty-three shared e-resources common to all MTU campuses which was delivered in March 2021. New content was added across disciplines, including new forms of delivery (e.g. video

streaming). In addition, increased content was added to some existing platforms. MTU e-book usage more than doubled from 2020 to 2021 attracting new users and increased usage by staff and student cohorts. High demand for new digital versions of print content with multi-user perpetual licenses to counter the logistical challenges of providing equitable remote access to a dispersed population. During summer 2021 an overlap analysis was completed which identified possible opportunities to secure perpetual e-access to high demand titles where possible allowing MTU Libraries to transition to a single E-book collection platform from 2023. Funding was secured via a TUTF call to acquire priority titles during summer 2021.

MTU is committed to a culture of diversity and inclusivity with EDI studies and awareness assisting innovative problem solving and addressing biases and prejudices. In April 2021 the Library partnered with Education, Diversity and Inclusion staff to curate and deliver new e-content as part of the MTU EDI Awareness program. Funding was delivered to acquire a bespoke curated list of recently published library e- titles relating to subject areas such as racial equality and violence against women. To broaden access and to ensure outreach to as wide an audience as possible to this material digital access was the chosen channel.

A series of [360-degree](#) bespoke virtual tours of three MTU libraries were created by library staff and launched online in January 2021. These are viewable on a computer, tablet, or smartphone and tours are embedded with information on key services and library facilities. The tours proved extremely popular at the height of restricted access to physical library facilities due to Covid19 and continue to be a valuable means of promoting library resources to prospective MTU students, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Plans are underway to produce further virtual 360-degree tours for the remaining campus libraries during 2021/2022 academic year. Inclusive and user-friendly access to resources underpins all library activities and initiatives and library staff are collaborating with the MTU Disability Support Service to explore the roll out of new software tools to ensure library users with disability can easily access resources in multiple formats.

Library workshops offered during this period were varied but included such themes as general information literacy skills, referencing, use of referencing software, awareness of misinformation and fake news, critical thinking skills, successful research search strategies, advanced Google search skills and discipline specific database workshops.

The Library is also piloting the Solus Library App which allows access to the library user's MTU library account from an iPhone, Android phone or tablet. The application enables users to borrow and return books themselves using their device as well as to manage their own library account, search the catalogue, and renew and reserve books. It is planned to introduce the Solus Library App in 2021/22.

Information and Data Management

As outlined in **Part A**, section 6 MTU Governing Body approved a suite of policies in relation to Information and Data Management in the first six months of 2021.

In addition to the approval of these policies, significant change has occurred during this period in relation to the development of MTU wide technology and systems alignment in relation to information and data management.

The merger of systems and processes, necessitates extensive planning, design, configuration, implementation, and ongoing support. A high-level overview in relation to progress in relation to the merging of prioritised systems and processes during this reporting period is provided below.

Identity and Access Management (iCube) – Significant planning, discovery, and design work was completed prior to this reporting period by the IT support teams of the former Institutions to prepare for new MTU identities, to be available beginning January 1st and thereafter as new systems are merged. This in-house developed Identity and Access Management (IAM) system relies on two key source systems for identity, namely the Human Resources system for staff (CoreHr) and the Student Record Management System for students (Ellucian Banner). This IAM system was used to provide unique MTU Staff identities to all staff, which were used in both the Financial and HR merged systems, as well as the new MTU Office 365 platform. This IAM system automatically provisions and de-provisions users based on their status within the source systems in order for target systems to use these identities, authenticate and allow for role-based functionality. Work and development on other processes, such as student identity integration, which will rely on a single merged instance of Banner to provide new MTU Student Identities, continues.

Financial System (Agresso Business World) - On 4th January, the University's' amalgamated financial systems went live, bringing together data from both previous institutions and aligning financial operations. A suite of Finance policies was aligned and approved in early 2021 and are located on the Finance website (finance.mtu.ie/policies).

Human Resource System (CoreHR) – MTU's Human Resource and Payroll systems were merged and went live on March 29th, bringing together staff and other Human Resource data from both institutions, as well as the alignment of some HR processes, while others continue to be aligned. As this was the first application on which staff used their new University Identity for, additional communication on Dual Identity to be used as systems merge was issued to all users.

Internal Comms and Engagement (WorkVivo) - This Internal Communications and Engagement system, which was first implemented on MTU Cork Campuses prior to the merger of the two Institutions, has been expanded to include the MTU Kerry campuses during this reporting period.

Staff Communications and Collaboration platform (Office 365) –The migration of all MTU employees to the new MTU Office365 platform constituted a substantial undertaking in planning, implementing and training during this reporting period. The system went live June 28th. The IAM solution had to provision the new staff MTU IDs, provision new email addresses, with additional systems utilised to migrate all of the former Institutions' Email, Personal Files and Department Shares, Sharepoint and Microsoft Teams. 18 TB of email, 50TB of OneDrive data, 527 Teams sites along with 372 Sharepoint sites were migrated to this new MTU platform. The project also entailed the rolled out of Multi Factor Authentication for additional security for all staff with accounts on the Office 365 environment, combined with training and guidance on the relevant apps within the platform.

Launch of University Interim Website – On January 1st, an interim MTU website was launched to coincide with the University's establishment. Work on a permanent replacement is ongoing as further outlined below, with a full redesign to be completed. Focus groups including staff, students, and external stakeholders are planned for consultation.

Development of a draft IT Digital Strategy – A draft IT Digital Strategy has also been completed during this reporting period, but will require alignment with the University's Strategic Plan, once formulated.

Student Record Management System (Ellucian Banner) – A programme of work has been developed to include a number of phases to develop and unify MTU's student record system. The initial phase included a review of Banner and its associated systems in order to align both the Cork and Kerry instances. The next phase (November 2021), will start with an upgrade for all Cork Campuses to V8.5, already in place on the Kerry Campuses. The

implementation of that upgrade, over the remainder of 2021/2022, will include the roll-out of Banner functionality and processes covering a number of areas – Examination Results Processing, Online Registration and Payments, Graduation on the Cork Campuses, most of which are currently processed independently of the Banner system. The third phase will involve upgrading all Banner instances in MTU to Banner V9, with the fourth and final phase being the merger of the two existing systems to form a single MTU Student Record Management System.

Merger of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) – Planning for the adoption of a common Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for use across all MTU campuses was undertaken during this reporting period. Currently, MTU Kerry campus uses Blackboard Learn while the Cork campus uses Canvas. MTU has settled on Canvas as the VLE for the University.

Student Communications and Collaboration Platform (Office 365) – Planning and design work on integrating learners into the MTU Office 365 platform for easier collaboration and communication commenced during this reporting period. This is a significant project including the potential migration of learner data and accounts, the provisioning of every student with a new @mymtu.ie email address/account, the provision of unique MTU Student Identities within the environment, the provisioning and deprovisioning of these identities from the IAM Solution and consideration of security aspects.

- **Public Information and Communication**

New Merged MTU Website – A tender was issued during this period for the design and redevelopment of a new MTU Website incorporating a new Content Management System used to manage and maintain the main MTU website and sub/micro sites, as well as hosting and maintenance.

See [MTU Web Site](#)

- **Other Parties Involved in Education and Training**

MTU Academic Council endorsed the QQI Accreditation Principles for Professional Engagements with Education Providers, including Programme Validation, Professional Accreditation and Approval

In April 2021, MTU AC noted an articulation agreement between MTU and UCC whereby MTU graduates (2.2 or above) of the newly approved 3-year BA (Hons) in Home Economics & Business (first intake September 2021) will have a protected pathway to the Professional Master of Education in UCC. Prior to the development of this programme, only one other third-level provider offered a home economics post-primary teaching qualification and a critical shortage nationally for home economics teachers had been identified. The programme had been initially designed as a five-year integrated joint MTU-UCC programme but, as development work progressed, it was decided by MTU and UCC that it would be more appropriate to develop a 3-year BA (Hons) in Home Economics & Business as a stand-alone programme of MTU, with graduates who attain 2.2 or higher progressing to the UCC PME programme via a protected pathway.

The Department of Marketing & International Business has offered a programme for qualified pilots for a number of years in collaboration with the Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA). Arising from the ongoing relationship with AFTA, validation of a new programme, Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Global Business and Pilot Studies, was proposed and subsequently approved by the Cork Academic Legacy Committee. This is a four-year programme which includes two years of external study (Stages 2 and 3) during which students undertake pilot training with AFTA. Throughout the programme, students remain full-time MTU students and have access to student supports, though a reduced student contribution fee is payable for the two years of external study. A Consortium Agreement between MTU and AFTA has been developed following a process of due diligence between both parties. The Consortium Agreement was approved by Academic Council, Governing Body in March, April, 2021 respectively.

- **Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review**

See Part A Section 8 for update.

- **Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes**

See Part A Section 4 for update.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

2.1.1 Anti-Plagiarism Software

In March 2020, the Academic Council of MTU founder Institute, Cork Institute of Technology tasked a working group to address matters related to the provision of anti-plagiarism software, cognisant of the licence term for the existent solution was due to expire in August 2021. The group oversaw the completion of a tendering process, with the successful tender being Ouriginal. The new solution offered several benefits, including improved integration with the Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) platform.

The Department of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) investigated the potential of migrating the existent Anti-Plagiarism Software database of student assignments to the Ouriginal solution. During this reporting period, there has been much engagement between relevant colleagues across the University, with a training programme on the new software made available to all academic staff and a sandbox version of the software also made available for testing by colleagues.

In June 2021, the MTU Academic Council approved the use of the Ouriginal plagiarism detection software on a University-wide basis. Additional recommendations in relation to the software were also adopted by MTU Academic Council for progression. These include a roll-out of the Ouriginal plagiarism detection software to meet the individual requirements of MTU Cork and Kerry Campuses; training in Ouriginal for staff and students; and the creation and facilitation of a specific University-wide Community of Practice for developing and sharing knowledge around the use of plagiarism detection software. The implementation of the recommendations is led by TEL and the E-learning Development Support Unit (EDSU).

MTU Academic Council also adopted recommendations in the broader context of academic integrity, these being:

- That MTU give consideration to the submission of all text-based assignments through the Ouriginal plagiarism detection software to increase information levels on, and to promote academic integrity;
- That MTU make all students aware of the use of the Ouriginal plagiarism detection software in the broader context of supporting best academic practice;
- That the affordances of the Ouriginal solution, and its availability as part of the University's e-learning infrastructure, be considered in the broader context of the on-going development of University-wide policies and procedures in the areas of academic integrity and honesty; and
- That the use and application of the Ouriginal solution be reviewed annually to ensure consistency with relevant policies and practice in the areas of academic integrity and honesty.

2.1.2 Academic Integrity Survey

During early 2021, Working Group 2 of the National Academic Integrity Network engaged in designing an **Academic Integrity Survey** for all MTU staff. The purpose of this survey is to explore staff experiences, perceptions and views on academic integrity and academic misconduct shown by learners in assessment and examination.

The current Chair of Working Group 2 is a member of MTU staff, and MTU agreed to be one of the institutes to pilot the survey, ahead of **NAIN** launching it nationally across all Irish HEIs.

The survey launched on 14th June 2021 and remained open for responses until 18th June 2021. It was open to all staff (both academic and professional) of MTU. While its end date was a little earlier than planned due to changes for the timeline for the transition to the MTU Office 365 and migration of data.

Responses were collected from **266** members of staff, with the majority (**236**) being academic or research staff.

While data analysis was ongoing at the end of this reporting period, the initial findings suggest, *inter alia*, that Academic Integrity is an issue of interest and concern for staff in MTU, with particular concerns being voiced around categories of misconduct such as collusion and submission of work done by external parties, and strong support for more initiatives aimed at students.

2.2.3 Library Assessment Toolkit

An [Assignment Toolkit](#) was developed by the Library Learning Community throughout the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years. Funding for the toolkit was awarded in November 2019 from the National Forum for Teaching and Learning's "Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education" (SATLE), which allowed a platform for its delivery to be developed by TEL. The Assignment Toolkit includes a suite of 8 modules, co-designed by staff and students in a partnership approach, that guide students through the assignment completion process and provide a grounding in academic integrity by using best practice guidance at every stage. The modules include the following:

1. Introduction to the Library;
2. Critical Thinking;
3. Misinformation;
4. Effective Searching;
5. Referencing;
6. Plagiarism;
7. Reading Academic Material and Planning for Assignments; and
8. Writing Assignments.

These modules are delivered and accessible asynchronously, online, incorporating elements of information literacy, critical thinking and academic writing skills to allow students prepare for and complete an assignment in line with best practice in academic integrity.

The Library Learning Community envisions this tool to be of significant help to new students especially, but also as a refresher for those with some academic experience behind them. However, it is also intended to be an asset to academic staff as a rich, interactive resource that can support their students with their studies.

As well as being available as a bespoke offering to MTU staff and students, the toolkit has been developed in a SCORM compliant package allowing the files to be shared, accessed and ultimately redeveloped for any institution that wishes to derive their own version. The toolkit developer files will be made available as an open access resource on the National Forum's national resource hub as an Open Educational Resource. The toolkit has been available to MTU students since early in Semester 1, 2021/2022.

2.2.4 Epigeum training for students and staff

During the reporting period, the University also commenced discussions with Higher Education online learning provider Epigeum, part of Oxford University Press, on online training on Academic Integrity for students and staff. It is intended that this training will be made available via the Learning Management System, with the student training being rolled out first. Students who successfully complete the training will receive a specially-designed MTU digital badge for academic integrity. This badge conforms with digital badge open technical standards meaning it can be showcased online in a range of ways and will provide a lasting record of the student's learning and knowledge in this area.

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 <i>Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</i>	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
	Preparation of MTU Strategic Plan	Office of the President
	Submission of Self Evaluation Report as part of CINNTE review Cycle	MTU Academic Council
	Establishment of Terms of Reference for the MTU Academic Council Integration and Development Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Planning • Student Affairs • Quality Assurance and Enhancement • Research and Innovation • Standing Orders and formation of steady state MTU Academic Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management of Agendas and Minutes of Meetings of Academic Council 	MTU Academic Council
	Development of MTU Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to the following, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations for Modules & Programmes (Marks and Standards) • Duties and Responsibilities of External Examiners (Taught Programmes) 	MTU Academic Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules • Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academic Integrity ○ Individual Extenuating Circumstances ○ Assessment Appeals and Reviews; ○ Student Feedback ○ Late Submission Penalties 	
	<p>Development of MTU Student Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to the following,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Recognition of Prior Learning • Equity of Access & Participation • Student Complaints (Grievances) • Reasonable Accommodations • Fitness to Study • Fitness to Practice • Student Discipline • Garda Vetting • Substance Abuse • Student Wellness & Health • Gender Identity and Gender Expression • Posthumous and aegrotat awards 	MTU Academic Council
	<p>Development of MTU Corporate Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to the following,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement 	MTU Executive

	Quality Enhancement	
	<p>Academic Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTU Examinations Administration Process 	Registrar's Office
	<p>Student Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of MTU Student Charter • Alignment of MTU Forms and Fees in relation to application, admissions, international, repeat examinations • Alignment of MTU processes in relation to management of Student Assistance Fund • Alignment of MTU processes in relation to assessment of Mature applicants • MTU Code of Practice in relation to admissions 	Registrar's Office
	<p>Collaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU between the MTU and the Cork and Kerry Education and Training Boards 	Registrar's Office
	Systems – Banner Upgrade in Cork	Registrar's Office

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

There are no reviews planned for the next reporting period.

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Cork Centre for Architectural Education	Review to be completed in AY 21/22. Site visit took place in March '21.	Previous report done in 2013

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

An Institutional Review, as part of the CINNTE review cycle, was due for the next reporting period. This review is delayed, with agreement of the HEA, due to the Covid 19 pandemic and no revised date has been agreed at the time writing.

A joint Programmatic Review of the MTU (Cork) campus Faculty of Business and Humanities and the MTU (Kerry) campus School of Business, Computing and Humanities is due for the next reporting period. This review is postponed, pending development and approval of relevant MTU policy and procedures.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Ensuring Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement in Digital Environments

While MTU Quality Assurance and enhancement policies and procedures are guided by QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines MTU is guided in particular by QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes in relation to ensuring quality assurance and quality enhancement in digital environment.

During this reporting period, most programmes were delivered in the context of emergency remote teaching whereby online platforms were used to varying extents depending on factors such as the prevailing public health guidelines, stage of programme, academic discipline, and campus specific considerations. This required substantial pivoting by lecturing staff, learners and support services in delivery and assessment of programmes. While many aspects of Emergency Remote Teaching, including guidance on examinations, assessments and academic integrity were reported on by the respective former Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee in their previous AQR submissions, the following provides a more detailed overview of the initiatives continued during this reporting period.

At University level, the strategy around quality assurance and enhancement in digital environments revolves around the dedicated units established providing the necessary infrastructure to: support and manage the provision of programmes in digital environments; to provide technical and pedagogical training and support to staff involved in online teaching, learning and assessment; to provide training and support to students in the use of online learning technologies; and to garner feedback from both staff and students, with a view to enhancing online and blended offerings.

These dedicated units are located in MTU Bishopstown campus (The Department of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)) and MTU Kerry North campus (The E-Learning Development and Support Unit (EDSU)). These units are supported by the University's IT Services Department, who provide further networking, software and hardware support. It should be noted that, at this time, the Learning Management System (LMS) / Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) used on the respective Cork and Kerry campuses are different, with plans to move to a single platform in the short to medium term. EDSU and TEL meet regularly to discuss, collaborate and progress developments, including the alignment and merger of the two LMSs.

1. Overview of Department of Technology Enhanced Learning

MTU's Department of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has a mission to create new learning opportunities and to enrich the learning experience of all learners by providing world-class technology-enhanced learning solutions and services. During the pandemic emergency, the department played a key role in helping the university respond to the requirement to transition quickly and effectively to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) modes.

In its mainstream role, TEL supports a rich e-learning ecosystem, incorporating a modern Learning Management System/ Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas), an integrated live e-learning system and various ancillary systems such as the University's plagiarism detection system, a student attendance tool, a credentialing platform and a range of authoring tools for staff to use to create media-rich e-learning content.

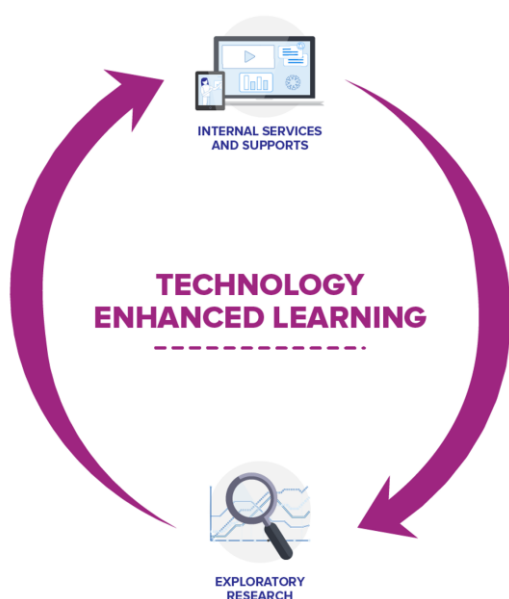


In addition to the above, the department pilots and, based on staff and student feedback, mainstreams new ways to use technology to enhance and enrich learning, with work ongoing during AY2020-21 with respect to the rollout of a student response and polling system and a new e-portfolio solution. As well as encouraging and supporting the use of technology as a complement to traditional on-campus learning, the department also supports and manages a suite of fully online and blended programmes. Prior to the pandemic and the remote teaching period – which effectively saw all programmes transitioning to online -- there were 25 such programme offerings.

Separate but foundational to such mainstream work, the TEL department conducts ongoing research at national and international level into big trends and ideas in ed-tech and e-learning, with current funded projects relating to topics such as learning analytics, game-based learning and gamification and open educational resources. Much of this work is funded through European Union and national sources such as, respectively, the EU Erasmus Plus programme and the National Forum for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (for more on the department's recent and ongoing research and development activity please see <https://tel.cit.ie/research>)

The department is also home to the E-learning and Ed Tech research group, a university-wide research group dedicated to pedagogically-orientated research into the application of new and emerging technologies to facilitate learning.

The interplay between mainstream services provided by the university's TEL function and the department's ongoing research work is best understood as a virtuous cycle, with ongoing research informing and "future-proofing" provision in the mainstream, while mainstream activity in turn provides insights and direction with respect to end user needs and emerging challenges and opportunities in the field.



a) Digital Environments

The TEL Department maintains and extends a range of core and ancillary software environments and hardware supports to deliver a feature-rich, well-integrated and highly-accessible ed-tech infrastructure. The Learning Management System / Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas), sits right at the heart of this ecosystem. Canvas supports a number of important online teaching and learning functions relating to assessment, communication, learner management and learning analytics and the ability to create, host and share learning content and other teaching and learning materials and objects.

Some other key technologies integrated into Canvas include:

- The portfolio e-portfolio system;
- The live e-learning or video conferencing tool, Zoom;
- The Badgr credentialing and digital badge platform;
- Screencastomatic screencasting software;
- Qwicky Attendance for attendance and participation Tracking and reporting;
- H5P rich content and assessment authoring software;
- Labster virtual lab software (selectively released to a number of departments and programmes); and
- Examity remote proctoring solution ((selectively released to two departments).

The TEL department team use a range of software to create media-rich e-learning solutions, making use of the Articulate 360 Suite, the Adobe Creative Suite, Evolve, Adobe Captivate, H5P, Gomo and Elucidat. For specific VR and game-based learning projects the team also made use of technologies such as Unity, Unreal engine, ARKit, Blender and Autodesk 3ds Max. Some web-based solutions in particular are also hand-coded using a combination of JavaScript, HTML/HTML5, CSS etc. TEL staff have a background both in learning theory and instructional design as well as the more technical or creative digital media aspects of TEL.

b) Support for Emergency Remote Teaching

Activity in the TEL Department during this reporting period continued to revolve around support for Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). Some key developments in preparation for the academic year included:

- The provision of additional pedagogical guidelines for ERT (see <https://tel.cit.ie/remoteteaching.tips-for-remote-teaching>);
- Guidelines on finding and using Open Educational Resources (see <https://tel.cit.ie/remoteteaching.OER>);
- The roll-out of the video conferencing system Zoom after survey and helpdesk data pointed to significant feature, performance and support issues with the system that had been used during the first ERT semester;
- Supports, developed in consultation with Disability Support Service, for greater accessibility of content and systems for staff and students with disability;
- Development of a range of new help articles for staff and students in response to helpdesk ticket data and survey results;
- A range of easy-reference remote teaching and remote learning guidelines (see <https://tel.cit.ie/remote-teaching-downloads>);
- Validation of an approach to supporting online pen and paper exams using the Canvas mobile app; and
- Limited rollout of an online proctoring service.

Over the reporting period, the department also managed a busy helpdesk system which received a monthly average of 297 tickets or help requests over this time with TEL Department staff issuing some 5,773 responses to helpdesk users over the course of the full academic year.

A knowledgebase of help articles and related resources was provided for staff and student as well which, at the time of writing, contains some 250 original help articles put together by TEL staff on a range of ERT and digital learning topics. System analytics for this knowledgebase platform indicate 88,758 unique visits to the staff portion of the platform over the course of AY2020-21 and a further 39,560 visits by students over that same period.

Throughout the reporting period, the TEL Department continued to send on frequent communication to staff and students, highlighting key ERT developments and signposting key resources and support options. At the end of each semester, the Department worked closely with the Cork Exams office in developing guidelines and procedures for terminal online exams and in providing operational and technical support for same.

The department, in addition, continued working throughout this period with various committees, and working parties of the university to ensure policies, procedures and other guidelines and academic frameworks aligned with or, as appropriate, accommodated the needs and requirements of staff and students teaching and learning during the pandemic.

c) Lecturer Supports and Services

All MTU staff, based on the MTU Cork campuses, were enrolled on a general Canvas-based module focused primarily on the LMS. This module continued to be reviewed and updated over the course of the period.

Live online training sessions were also offered. The approach taken from the beginning was to broadcast sessions via the department website and via YouTube. Staff could also attend live sessions offered via the Zoom platform. Some sixty live training sessions were delivered by the TEL Department over AY2020-21 and at the time of writing approx. 80 hours of edited recordings are available via the department YouTube channel.

From September 2020 to August 2021, the Department YouTube channel logged a total of 30,679 views.

d) Learner Supports and Services

A range of resources were created specifically for students over this period which included:

- A Student Guide to [Remote Teaching Approaches](#)
- [Tips for Remote Learning](#)
- Guidelines on the use of [Canvas for Remote Learning](#)
- A [Student Assessment Guide](#)

A number of live training events specifically for learners were delivered over this period also. Many of these sessions were very well attended and associated recording also proved very popular – a start-of-semester “Getting started with Remote Learning” session for example logged over 2,500 views in semester one of this academic year.

A specific knowledgebase of help articles and related resources was also provided for learners. This contains some fifty original articles written by TEL staff on a range of remote learning topics for students. Analytics for this helpdesk platform same indicate 39,560 unique visits by students over the course of AY2020-21 with 76% of visitors indicating that they had found an answer to their question.

e) Lecturer and Learner Feedback

The data offered above provides only a partial view with respect to the experience and practice of ERT in the University. To provide further insight into the experiences of staff and learners, a number of large scale surveys were conducted throughout the ERT period. A range of presentations, reports and infographics were subsequently developed by the TEL department and shared widely as a way to give value and voice to staff and learner experiences while also fostering open discussion in the area.

Some key findings from a staff survey administrated in May 2021 (n=381) are as follows:

- 11.1% of staff respondents characterise their internet provision as “unreliable” (n = 42);
- The mean rating for support received from the university for remote teaching approaches was 3.7 out of 5 (n = 378);
- 80.1% of respondents felt there were benefits associated with remote learning (n = 381);
- The top three remote teaching benefits which MTU staff respondents would like to see continued on when campuses reopen are as follows (n = 304):
 - Ability to work from home (78.9%);
 - Greater flexibility (74%); and
 - Time saved on travel/commuting (57%).

Some key findings from a student survey also administrated in May 2021 (n = 1,703) are as follows:

- 14.8% of respondents characterise their internet provision as “unreliable” (n = 1685);
- The mean rating for support received from the university for student remote learning was 3.3 out of 5 (n = 1696);
- 71.3% of respondents felt there were benefits associated with remote learning (n = 1700);
- The top three remote learning benefits which students would like to see continued on when campuses reopen are as follows (n = 1204):
 - Recorded lectures/classes (76.3%);
 - Greater flexibility (63.4%); and
 - Ability to study/work from home (56.6%).

f) Further Development

As the emergency that gave rise to emergency remote teaching wanes, the TEL department is working to encourage and support reflection on the legacy and impact of this period. Staff and learners in MTU will emerge from this period with a shared and extended experience of teaching and learning through digital environments and with new ideas and intentions with respect to teaching and learning going forward. Qualitative and quantitative research conducted with staff and learners has highlighted some of the work and creative problem-solving that allowed the university to ensure academic continuity but it also highlights additional issues, in particular to equity and equality of access. Research and discussion with respect to teaching and learning practices during the pandemic will also inform the University development around digital transformation, including the cultural and contextual aspects as well as the digital infrastructure and environments. Ongoing transformations need to be underpinned by organisational models and tools for university staff to develop a greater awareness of the affordances technology provides, how it can be used in their own practice and how they can model those practices to further enhance its offerings.

2. Overview of EDSU

The E-Learning Development Support Unit (EDSU), located on MTU Kerry campus has three principal objectives:

- To design, develop and support the delivery of blended and online programmes
- To promote Digital Literacy of supported tools among MTU Kerry campus staff
- To provide front-end administration for MTU Kerry campus's Learning Management System (LMS) – currently Blackboard.

EDSU provide induction training on the use of the Learning Management System / Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard / Collaborate Ultra) and associated technologies for new lecturers and learners each semester, provide Continued Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for lecturers throughout the year and develop resources for lecturers and learners on the effective use of technologies.

a. Digital Environments

EDSU support and develop resources for the technologies provided by the University for lecturers and learners that are integrated into the LMS. The LMS currently in use by MTU Kerry is Blackboard. As part of the alignment of systems across the university, MTU Kerry are in the process of preparing academic staff and learners for the move to Canvas in AY 2022/23. The team are piloting Canvas with a small number of lecturers and learners who will champion the new LMS with their colleagues. The technologies used by the team can be broken into types – those used by lecturers and those used by the team themselves.

The technologies used by lecturers that the team support include:

1. The LMS (currently Blackboard, piloting Canvas);
2. Portfolio tool (Pathbrite);
3. Anti-plagiarism software (Turnitin for AY 2020/21, Ouriginal AY 2021/22);
4. Video Conferencing tool (Collaborate Ultra, Zoom as part of the Canvas pilot roll-out);
5. MCQ/Test software;
6. Office 365 suite – particular focus on accessibility; and
7. Office 365 suite – focus on presentation tools such as PowerPoint.

The EDSU team use a variety of technologies to develop content, including:

- Articulate 360 Suite – This is used to develop interactive asynchronous content;
- Screencastomatic – This is used to create short video guides;
- Collaborate Ultra – This is used to deliver synchronous sessions;
- Blackboard – This is used to host our asynchronous/synchronous content;
- Adobe Creative Suite – This is used to design graphics/illustrations;
- Banner – The University Student Record System (SRS); and
- The team also use Office 365 for content development and administration.

b. Technical and Pedagogy Training Resources (Synchronous and Asynchronous)

The focus for this reporting period was on Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and the provision of training and support for lecturers and learners in the provision of online delivery and assessment. To ensure that the experience for learners was consistent, comfortable and engaging, the EDSU team identified a minimum acceptable standard ERT and provided training for lecturers to ensure that all modules offered at least this minimum level.

EDSU delivered training in the first weeks of the semester to ensure that staff had the opportunity to gain the skills. Existing asynchronous resources were reconfigured to focus on this minimum level.

Training sessions were run multiple times to allow for staff availability and to maximise active participation and instructor interaction for the attendees. A schedule of training covering, inter alia, assessment, discussion boards, accessible content creation, was provided for the semester. Sessions were tailored to the experience and skill levels of participants and guest speakers were invited to present on various topics.

EDSU emphasize the fact that technology is an enabler, not pedagogy. The technical training was complemented with lectures and workshops covering the pedagogical aspects of ERT. A number of guest lecturers from other Higher Education Institutions made presentations on approaches to online delivery and assessment.

In addition to the training the EDSU team provided support for lecturing staff via a support desk email system where calls were logged and resolved, online “drop-in” sessions run weekly and a booking system for appointments for advice on assessment setup in the LMS. The move to online meant that this became the primary source of contact for lecturing staff. The calls logged were extracted and analysed to inform training plans and the development of asynchronous training content and associated resources.

As Final Scheduled examinations were delivered online, EDSU were highly involved in the design, development and implementation of examination setup templates, checking that setups followed the Guidelines and that examinations were fully set up in sufficient time for the examination period. Full training and support was provided for academic staff through workshops, appointments and resources.

While the impact of the pandemic pushed the focus of EDSU’s work to ERT, the team were very conscious that the experience of online delivery and the skills gained during this period would significantly impact on the perception of both lecturer and learner of online learning. Training and resources were developed with this in mind.

As the anti-plagiarism software used changed for AY 2021/22, a training programme and associated resources was created. Sessions were provided during the semester covering those areas identified by academic staff as of most interest. EDSU publish a weekly eNewsletter which is sent to staff each week, highlighting the relevant resources at particular times (e.g., before assessment periods, as well as highlighting the training, the newsletter will highlight the relevant resources and provide answers to the most frequently asked questions during that period.

The team continued to offer drop-in sessions and appointments for assessment checking in Semester 1. The synchronous training sessions provided by EDSU during this reporting period are listed below. Training sessions were recorded and the recordings made available to all lecturers, including all of the resources developed for the session. These sessions also informed the development of further resources.

c. Asynchronous Content - EDSU Training Resources

This is a module on the LMS to which all academic staff are assigned. EDSU have collated all asynchronous content. To try and suit a variety of learning styles, most pieces of content come in two formats, a printable guide, and a video guide.

Each section is broken down into small “chunks” to aid the lecturer in finding answers to specific questions or to allow them to peruse the content more easily. The content is updated and reviewed regularly. Feedback received on this content has been consistently positive.

d. Learner Training

The EDSU team recognise that for learners the main point of contact for identifying issues with the LMS is the lecturer. Notwithstanding this, a handbook (with accompanying video resources) in relation to online teaching and learning facilities is provided to all learners. Specific resources for assignment and examination submission are provided and highlighted for learners by both EDSU and the Examinations Office. The EDSU team work with Student Services to ensure that learners with learning difference are also supported. Working with the Computer Services, students were able to log issues, directed to appropriate resources and where required, the EDSU team interacted directly with the learner to resolve the issue.

For AY 2021/22, the resources available for learners improved, with the provision of an “AskBlackboard” support service specifically for learners. Learners can contact the AskBlackboard service directly where their issues can be assessed by the EDSU team and the appropriate support provided.

e. Staff/Student Feedback

EDSU surveys staff on MTU Kerry campus at least once a semester requesting feedback, suggestions for improvement and training resources. This is in addition to the wider University staff and learner survey. The feedback from staff and learners has been very positive regarding the supports provided, including integrity measures employed to mitigate potential collusion during the online scheduled exam process. Feedback also indicated that quieter students interact more online than in a physical class utilising chat feature and respond to in class polls while online delivery improved learner information searching and reading for understanding skills.

f. Further Development

EDSU are currently focused on the migration of all content and modules from Blackboard to Canvas. This is the continuation of the alignment of the online learning environments and practices across MTU campuses. EDSU and the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning in MTU Cork meet regularly to discuss developments and are well placed for the alignment and merger of the two LMSs once MTU Kerry complete the Canvas move.

EDSU, in support of the university’s goals, intends to offer accredited modules on instructional design and associated technologies to industry and the education sector at all levels. It is intended that industry-focused modules will be delivered online to develop skills in accessible, engaging and focused content development for both trainers and educators.

EDSU also works with colleagues across Europe on EU funded projects such as Tourism Insight, a programme designed to develop multi-lingual asynchronous learning resources on the tourism industry for second level learners across Europe.

The team consisted of five people during this reporting period – including three Learning Technologists, and an educational developer (pedagogy) and a manager.

g. Training Sessions (provided during this reporting period)

Training provided was one-to-one tailored training for lecturers delivering online

10/01/2021 - Blackboard - What you need to know to deliver your first week of classes

11/01/2021 - Collaborate Ultra Basics

12/01/2021 - Blackboard Assignments

22/01/2021 - Introduction to accessibility

29/01/2021 - Blackboard and Collaborate Ultra

05/02/2021 - Teaching in an online environment

10/02/2021 – Effective online course design and delivery

17/02/2021 – Open Educational Resources and Practices

01/03/2021 - Setting up your Open Book Exam

01/03/2021 - Setting up your MCQ/Test Exam

01/03/2021 - Considerations for Assessments Online

02/03/2021 - Setting up your Open Book Exam

02/03/2021 - Setting up your MCQ/Test Exam

03/03/2021 - Blackboard MCQ/Tests - Beyond the basics

04/03/2021 - Overview of Accessibility

04/03/2021 - Considerations for Assessments Online

26/03/2021 - Final Scheduled Examination Setup

02/06/2021 - Autumn Exam Setup

Drop-in sessions were run twice weekly.

Assessment checks appointments were provided weekly from week 3 of the semester.