NUI Galway

2022

Annual Quality Report NUI Galway
Reporting Period 2020-2021

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2020-2021

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

Submission Process and Timeline

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

Completing the AQR

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

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

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

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

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

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

Case Studies

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

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

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

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

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

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

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for NUI Galway for the reporting period **1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021.**

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 25 February 2022**.

The AQR has been approved by the University Management Team (UMT) and is submitted by Sinéad O'Connor, Director of Quality.

NUI Galway has been inspiring minds since 1845 as a research-led university. It is one of the oldest and largest universities in Ireland. Beginning with just 68 students, our campus community now numbers over 22,000 students and staff, and our 110,000 alumni are located in over 100 countries across the world. From humble beginnings, today we are ranked 259th in the world according to QS university rankings.

NUI Galway is an international university with global ambition, but with deep roots in our region and nationally. Our location on the very edge of Europe gives us a unique perspective. Our university is at the heart of a distinct and vibrant region, renowned for its unique culture, creative industries, medical technologies, marine ecology and economy, and our innovation. We work in partnership with business, industry and government to provide the graduates, skills, knowledge and innovation that drive entrepreneurialism, employment and growth in our region.

The University contributes greatly to the diversity and dynamism of Galway, the most international city in Ireland. With over 3,300 international students and 480 international staff from 122 countries, we are rightly proud of the contribution and vibrancy they add to our campus and wider communities. Through our teaching and research, we attract and develop talent from around the world to address global challenges. Our international impact is strengthened by our alumni network, along with our partnerships and collaborations with leading international universities and organisations around the world. The global impact of our research is evident in the number of our international research collaborations, and the fact that we are home to five of the most highly cited researchers in the world.

We are a comprehensive research-led university with a breadth and depth of teaching and research across the sciences, social sciences and humanities, delivered through four Colleges, 19 Schools, 60 academic disciplines, five Research Institutes and a range of research centres and clusters. Our regional footprint is the largest in Ireland spanning the Atlantic seaboard.

1.0   Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Under the Irish Universities Act 1997, governance arrangements for NUI Galway follow a bicameral model, with Governing Authority (Údarás) exercising overall governance responsibility and Academic Council (AC) having a particular responsibility for the governance of academic affairs. The Academic Council is the chief academic authority and, subject to review by Údarás na hOllscoile, controls the academic affairs of the University, including the curriculum, instruction and education provided by the University. Consequently, AC plays a critical role in setting the academic direction of the University, and its remit includes the development and approval of academic programmes and academic policy.

The University Management Team (UMT) is responsible for executing the decisions of Údarás through all academic Colleges, Schools and Centres, and major Professional Services. Údarás is comprised of elected representatives of academic staff, students, alumni, local organisations (public and industrial) and ministerial nominees and has full responsibility for the oversight of quality and quality assurance (QA). It regularly receives quality reports through Academic Council and the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC). Údarás meets five times annually. Its sub-committees (e.g. Standing and Strategic Planning, Finance Resource Committee, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) meet more frequently. Academic Council meets five times annually.

The University's governance structure enforces separation of responsibilities between developers and approvers and their terms of references are known through long-established practice and where appropriate, documented and published.

NUI Galway Governance and Management Structure
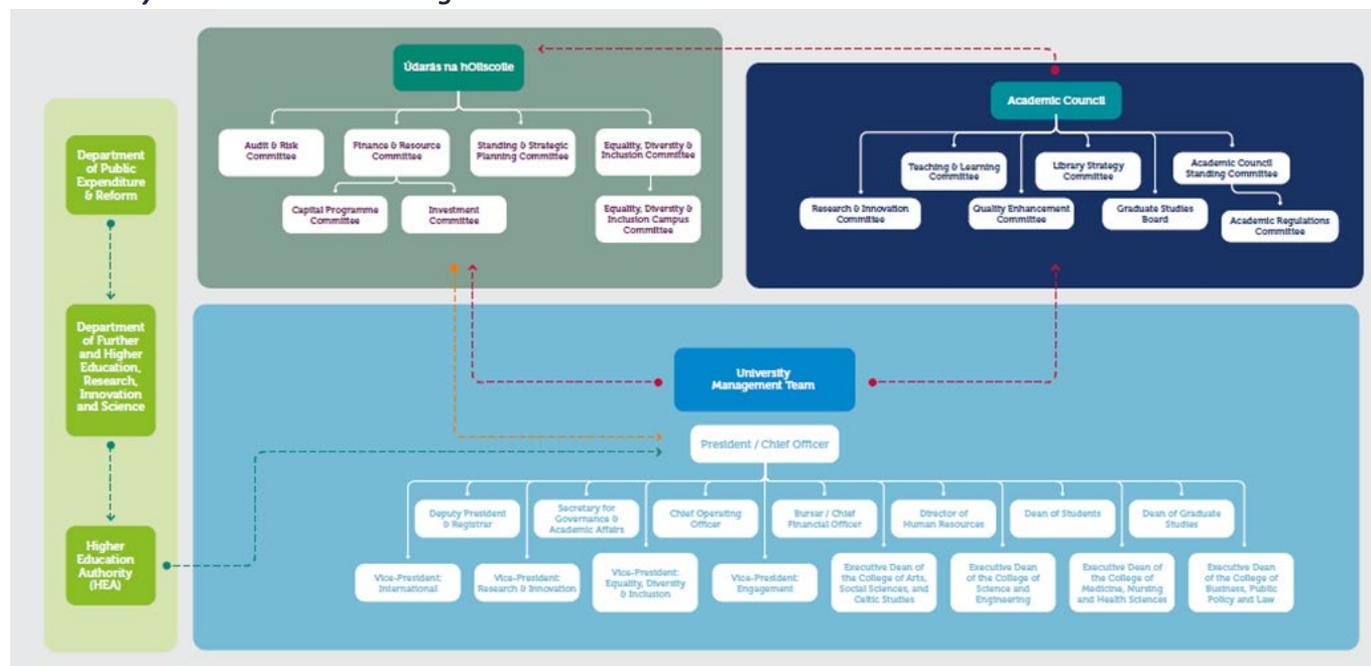
Quality and Quality Assurance is overseen by Údarás na hOllscoile through its principal committees – Academic Council, Standing and Strategic Planning Committee and the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC). Quality and Quality Assurance is a regular item on the agenda of these committees and a fixed item on the agenda of Academic Council. The execution of various quality assurance policies is principally overseen by QEC, chaired by the Deputy President and Registrar. QEC meets at least three times during the academic year to discuss and approve all quality related Policies and Procedures. Membership is made up of representatives of both academic

and service communities, including the Director of Quality. The Director of Quality is responsible for assuring quality enhancement across all of the University's units where Quality, Strategy and Performance form a 'tripartite' approach to the enhancement of quality and performance. The Director of Quality provides support for the development and implementation of teaching, research and support related Policies and Procedures and is also responsible for engaging with all units and external agencies in the development and improvement of a culture of quality assurance at the University.

Continuous improvement to the quality of all activities across NUI Galway is the responsibility of every member of staff through their own individual efforts and through organisational committees and units. Staff are guided in this endeavour through three key external standards:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

In addition, staff activities are guided by a number of additional external guidelines published by Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) and other bodies including IHEQN and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Continuous improvement by all staff to improving quality is also guided by the University's strategy Strategy 2020-2025. The new plan, launched in January 2020, is built on a foundation of core values that define the University's purpose and priorities. Through the value of excellence the strategy will deliver an excellent student-centred, research-led teaching and learning experience. In March 2020, the Director of Strategy Implementation was appointed to the Office of the President. The Director of Strategy Implementation works with the President and University Management Team to implement, monitor and review targets/actions of the strategic plan, via the operational planning processes across all Colleges, Schools and Units.

QA is implemented through a comprehensive annual Operational Planning process linked to Strategic Planning. An update to *QA007 Operational Planning* was approved by Academic Council in October 2020.   The School Operational Planning process now includes ongoing reporting on IRRP Research Review Action Plans. For Operational Planning Cycle 2020-21 onwards, major actions from School Quality Reviews will also be included.

Quality assurance and enhancement is also covered through the operational planning process where every major unit in the University – Schools, Colleges and Support Services – provides details of completed and planned enhancements.

NUI Galway has a comprehensive documented approach to Quality Assurance (QA) illustrated initially through its Policies and Procedures Repository and an archive of meeting minutes and records accessible via the Quality Office website. NUI Galway implements external standards and guidelines through a comprehensive QA system focussed on over 305 internal Policies and Procedures and that includes specific Policies and Procedures around internal monitoring and Quality Reviews (QRs).

Decisions around the development and continuous improvement to all internal Policies and Procedures including those related to internal monitoring and Quality Review (QR) are taken at a number of major committees and meetings. These are led by the Governing Authority (Údarás) and its principle sub-committees that include Academic Council and the University Management Team (UMT). Decisions around development and changes to Policies and Procedures related to academic activities are taken mainly by Academic Council.
Decisions around Policies and Procedures related to internal monitoring and Quality Review (QR) are taken by the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) which reports to Údarás through Academic Council (AC). The Quality

Office is responsible for executing Policies and Procedures related to internal monitoring and QR and for supporting all units in the development of internal Policies and Procedures.

Both Údarás and the Academic Council have a number of other key subcommittees that discuss quality improvement on various aspects of the University's processes and typically meet immediately prior to the meetings noted above and more frequently, as required. These sub-committees are:

- Colleges and School Boards
- Graduate Studies Board
- Research Committee
- Standing and Strategic Planning Committee
- Academic Council - Standing
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Library Strategy Committee

The University has adopted a policy for documenting all policies and procedures. All major policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines are made available by various units across the University and guide the behaviour of University staff and students when implementing key University processes. Policies and Procedures are typically documents but may also be manuals, webpages and forms. Policies and Procedures should reflect best practice in the higher education sector and should be written using simple and accessible language for end users. All University Policies and Procedures must be periodically reviewed, and if necessary revised, at least once every seven years.

All University Policies and Procedures must be coded and indexed in the University's P&P Repository available in the Quality Office website. Additional policies and procedures related to this heading and available from the Policies and Procedures Repository include:

1. QA001 Quality Assurance
2. QA002 Policies and Procedures
3. P&P Repository
4. Quality Office Website

An extensive number of internal statutes and organisational structures also define the role, duties and responsibilities of key organisational units and committees and the responsibilities of key individual staff.

NUI Galway manages the competing needs of external regulations, internal strategic objectives and risk management through the enhancement of a responsive culture characterised by a willingness by staff to engage with stakeholders including learners in a way that responds to their needs for continuous improvement to quality.

The post of Dean of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Office were established in 2008, with the objective of enhancing postgraduate research in the University. The Graduate Studies Board considers all research degree programmes, and changes to the University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes and makes recommendations to the Standing Committee of Academic Council. The Board is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

A key mechanism in the implementation and evaluation of quality research is the Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP). The overall aim of IRRP2016 was to enhance research performance at NUI Galway

and to comply with the *Irish Universities Act* for a peer review of research quality. Planning for IRRP 2023 is under way.

The Research Committee reports to Academic Council and is tasked with advising on the implementation of the University's Research Strategy as embodied in the University's Strategic Plan.

The Research Office has responsibility for the development and promotion of the University's research effort. It works closely with academic and research staff to secure national and international funding, and to further the impact of research and innovation. The Research Office is part of the Office of the Vice-President for Research and works closely with the Innovation Office, Graduate Studies, the Researcher Development Centre and other professional services supporting NUI Galway's research community.

Representation of learners and external stakeholders

NUI Galway's policy is to engage widely with all of its stakeholders. Stakeholders include learners, Schools, other Colleges and Universities, research funding agencies, general public, industry, national and local government and many more.

Key stakeholders in the context of quality assurance include:
- Irish Universities Association
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN)
- European Universities Association
- North-West Cluster (GMIT, LYIT, IT Sligo)
- Research Funding Bodies (SFI, HRB, etc.)

Students are a primary stakeholder and regarded by NUI Galway as competent, active and constructive partners as opposed to consumers. Students are regularly invited to engage in programme design, governance and corporate image while also engaging with their own learning.

Learners are represented on all major committees dealing with quality and quality assurance and liaise directly with the University through the committees above and also through the Dean of Students reporting directly to the Deputy President and Registrar. There are three undergraduate students and one postgraduate student on Údarás na hOllscoile.

NUI Galway staff also meet regularly with counterparts from other Universities through the Irish Universities Association (IUA) Quality Committee to discuss Policies and Procedures across the sector and also with various external stakeholders, in particular, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), IUA and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). These meetings inform NUI Galway's key decision-making processes.

A number of external constituencies are also represented on Údarás na hOllscoile:

Constituency External	Number of Members
External Organisations	3
Artistic/Cultural Nominees	2
Elected Nominees of Local County/City Councils	7
Nominees of the National University of Ireland	2
Ministerial nominees	3

External panellists, examiners and authenticators: There are explicit criteria laid down in a number of Policies and Procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external independent panellists, examiners and authenticators. The following Policies and Procedures lay down explicit criteria for the retention of panellists, examiners and authenticators:

- QA003 Review of Schools
- QA004 Review of Research Performance
- QA005 The Role of External Examiners (Taught)
- QA006 Review of Taught Programmes

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

LINKED PROVIDERS

NUI Galway provides a list of linked providers under the heading 'collaborative providers' on its public website and relies on two national guidelines (IHEQN and QQI) to define and implement Policies and Procedures in this area for all Schools and Colleges.

- Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (IHEQN)
- Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI)

One internal policy defines the cyclical review process for Linked Providers and draws on legislation:
QA009 Review of Linked Providers.

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

NUI Galway Policies and Procedures cover all such arrangements including sub-contracting of provision. This is done through Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding and also internal Policies and Procedures for the review of such agreements.

NUI Galway provides a list of collaborative providers on its public website and relies on two national guidelines (QQI and IHEQN) to define and implement Policies and Procedures in this area for all Schools and Colleges:

- Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI)
- Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (IHEQN)

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

NUI Galway's teaching mission is delivered through taught programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional, part-time and evening levels. The NUI Galway Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy provides the overarching framework for the design and operation of courses and modules. Responsibility for programme design lies with the Colleges and reviewing and revising programme offerings is a key aspect of quality assurance and enhancement. Successful innovation also requires the availability of accurate and timely information and data, basing major decisions on evidence and on a compelling case which is cognizant of the external context, the developments in academic fields, in other institutions, and the identification of future needs. The design of new programmes and the revision of existing offerings can be facilitated by the implementation of Learning Design principles and via the support of expertise in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), (and, for flexible programmes, Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD)), providing scope for innovation in pedagogy, assessment and the effective use of technologies and media.

All programmes undergo a comprehensive and rigorous design process and independent approval process. While processes vary from college to college, programme and module templates are prepared that include programme objectives, learning outcomes, progression rules, and student workloads (ECTS) and that are compliant with the National Framework for Qualifications. All programmes must have Programme Boards who consult various stakeholders including employers and students when designing, revising or evaluating programmes. The approval process from inception to College Board varies from college to college but may include some or all of the following:

- Discipline approval
- School committee approval
- School board approval
- College Curriculum Committee
- College committee approval

An outline of the new programme will be developed. This will normally go through a number of iterative stages, which may include some informal consultation with the College Office. A final draft of the proposal for the new programme may be approved at Discipline level and proceed from there to the School Committee (e.g. Teaching and Learning Committee). Schools/disciplines prepare programme and module templates that include programme objectives, learning outcomes, progression rules, and student workloads (ECTS) and that are compliant with the National Framework for Qualifications.

While individual programmes will have their own Programme Level Learning Outcomes, NUI Galway has developed Graduate Attributes, broader statements of capability and disposition which aim to capture the essence of what it is to be a 'graduate' and be ready to move on to the next level of study, research, employment, cultural or societal contribution. The graduate attribute statements provide an effective means of reviewing programme and course design, highlighting potential areas in which students may be provided with additional opportunities to develop these particular skills and dispositions.

The level of research, analysis, consultation and engagement with stakeholders, detail and discussion will vary from programme to programme depending on the level of innovation and the scale of the programme change involved. Once approved at college level it is the role of College Boards to bring forward new programmes for approval to Academic Council Standing and ultimately to Academic Council. This is outlined in University Regulation-2-2018 Role and Structure of College Boards. The relevant College must have approved the required detailed information for the proposed programme, including information on the programme's modules as required by Registry. Academic Council Standing Committee may request that this information be provided to

it prior to approving the programme. Academic Council Standing will request documentation in advance of each meeting for new programme proposals. Each new programme approval must be submitted using the standard *New Programme Proposal Form*. The proposal form includes the following:

- Section 1 New programme summary
- Section 2 Market research and analysis
- Section 3 Resources: must be completed before submission to Academic Standing Committee for final programme approval.

The form is accompanied by a guide which is intended to assist programme co-ordinators and schools on how to conduct effective market research for any proposed new programme, as an input into the Market Analysis section of the Programme Approval Form. The purpose of the market research analysis is to give a clear sense of likely demand, offer insights into desired course content and to help identify viable and sustainable programmes. The principles of completing this process include the following:

- Develop curricula which reflect our research expertise, are inclusive, and are responsive and attractive to the core student population which NUI Galway wishes to attract to fulfil the University's strategic plan
- Improve transparency of the progress of programme approval
- Encourage a more facilitated approach to programme approval
- More effective and timely launch of new programmes

When a programme is approved by Academic Council Standing the decision will be documented in the meeting minutes which are then submitted for final approval by Academic Council. Academic Council is the chief academic authority and, subject to review by Údarás na hOllscoile (Governing Authority), controls the academic affairs of the University including the curriculum, instruction and education provided by the University.

Uniform System of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme Weightings have been applied since the AY 2012/2013 – a policy document agreed by Academic Standing Committee (in June 2012) outlines the award, duration, ECTS, NQAI and level (Major or Minor). This document is currently being reviewed by a working group chaired by the Deputy Academic Records and Registrations Officer.

Policies and Procedures are largely implemented through committee work as well as a number of online systems (e.g. AKARI) and other forms available from NUI Galway's Syllabus Team. Detailed programme outlines are available to the public through the main University website.

All programmes undergo annual review through Programme Boards and the External Examination process and periodic review through the Quality Review process. New and major changes to programmes are available on the Quality Office website.

A sample of additional policies and procedures related to this heading and available from the Policies and Procedures Repository include:

- General Calendar

- Bologna & NFQ Standards and Guidelines

- Course Fee Establishment

- Module Bonding

- New & Changed Modules

- New & Changed Programmes

- General and Academic Calendars

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Students can access NUI Galway programmes of learning through a variety of means administered by the Admissions Offices. These include: Leaving Certificate; A Levels, EU & EFTA, Non-EU, International, and Medicine. Access is also provided to Irish, UK and EU/EEA Transfers, Advanced Entry, FETAC, International/Non-EU and Mature Students. All admissions are overseen and approved by senior academic staff mainly through School committees and later approved by University management.

Extensive use is made of the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) for assessing applicants coming from outside the Irish education system.

Student access and progression is dealt with through the following key offices that implement a variety of related Policies and Procedures (Policies and Procedures):

- Academic Records, Conferring, & Registration
- Access Office
- Undergraduate Admissions Office
- International Office
- Postgraduate Admissions Office

Policies are in place for

a) new entrant students wishing to transfer to another First Year Undergraduate programme QA252 New Entrants to First Year Fulltime Undergraduate Degree Programmes

b) and for students who have already completed first or subsequent years of an Undergraduate programme wishing to transfer to First Year of another Undergraduate programme QA251 Existing NUI Galway Students to First Year Undergraduate Degree Programmes

Widening participation: The University's Access Centre aims to create a supportive learning environment where students who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage, students with disabilities and mature students are enabled to access and succeed in third level education. This involves a wide range of educational approaches and specialist services targeted at large numbers of students who are classified by the Higher Education Authority as 'non-traditional.'

The Access Centre helps individuals realise their educational potential irrespective of their educational background, age or personal health circumstances. It provides support for students participating on access programmes, students with disabilities and mature students.

In September 2019 NUI Galway became a designated University of Sanctuary, a movement aimed at promoting the inclusion of International Protection Applicants, refugees and Irish Travellers within the community. The Steering Committee for the movement has embedded the ethos of the Places of Sanctuary across campus with the aspiration of creating an inclusive, inviting and welcoming campus for all people. The overall aim of the NUI Galway campaign is to break down the barriers for individuals regardless of their societal positioning, and offer a genuine 'Welcome to NUI Galway'.

The NUI Galway University of Sanctuary Campaign is led by the ethos of the Places of Sanctuary Movement: Learn, Embed, and Share. The University of Sanctuary initiative at NUI Galway aims to increase public awareness of International Protection, migration and Traveller-specific topics across campus, in an effort to address the low levels of participation of underrepresented groups in third-level education. International Protection Applicants, refugees, vulnerable migrants and Irish Travellers are too frequently excluded from participation in education due to inequitable societal barriers. NUI Galway aims to make its university community a much more inclusive and equitable space for all.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that allows students to gain admission to a programme of study or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme, based on demonstrated learning that a student may have achieved through another programme of study, or through work or other learning experiences. RPL recognizes that knowledge and skills can be acquired from a range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal and informal and may reduce the time and cost of study involved in completing a programme of study. The following resources are in place to support students in respect of RPL:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
- RPL Student Handbook

A sample of additional external standards and guidelines and internal processes and Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the Policies and Procedures Repository include:

- QQI Policy on Access Transfer and Progression
- QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- FAIR Report: Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition
- CAO Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Revised Common Points Scale
- Agreed CAO entry requirements criteria for WU/EFTA Applicants, CAO Handbook
- NUI Matriculation requirements
- Information on MSAP – Mature Student Application Process
- HEAR Scheme - offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.
- DARE Scheme- Scheme that offers places for those who have a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.
- HPAT– Medicine Entry Admissions Test
- Diploma Supplement – European Standard transcript
- QA248 Holders of QQI Qualification – Policy for the selection of QQI applicants to the University's degree programmes
- QA254 Occasional Students – Policy for students who wish to study specific modules for a semester or two
- QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards – Governs undergraduate student progression
- QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards - Governs postgraduate student progression
- QA222 Recognition of Prior Learning
- Student Code of Conduct
- Scholarships & Fellowships
- Student Attendance
- Guidelines for Work Placement

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The design, operation and evaluation of courses is guided by the University's Learning, Teaching & Assessment (LTA) Strategy 2017-2020. It reflects strategic priorities, national and international best practice. It applies to all NUI Galway undergraduate, postgraduate (and other) programmes.

All programmes undergo a comprehensive and rigorous design and approval process. Schools and Colleges prepare programme and module templates that include programme objectives, learning outcomes, progression rules, and student workloads (ECTS) and that are compliant with the National Framework for Qualifications.

Supports are available through the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) for developing learning outcomes and aligning assessment. These include:

- Learning Outcomes Quickguide
- Programme Outcomes Quickguide

Advice is provided on designing the awards within the National Framework of Qualifications and outlines the implications on the implementation of the framework.

Assessment at NUI Galway is governed by QA277 Assessment Policy. Programme Boards also have oversight and responsibility for a number of key aspects of the assessment process and should ensure that all necessary requirements outlined in the policy are in place and facilitated as appropriate within the management structures/processes of their College and School.

Guidance and resources on aspects of assessment are available through the CELT website. A Rubrics Guide provides advice on how to use rubrics to clarify expectations for students performance and as learning aids prior to assessment.

Many academics in NUI Galway use self and peer-assessment, as an effective learning method for students. The Self and Peer Assessment Guide provides an overview on how Self and Peer assessment can be beneficial for both the student and lecturer.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Students are engaged in programmes using a variety of Policies and Procedures captured in NUI Galway's Learning, Teaching & Assessment (LTA) Strategy developed by the LTA Committee and supported by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
This strategy and associated Policies and Procedures describe how staff engage with the following:
- Bologna Process
- Learning Outcomes
- Academic Integrity
- Accessibility
- Attendance Requirements
- Feedback Policy
- Teaching Evaluation

Different modes of delivery are encouraged and supported and using a variety of pedagogical methods that include the Blackboard Learning Management System. NUI Galway also provides support for a comprehensive suite of teaching technologies that includes:
- Blackboard
- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
- Clickers - TurningPoint Cloud (TP7)
- Echo360 Lecture Capture
- Kaltura - MediaSpace
- Kaltura Video in Blackboard
- Lecture Capture - Echo360
- Qwickly Attendance
- Turnitin
- Video Conferencing

- [Webconferencing](#)
- [Video Basics](#)
- [Mini-studio](#)

When a student registers for a module on the Student Record System, they are given access to the corresponding course on the VLE within 24 hours.

Colleges and Schools across the University have developed an extensive suite of teaching and research focussed laboratories. These laboratories extend to local industry, arts events and the local environment including archaeological sites and weather stations. Details are available within [School websites.](#)

Programme assessment is dealt with through a variety of Policies and Procedures (Policies and Procedures) and in particular NUI Galway's [Marks and Standards](#) and the [Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy (LTA Strategy)](#) supported by the [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).](#) The [Examinations Office](#) provide a number of Policies and Procedures related to examinations, re-checks and special circumstances. Local policies and procedures for assessment exist at the College/School or Programme level.

The LTA strategy and associated Policies and Procedures describe how staff engage with the following:

- [Bologna Process](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Attendance Requirements](#)

Teachers are made aware of a variety of [assessment methods](#) and receive support from CELT through a range of [professional development courses](#) and personal advice. This guidance includes marking criteria, formative assessment and assessment rubrics.

NUI Galway offers all students the possibility to inform examiners of [extenuating circumstances](#) during the assessment process and to [appeal](#) results of the assessment process.

All programmes have marks and standards set up against them. These marks and standards ensure the same process and rules apply to all students within their programme.

Quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards is provided to the assessment process through annual international peer review using external examiners. The process for nominating and approving External Examiners is outlined in [QA278 Nomination and Approval of External Examiners - Taught Programmes](#). External Examiners play a vital role in assuring and enhancing academic standards of modules, programmes and awards. This role is clearly outlined in [QA005 Role of External Examiners – Taught Programmes](#).

Although primarily involved in the review of assessment grades and standards, External Examiners also provide an important consultative and advisory function in the development of modules and programmes and the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment practices.

External Examiners review samples of exam scripts to ensure marking is in line with their expectations. All programmes go before Examination Boards, chaired by the Dean of College with representatives from the College in attendance also.

The Examination Board determines the progression of students. Students who have a concern about their results can apply to recheck or appeal their examination results.

The Dean of Students has particular responsibility for ensuring that the university structures, environment and support services underpin the educational and personal development of students. The Dean plays a lead role in the implementation of the NUI Galway Strategy with particular focus on the objectives and initiatives which support the success of students in their education.

Academic Integrity is fundamental to all areas of scholarship, teaching and learning. The NUI Galway Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy advocates a range of assessment instruments should be used without over

reliance on a single approach (such as traditional unseen written examination papers). To address the issue of plagiarism consistently, NUI Galway advocates a combination of education, good assessment design, and standard procedure. Academic staff who undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education take part in a workshop on Academic Integrity, which aims at considering academic integrity within the context of good practice in assessment design. The Dean of Students is also a member of the National Academic Integrity Network. Efforts to deal with the issue of plagiarism are supported through the Code of Practice for dealing with Plagiarism and the use of specific tools including Turnitin Originality Check.

A sample of additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the Policies and Procedures Repository include:
- QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards
- QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards
- QA235 Procedure for the Discussion, Checking and Appeal of Examination Results
- QA005 External Examiners – Taught Programmes Policy
- QA230 Procedures for dealing with breaches of Examination Regulations
- QA248 Holders of QQI Qualification – Policy for the selection of QQI applicants to the University's degree programmes
- QA254 Occasional Students – Policy for students who wish to study specific modules for a semester or two
- QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards – Governs undergraduate student progression
- QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards - Governs postgraduate student progression

Other related external policies and procedures include:
- QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- CAO Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Revised Common Points Scale
- Agreed CAO entry requirements criteria for WU/EFTA Applicants, CAO Handbook
- NUI Matriculation requirements; Information on MSAP – Mature Student Application Process
- HEAR Scheme - offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland
- DARE Scheme- Scheme that offers places for those who have a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.
- HPAT– Medicine Entry Admissions Test
- Diploma Supplement – European Standard transcript
- The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning - Principles of Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Student resources and support is provided through a number of Policies and Procedures delivered primarily through the offices of Student Services, the Library and the Student Information Desk (SID).

Student Services is supported by Policies and Procedures around: student access, accommodation, careers development, counselling, disability services, student health, sports and societies.

The Library implements a number of services considering:

- Academic Skills
- Training
- Support for Researchers
- Archives Support
- Special Collections Support
- Assistive Technology Service

The Library also has Policies and Procedures for providing dedicated study space for students and supports students through the Academic Writing Centre. The Student Information Desk offers support that interface between students and administration services including access, transfer and progression, admissions and examinations.

The centre for Support for Undergraduate Maths Students (SUMS) offers all students support with learning Mathematics. The Computer Programming Drop-In Support Centre supports students from all Schools and Colleges with self-directed learning in computing programming and computer related topics and in addition to supports provided by the Information Solutions and Services.

Internationalisation

The International Office implements a range of Policies and Procedures focussed on NUI Galway's international community and that includes admissions, Erasmus, accommodation, financial assistance, mentoring and local assistance.

The external standards and guidelines encompass both broad and specific activities and functions of the University. QAG 5.3 addresses international effective practice, guiding the University to engage with its international peers to enhance teaching and research. Both QAG 7.1 and ESG 1.6 address learning support, guiding the University to ensure that international learners benefit from appropriate teaching and learning resource availability, pastoral care, access (e.g. to services and programmes), representation (e.g. via feedback systems) and guidance (e.g. orientation).

At NUI Galway, international learners fall broadly within two categories: (a) inbound migrating learners who travel to Galway in order to pursue studies at NUI Galway (commonly referred to as 'international students'); and (b) domestically resident non-citizen who ordinarily reside in Ireland and choose to attend NUI Galway (commonly thought of as 'minority ethnic students'). Given the particular circumstances of Galway as Ireland's most internationally diverse city – in which one-in-five of the population are either born abroad or are of non-Irish descent – the latter group represent a significant and frequently overlooked (e.g. poorly audited) subset of international learners.

At NUI Galway, the International Office supports the broader University community in fulfilling the principles relating to, for example, international engagement, access, pastoral care, representation, and guidance (academic Schools and Colleges are active in fulfilling principles relating to teaching and learning resource availability). For example, the International Office:

- represents NUI Galway at international fairs and symposia, and manages inbound visits by delegations from international Universities, supporting Schools, Colleges, and the Research Office (inter alia) in cultivating international teaching and research partnerships

- provides dedicated pastoral care to international learners, including crisis counselling
- ensures smooth-running access to services and programmes for international learners, through co-ordinated collaboration with central University services (e.g. admissions and examinations offices), as well as formal support to international learners on immigration and visa matters
- provides representational opportunities for international learners by, for instance, liaising with representative groups and societies and operating an international student ambassador scheme
- provides ongoing guidance to international learners by, for example, organizing orientation and cultural awareness programmes

The Vice President International (VPI) leads the strategic development of internationalisation across all areas of University activity including international student recruitment, international student and staff experience, institutional educational and research partnerships, scholarships and networks.

Library
The Library prioritises the following to enable teaching, learning and research:
- A compelling place for academic engagement
- Access to excellent and relevant collections
- Connectivity through partnership, communication and community
- Graduates who think critically and have lifelong academic skills
- High-impact publication of research, data and digital content
- Expert staff, skilled to help in person or online

The Library provides collections, training in information use and a range of spaces in its building to enable different modes of learning and research. An annual budget for information resources is allocated to provide access to books, journals, archives and other collections across all disciplines.
Staff are organised in five teams:
- *Operations*: aligning Library space and staffing with changing needs
- *Collections*: integrating management, development of and access to, information resources
- *Marketing and Engagement*: promoting the Library and understanding user needs
- *Research and Learning*: enabling research and developing academic skills
- *Digital Publishing and Innovation*: creating digital collections for innovative research

A sample of published policies and procedures include:
- QA237 Open Access to Research Outputs
- QA801 Library Code of Conduct
- QA802 Collections Strategy
- QA803 Customer Charter
- QA807 Exhibiting at the NUIG Hardiman Research Building
- QA808 Library Complaints Procedure

Other library strategies include:
- The Journey to 2020
- Archives Strategy
- Digital Scholarship Enablement Strategy

Annual operational plans are drafted, approved and monitored. An annual survey of all users generates feedback to inform plans. Enhancements are reported to users.
The main Library IT system is Alma, supplemented by others including Primo (discovery), CALM (archives), DSpace (institutional repository), Islandora (digital collections) and Talis Aspire (reading list management).
Other supports provided in the Library Building include assistive technology, academic writing and IT.

Student Supports

Students are made aware of resources available to support their learning through an online hub which also signposts specific training sessions throughout the academic year. These are in addition to programme specific supports. The adequacy of resources are determined annually by analysing the response of students to questions related to the Supportive Environment in the studentsurvey.ie.

First year students are informed at Orientation, through general and College-specific sessions, of the learner supports available to them. They are provided with a Student Guide which outlines these supports and each first year student is enrolled in a The Learning Centre on Blackboard. The development of the Academic Skills Hub brings all the resources together in one place and ensures that different learner support/resource units benefit from networking. The range of supports include the following: IT and Digital skills available online; Academic Skills Team in the Library; the Academic Writing Centre which offers one-to-one tutorials on writing skills to over 500 students annually; Support for Undergraduate Maths and Statistics (SUMS) which is free drop-in center for undergraduate students where tutors provide support for any area of Mathematics and Statistics; Smart Life/Smart Study courses which offer targeted support around study and preparation for examinations. Learners are also supported through Peer Assisted Learning: 'Céim', in the College of Engineering & Informatics, and disciplines of Law, Geography, Psychology, Sociology and Politics, and Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) in the School of Business and Economics.

A sample of additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading include:

- Students' Union Services
- Pastoral Care
- Learner Representation
- The Language Laboratory
- Placement Services
- Student Fees & Grants
- Career Development
- Accommodation Services
- Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI)

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

NUI Galway places a strong emphasis on quality impactful research and the quality of training provided to researchers. The standards and guidelines above are reflected in our Policies and Procedures and post-graduate research programmes.

The post of **Dean of Graduate Studies** and the **Graduate Studies Office** were established in 2008, with the objective of enhancing postgraduate research in the University. The **Graduate Studies Board** considers all research degree programmes, and changes to the University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes and makes recommendations to the Standing Committee of Academic Council. The Board is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Research Office, Graduate Studies and Technology Transfer teams provide a variety of Policies and Procedures for all aspects of NUI Galway's research activities. These Policies and Procedures include codes of practice for research degree programmes, good practice in research, intellectual property, governance and open access.

A key mechanism in the implementation and evaluation of quality research is the Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP). The overall aim of IRRP2016 was to enhance research performance at NUI Galway and to comply with the *Irish Universities Act* for a peer review of research quality. Planning for IRRP 2023 is in its early stages.

Research activity takes place within Schools and Colleges of the University and through Research Institutes/Centres. Every Researcher (academic, contract researcher, PhD student) is aligned to a School. Research Institutes or Centres have a primary affiliation with a College or School and are not stand-alone entities. Therefore, in all instances, a reporting relationship exists between a Research Institute or Centre and a College or School, and the reporting line is Principal Investigator (PI), Head of School, Dean of College and President.

The Researcher Development Centre (RDC) is supported by the Offices of the VP for Research and Innovation and the Dean of Graduate Studies, for the specific purpose of providing support and continuing professional development opportunities for researchers at NUI Galway.

The RDC mission is to create and foster a culture of continuing professional development (CPD) for researchers; to enable researchers to identify and achieve a range of skills suited to their personal career pathway; to signpost opportunities for researchers both within and beyond academia and to measure the impact of such training/CPD. The RDC fully supports the EU MISSION 'to facilitate the development of R1 and R2 researchers to become fully aware of their possible career trajectories and the existing range of career development opportunities open to them, thereby enabling them to make training and occupational choices and to take personal responsibility for the management of their own career.

The RDC aims to ensure that all researchers have a Personal Development Plan, mentoring support, training and professional development opportunities, career support and advice. The RDC has developed a specific website for researchers, a Researcher Handbook to help guide staff and a training portal for researchers to register, attend and keep their training records online for personal access.

In December 2018, Údarás na hOllscoile approved NUI Galway's Research Integrity Policy. This Policy is aligned to the revised European Code for Research Integrity. As well as revised changes to the relevant national policy, it outlines the procedure for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, and for the first time, in an NUI Galway Policy, defines the role of the Research Integrity Officer in dealing with such allegations.

The National Forum on Research Integrity (of which NUI Galway are a member) agreed to publish annually a consolidated report about investigations of research misconduct undertaken within the research performing organisations (RPOs) in the preceding calendar year. The Forum agreed that each RPO would report annually in confidence to the National Forum Secretariat with the following information:

- The number of research misconduct investigations concluded in the calendar year;

- The number of said research misconduct investigations where the allegations were upheld;
- An overview of the types of misconduct (based on the OECD definitions included in the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland).

Integrity training continues to be supported by the RDC using the Epigeum (Oxford University Press) online course materials – this training is mandatory for researchers working on most of the nationally funded projects.

The Research Committee reports to Academic Council and is tasked with advising on the implementation of the University's Research Strategy as embodied in the University's Strategic Plan. A key objective of Research Committee is to keep under review, policies on research matters and address short comings and anomalies so as to facilitate quality research activities within the University. Each College is represented on the Committee by a Vice-Dean for Research and each Research Institute is represented by its Director. Each College has in place its own Research Committee, chaired by its Vice-Dean for Research. The review of the Policy on the Governance and Management of Research Institutes was completed in 2018/19 and approved and published in October 2019. This Policy is a framework for the governance and management of NUI Galway's five designated Research Institutes and details the role and composition of an Institute Advisory Board, an Institute-University Board, and an Institute Executive Management Team.

The Research Ethics Committee is responsible for safeguarding the health, welfare, and rights of human subjects and researchers in research studies, and to afford dignity to the handling and treatment of biological materials, taking into account the scientific procedures and concerns of the local community. The Animal Care Research Ethics Committee is responsible for facilitating compliance with relevant legislation, ensuring that NUI Galway operates to best international standards in any research or teaching involving live animals. Both of these committees are administered through the Research Office.

The Research Office is responsible for verifying eligibility for funder programmes at the pre-proposal stage and endorsing applications for submission to external funders. The Office of the Vice President of Research is also responsible for reviewing and accepting contracts and initiating the set-up of research accounts. To ensure that all research projects are fully costed, NUI Galway has in place a requirement that all budget requests in excess of €50K must be reviewed and approved by the Research Accounts Office prior to submission to the funder.
A new policy on the management of the Research funding lifecycle is in the final stages of approval.

For the most part, the external funder has an important role in the oversight of research activity and through the PI, the University, is contractually bound for the effective and compliant management of the research grant. In meeting the contractual commitments and technical and financial reporting requirements, the PI is supported by the Research Office, the Research Accounts Office, the Technology Transfer Office (TTO), the Procurement Office, Human Resources and other units. Controls in place to ensure project delivery and the overall quality of the research include project oversight or steering groups with funder representatives, Governance Committees, and rigorous financial audits.
The Technology Transfer Office is responsible for the management of the University's Intellectual Property (IP) and for all negotiations, evaluation, marketing, licensing, assignment and disposal of this IP. The TTO is also responsible, together with the Secretary of the University for assessing cases under the *Conflict of Interest and Conflicts of Commitments* Policy. In 2017, NUI Galway contributed to the HEA-commissioned review of Intellectual Property Management and Conflicts of Interest.
A sample of additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the Policies and Procedures Repository:
- Code of Good Practice in Research
- Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct
- QA506 Governance and Management of Research Institutes

- Financial Policy and Procedures Manual Contract Research
- QA512 Research Ethics Committee
- QA500 Animal Care Research Ethics Committee
- QA413 Conflict of Interests and Conflict of Committees
- QA507 Intellectual Property Policy
- Budget sign off
- QA505 University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes
- QQI Statutory QA Guidelines for Research Degree programmes
- National Framework for Doctoral Education
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland
- Inspiring Partnerships – the National IP (Intellectual Property) Protocol Data Management Policy

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Human Resources (HR) and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) have developed a comprehensive range of Policies and Procedures for all aspects of teaching and research throughout the employment lifecycle of teaching staff.

HR has developed many Policies and Procedures that support staff from starting employment to staff development and on to end of employment.

In addition, CELT offer staff a number of Policies and Procedures that support learning, teaching and assessment. An Academic Practice Framework has been developed within which modules and qualifications provided by CELT are situated. This offers a range of modules which can either be taken on a 'standalone' basis or combined to build up a series of professional, postgraduate qualifications.

The National Forum's National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teaching in Higher Education in Ireland is being adopted for continuous professional development for staff, through CELT.

The President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching recognises outstanding efforts of teaching staff to ensure NUI Galway students receive the highest quality learning experience. The scheme was reviewed in 2018 and awards in 2019/20 were made at both College and University levels.

The Graduate Studies Office offers staff training on research supervision and the Researcher Development Centre continues to provide support for the training and career development needs of NUI Galway's Research Communities.

NUI Galway operates a comprehensive communication network mainly through committees that involve comprehensive reports that are circulated to all staff. The University also has an internal staff newsletter and many opportunities for staff to engage in discussions surrounding teaching and learning through conferences, seminars and training workshops.

A sample of the many additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the Policies and Procedures Repository:
- Equality and Diversity
- Further Education Policy
- Sabbatical Leave
- Carer's Leave
- Temporary Absences
- Transition to University Teacher (Grade II)
- Triennial Travel Grant (Academic Staff)
- Unpaid Leave of Absence for Academic Staff

Staff Development

The provider environment is enhancement-focused and utilises the available resources to:
- Offer opportunities for and promote the professional development of teaching staff

- Encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between teaching and research
- Encourage activity to strengthen the links between teaching, research and other developments within fields
- Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies
- Offer Career Development Pathways for Support Service Staff
- Voluntary Employee Review Process
- Coaching and Mentoring Framework

All Staff members have access to support and opportunities for development based on a voluntary approach to the identification of their continuing professional training and development needs.

An internal system of support for newly recruited and newly-qualified staff, or staff with minimal experience in operation in terms of Induction, Probation and Professional/personal development also exists. An annual staff training programme is available to all staff alongside a Further Education Scheme Policy (FEP) to support all staff to engage in further education programmes, supporting both their professional and personal development, funded by the University.

Staff Recruitment
Policies and Procedures for recruitment address:
- Roles, responsibilities and codes of conduct
- Academic/professional/technical standards for all staff
- Pedagogical standards for teaching staff
- Benchmarking staff profiles (at programme level) with those of similar providers
- Recruitment, selection, probation and tenure
- Collection and use of regular and timely learner and other relevant feedback
- Pedagogical training and certification of teaching staff
- Performance management
- Probation for new staff
- Induction for new staff

Gender and Equality
Equality of opportunity not only in the recruitment but in the development of staff and in the work experience and culture of NUI Galway, as articulated in QAG 4.3 and ESG 1.5, is extremely important. This has received significant attention by NUI Galway as detailed in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report 2018/19. The EDI structures within NUI Galway have continued to evolve. Schools are developing their own EDI committees (or Athena SWAN committees) to engage with the EDI agenda and provide feedback to their Colleges. Vice-Deans for Equality and Diversity are now in place in each college providing an active communication channel to and from the EDI Campus Committee and their College Dean and College committees. The Vice Deans EDI also meet regularly with the OVPED. The Support Services Directors Forum (SSDF) has also established an Equality sub-committee to look into equality and diversity in support service units.

In order to ensure that colleagues in all areas are prepared adequately for the staff recruitment process, since Sept 2015 all members of interview panels receive unconscious bias training in addition to general interviewing skills. Such unconscious bias training is also relevant in the teaching and assessing arena. Face to face training is augmented and supplemented with online unconscious bias training. This training is also available to all teacher education students as recommended by the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions.

NUI Galway also has in place a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) incorporating all the recommendations from the NUI Galway Gender Equality Task Force chaired by the Vice President for Equality and Diversity.

In order to enable the active participation of all staff in meeting and committee work, NUI Galway introduced a Core Hours Meetings Policy in October 2016.

A returner grant for research active academics who are returning from maternity leave, adoptive leave or long terms carer leave (>24 weeks leave) is in place since September 2016. This provides a grant of up to €10,000 to support re-integration of academic colleagues particularly into their research programmes and the research activities of their School. To date 8 colleagues have availed of this returner grant.

A one day "Ramp-up" Programme is provided once per semester for those returning from Maternity, adoptive/carer leave, and a series of 2-hour workshops are similarly run each semester for line managers on 'managing inclusivity at work'. NUI Galway also has a series of family friendly policies and procedures in place and available to colleagues throughout NUI Galway.

- QA120 Meetings During Core Working Hours
- QA119 Flexible Working Hours Scheme (Admin Staff)
- QA151 Research Grant for Returning Academic Carers
- QA135 Paternity Leave Scheme
- QA103 Career Break Scheme
- QA111 Carer's Leave Scheme
- QA128 Compassionate Leave Scheme
- QA131 Force Majeure Leave Scheme
- QA133 Job Share Scheme for Academic Staff
- QA102 Parental Leave Scheme
- QA104 Part-time Working Scheme for Support Services Staff
- QA141 Shorter Working Year Scheme
- QA152 Equal Opportunities
- QA153 Equal Opportunities Grievance
- QA157 Disability Code of Conduct
- QA156 Disability Complaints

Staff Communication

Effective two-way internal communications is vital to the promotion of a culture of quality throughout any organisation, particularly one as large and diverse as NUI Galway. The University is committed to internal self-monitoring and ensuring that staff are kept informed of issues, changes and enhancements to our work practices. The University's Internal Communications Officer works with colleagues across campus to provide a cycle of internal communications aimed at staff. These channels are used to raise awareness of changing work practices and policies, and to celebrate success and achievement across the wide range of University activities. They include:

- An Dialann: weekly staff news and events ezine
- Ollscéala: quarterly staff magazine
- Campus screen network
- Presidential All-Staff Addresses
- Staff Calendar system

6.0 Information and Data Management

NUI Galway operates a number of learner information systems supported by comprehensive information systems services and supports. The Quercus student record system is the provider and consumer of data to and from a number of other University information systems, including, Blackboard, Campus Account Self Service (CASS), Akari, OAS, Email (Microsoft Active Directory), Discoverer and Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

Quercus provides integrated data and data archives for:
- Student Records
- Registration Records
- Exam Records
- Graduation Records

DANte, a Business Intelligence/Data Analytics solution, was developed using the Microsoft PowerBI reporting tool to support strategic decision making for University staff. DANte offers a single NUI Galway facility for both tabular and attractive visual reporting based on a range of data sources including student and staff records (Quercus & CoreHR), financial data (Agresso) and some data from other systems including Blackboard and Wi-Fi records. Some reports integrate data from a range of sources.

Other information systems provided and supported by NUI Galway are available through the Information Systems service catalogue.

Research Metrics are centrally managed through the Institutional Research Information System (IRIS) that supports the quality enhancement of activities such as research funding, publications, PhD performance and teaching workloads. The impact of QA activities is measured by a specific set of KPIs that are also used in the development of self-assessment reports used during quality review.

The Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) provides data on student interaction and engagement with teaching, learning and assessment. This interfaces with the University's Admissions and Examination records systems.

Quality Review data is provided by the Quality Office who publish results of all quality reviews and action plans. The Quality Office Intranet manages data related to Reviewers and External Examiners and reports related to the University's External Examination Process.

Financial Data on areas such as student fees, capital investments, budgeting and financial planning is provided by the Bursars Office and informs decisions by Schools around programme development and enhancement. The Bursars Office also provides data on research funding.

Library resources includes ARAN a digital collection of open access scholarly publications. Authors of peer-reviewed articles and peer-reviewed conference papers resulting from research carried out at NUI Galway must deposit a copy in the ARAN repository. ARAN enables easy discovery of NUI Galway publications through global search engines such as Google and complements IRIS by linking from author profiles to the full text of University publications.

Information Solutions and Services
The Information Solutions and Services unit provides IT services to the entire University. IT change projects are delivered using key elements of the PRINCE 2 methodology.
Development: ISS has established a governance process based around the University IT Strategy and its programmes. High level governance is provided by the Information Technology Planning and Priorities Committee (chaired by the Chief Operating Officer). This is underpinned by a series of programme boards and

associated project boards. ISS operates a Change Review Board to manage the initiation of all projects and 'small changes'. Where a project/change results in a release of software or configuration change the change must be approved at the ISS Release Management Board before being put into production. Evidence of appropriate user testing and signoff is required by the Board.

Operations: ISS has developed a defined Service Catalogue. Public facing services have a customer facing service definition published on the ISS website. For each service a Service Delivery Plan has been developed. Incidents and service requests are tracked against the individual services. All logged tickets are assigned to technicians for resolution. Service targets have been established for fulfilment of Service Requests against a number of services. Escalation procedures are defined. Security incidents are notified to the IT Security Committee and all critical incidents are managed through the Critical Incident process. The ISS Service Group meets monthly, chaired by the Assistant Director for Operations, to review service targets and review major incidents.

Below is a sample list of a large number of policies, procedures, processes and IT systems:
- QA404 Password Policy
- QA405 Partnering Policy
- QA406 Remote Access Policy
- QA407 IT Asset Protection Policy
- QA408 Logical Access Policy

QA Record Maintenance and Retention

Most records related to the quality review process are made publically available through the Quality Office website. Records available to the public include policies and procedures, review schedules, review reports and actions plans, review team names and affiliations and quality enhancements.

Evidence is provided by publicly accessing records through the Quality Office website. Non-public records are available through the Quality Office intranet.

Data Protection

NUI Galway holds a large amount of personal data to perform its various functions and takes its obligations to protect personal data very seriously. The University has developed a Data Protection Policy, A Data Breach Procedure and a Record Retention Policy. Staff are supported through Data Protection training both online and in person. The University Data Protection website provides a suite of resources and guides to assist staff and students in their daily affairs.

Freedom of Information

The University is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the "FOI Act ") which provides a legal right of access to records held by the University. The FOI Act also sets out rules and procedures to be followed by public bodies when a request is received.

NUI Galway operates a Freedom of Information Office for servicing information requests from students, staff and the public. Responsibility to comply with FOI requests received is delegated to the Head of School or Head of Unit (or nominee), to act as local decision makers with overall responsibility for the initial decision on FOI requests from their School or Unit, i.e. to decide whether to release all the records, partially release the records or deny access. Advice is provided by the University Freedom of Information team. Timelines involved in processing an FOI request are reflective of the time obligations imposed by the *FOI Act* which provides that requests, save for limited circumstances, must be responded to within four weeks.

The University is acutely aware of its duties in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. The Office of the Chief Operating Officer oversees compliance in these areas. Freedom of Information and Data

Protection requirements are overseen by the Chief Operating Officer, the Data Protection Officer, the University Solicitor and an Administrative Assistant.

A sample of policies in place regarding Data Protection include the following:
- QA400 Data Protection
- QA401 Data Handling
- QA402 Data Classification
- QA412 Student Data Usage
- Data Breach Procedure
- QA442 Record Retention Policy
- GDPR Training provided to key units and to Unit/Department Heads and Administrative Officers.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are provided by the Institutional Research Office (IRO) and are used extensively throughout NUI Galway and during quality reviews. These indicators were defined largely by NUI Galway's Vision2020 Strategy and the HEA's Mission Based Performance Compact and include data on student population profiles, student progression, student completion rates, international and non-traditional student participation, and career paths, as well as a wide range of research performance data. Indicators are also informed by University and Subject Area ranking schemes, in particular those developed by THE and QS University ranking agencies. A new set of KPIs is currently being developed in relation to the implementation of Strategy 2020 – 2025.

The Office of Planning & Institutional Research prepares a number of management information reports to senior management, Colleges and Schools to fulfil the principles relating to data to inform self-monitoring, planning and help feed into the internal quality assurance system. For example, regular reports prepared and disseminated by the Office of Planning & Institutional Research include:
- Annual Key Performance Indicator reports for the overall University, each College and each School, with historic data including data on research performance, student body composition, International students, non-traditional students and retention rates for the annual operational planning process to help inform the Annual Operational Planning process.
- Market Analysis reports detailing CAO applicants, their demographic and national trends and demand at key points during the year
- Annual ISSE report – analysis and dissemination of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, for the University, each College and programme each year. Includes national benchmarking data.
- HEA institutional profile each year, detailing a number of staff and student metrics including forecast profiles to help inform University's progress of HEA Compact targets.
- Annual international QS Subject Ranking analysis including Scival benchmarking and research metrics
- Provision of bibliometric research data from SciVal and the KPIs for the Institutional Review of Research Performance process, internal promotion and external hiring processes.
- Annual analysis of PHD cohort, completion rates and times for Graduate Studies

The impact of QA and enhancement activities are measured through qualitative and quantitative indicators. Quantitative indicators have been defined and are regularly used at all major meetings.

Student Satisfaction and Feedback data are developed from results of the national studentsurvey.ie and NUI Galway's student feedback policy (QA221 Feedback on Modules and Programmes) where all staff receive and act on student feedback. Studentsurvey.ie participation and results analysis is carried out by NUI Galway's Dean

of Students. Other survey data collected include surveys of Graduates, First Year Students, International Students, Graduate Employment and Facilities.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

NUI Galway has a policy of providing a wide variety of Teaching, Research and QA related information to the public. This is done mainly through the comprehensive main public website but also through public websites of all its Schools, Colleges and Student Services. Other mechanisms include information booklets and press releases from the Press and Information Office.

Publicly accessible information includes results of all Quality Reviews and access to publicly available Policies and Procedures. Academic staff also use the Library's publicly accessible ARAN repository for research publications. Other information is available under Freedom of Information.

A sample of other information sources are outlined below for illustration with links provided.

- Programmes and Modules
- Research Outputs
- Library Collections

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

NUI Galway has a number of key policies related to self-evaluation and monitoring and that include the topics Quality Review (QR), Operational Planning, External Examinations and Student Feedback. Specific Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures related to this heading are listed below and available from the Quality Office:

- QA001 Quality Assurance
- QA002 Policies and Procedures
- QA003 Review of Schools
- QA004 Review of Research Performance
- QA005 The Role of External Examiners (Taught)
- QA007 Operational Plans
- QA008 Programme Boards
- QA009 Review of Linked Providers
- QA012 Review of Research Institutes
- QA013 Review of Services

The QR process is comprehensive and involves key steps around self-assessment, benchmarking, independent peer review, stakeholder interviews and surveys, recommendations for quality enhancement and action planning.

The independent peer review process begins with the selection of expert panellists, examiners and authenticators from similar organisations outside Ireland who are prepared to declare their ability to maintain confidentiality, that they have no deep or long-standing relationships with the unit being assessed and that they have received gender bias training. All panellists, examiners and authenticators receive payment for their services in return for providing value to the University in terms of a thorough and comprehensive review of quality and statements of recommended changes that will enhance quality.

QA001 Quality Assurance and QA002 Policies and Procedures guide the development of all Policies and Procedures in use across NUI Galway. While the majority of Policies and Procedures are contained on website pages, manual and online forms, internal statutes and committee reports, a number now follow NUI Galway's 'QA' P&P template that aids policy writers in the design of Policies and Procedures that improve communication,

encourage revision and lower risk. Most Policies and Procedures are made available to the public is a variety of formats through the University's public websites.

Programme Review

All Taught Programmes (e.g. BSc, MSc) must be reviewed in compliance with QA003 Review of Schools. Programmes must also be monitored by Programme Boards and External Examiners annually in compliance with QA005 External Examiners (Taught). Taught Programmes may be reviewed at least once every seven years in compliance with QA006 Review of Taught Programmes. Some Taught Programmes may be reviewed by professional, regulatory or statutory bodies (PRSBs) and in compliance with QA244 Accredited Programmes and are deemed to have met compliance with QA006 above. All new and major changes to Taught Programmes are approved by the Academic Council Standing Committee.

Monitoring Student Feedback

Student feedback is vital to maintaining the quality of our teaching. Students are surveyed across all modules, and this feedback is collated and shared with academic colleagues at a College, School and Discipline level.

All modules and programmes are required to conduct student feedback either mid or end of term. The policy QA221: Feedback on Modules and Programmes requires all academic staff to gather student feedback, create and implement action plans and communicate changes to students typically in the following year. The process is independently monitored by the Head of School or nominee (e.g. Head of Discipline) and annual compliance reports can be requested by the Deputy President and Registrar. The University is a strong supporter of the studentsurvey.ie and consistently performs well against other Irish Universities in our participation rates. The University produces reports on the ISSE indices at a College and programme level, which are presented to Academic Council and filtered down to staff through their College.

9.0　Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1　Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

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

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Energy Systems Engineering)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/11/2022

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Biomedical Engineering)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/11/2022

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Civil Engineering) BE (Electrical & Electronic Engineering) BE (Electronic & Computer Engineering) BE (Mechanical) ME in Civil Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2023

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland

Programme titles and links to publications	ME in Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/11/2022

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	ME in Electronic & Computer Engineering ME in Energy Systems Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/11/2022

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	ME in Mechanical Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2025

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Hons in Computer Science
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/11/2022

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Honours Bachelor of Nursing Science (Mental Health) Honours Bachelor of Midwifery Science Honours Bachelor of Nursing Science (General)
Date of accreditation or last review	31/05/2018
Date of next review	31/05/2023

9. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Midwifery
Date of accreditation or last review	24/06/2019
Date of next review	24/06/2024

10. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing)
Date of accreditation or last review	15/03/2018
Date of next review	15/03/2023

11. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Health Sciences Nursing (Education) Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (Education)
Date of accreditation or last review	11/10/2017
Date of next review	01/02/2022

12. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing/Midwifery (Advanced Practice with Prescribing)* Master of Health Sciences (Advanced Practice Nursing/Midwifery with Prescribing) (Consortium with UCC, UCD, UL and Trinity College)
Date of accreditation or last review	15/03/2018
Date of next review	15/03/2023

13. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Acute Medicine) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health

	Sciences (Emergency Care) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Intensive Care) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Perioperative) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Gerontology)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/06/2016
Date of next review	01/06/2021

14. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Oncology & Haematology)
Date of accreditation or last review	28/05/2018
Date of next review	28/03/2023

15. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Public Health Nursing)
Date of accreditation or last review	24/03/2016
Date of next review	24/03/2021

16. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Society of Chemistry
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Biopharmaceutical Chemistry (Level 8) BSc Chemistry (Level 8) MSc Chemistry (Level 9) (research 30 taught 60 project)
Date of accreditation or last review	31/08/2018
Date of next review	31/08/2023

17. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council

Programme titles and links to publications	Undergraduate (UG) Bachelor of Arts (Mathematics & Education) Bachelor of Arts Education (Computer Science & Mathematical Studies)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2022

18. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Graduate/Postgraduate (PG) Professional Master of Education Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2016
Date of next review	01/01/2022

19. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BA / Higher Diploma in Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	31/08/2019
Date of next review	31/08/2024

20. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Applied Behaviour Analysis International (ABAI)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Applied Behaviour Analysis
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

21. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	HDip Psychology (full and conversion)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2024

22. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Health Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

23. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Doctor of Clinical Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

24. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Speech and Language Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	30/06/2020
Date of next review	30/06/2025

25. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Speech and Language Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2017
Date of next review	01/01/2022

26. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Occupational Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	31/08/2020

Date of next review	31/08/2025

27. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Occupational Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

28. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	International Union of Health Promotion & Education
Programme titles and links to publications	MA in Health Promotion Post Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion
Date of accreditation or last review	31/03/2020
Date of next review	31/03/2025

29. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	International Union of Health Promotion & Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Post Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion
Date of accreditation or last review	31/03/2020
Date of next review	31/03/2025

30. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	College of Podiatry UK, The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Sc. (Hons.) Podiatric Medicine
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2016
Date of next review	01/01/2022

31. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Strategy, Innovation and People Management
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

32. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Human Resource Management
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

33. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of MBAs (AMBA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Executive MBA
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

34. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Medicine (MB) of Surgery (BCh) and of Obstetrics (BAO)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

35. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Parlaimint na hEorpa / European Parliament – DG LINC & DG SCIC
Programme titles and links to publications	MA (Ateangaireacht Chomhdhála / Conference Interpreting)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2023

36. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Accounting
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

37. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Accounting
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

38. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

39. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

40. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

41. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Taxation Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

42. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

43. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

44. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc International Accounting & Analytics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

45. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc International Accounting & Analytics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021

Date of next review	01/01/2022

46. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Corporate Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

47. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Corporate Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

48. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	EPAS
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Business Information Systems)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

49. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	AMBA
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Business Administration
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

50. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CIPD
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc (Human Resource Management)

Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

51. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CIPD
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc (Strategy, Innovation & People Management)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2022

52. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	AACSB
Programme titles and links to publications	School of Business and Economics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

53. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Oral Health)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

54. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Youth Health)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

55. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)

Programme titles and links to publications	PgCert (Health Promotion [Cardiovascular Health and Diabetes Prevention])
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

56. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	PgCert (Health Promotion [Workplace Wellness])
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

57. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	PgCert (Health Promotion [Mental Health Promotion])
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

58. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute & Faculty of Actuaries
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Financial Mathematics & Economics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2024

59. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Energy Systems Engineering)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/11/2022

9.2   Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	NUI Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	Level 8 Certificate in Regulatory affairs & Operations
Date of last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2027

2. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	NUI Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Date of last review	01/01/2015
Date of next review	01/01/2022

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	NUI Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Medical Technologies Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	01/01/2025

4. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	NUI Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	Level 8 Cert in medical Technologies Regulatory Affairs & Quality

Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	01/01/2025

5. Collaborative provision	**Collaborative programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	Burgundy School of Business, Dijon, France
Programme titles and links to publications	BComm (Global Experience)
Date of last review	30/04/2017
Date of next review	30/04/2024

6. Collaborative provision	**Collaborative programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	Pforzheim University of Applied Sciences
Programme titles and links to publications	BComm (Global Experience)
Date of last review	12/02/2018
Date of next review	12/02/2022

7. Collaborative provision	**Collaborative programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	ICN- Artem, Nancy, France
Programme titles and links to publications	BComm (Global Experience)
Date of last review	12/02/2018
Date of next review	12/02/2022

8. Collaborative provision	**Collaborative programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	UCD
Programme titles and links to publications	Master/PGD Health Sciences (Children's Palliative Care/Complex Care)
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

9. Collaborative provision	**Collaborative programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	UCC and NUI Galway

Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Technology Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Technology Commercialisation, Postgraduate Diploma in Innovation Management
Date of last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2023

10. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	RTÉ and NUI Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	MA (Cleachtas Gairmiúil sna Meáin)
Date of last review	31/08/2018
Date of next review	31/08/2025

11. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy
Programme titles and links to publications	PG Cert and PG Diploma in Practice-based Play Therapy
Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	01/01/2023

12. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	National Youth Council of Ireland and NUI Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Youth Health)
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

13. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Dental Health Federation and NUI Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Oral Health)
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2022

14. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Burren College of Art
Programme titles and links to publications	https://www.burrencollege.ie/programme/
Date of last review	01/01/2016
Date of next review	01/01/2023

15. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	St. Angela's College
Programme titles and links to publications	http://www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie/stangelas/courses/
Date of last review	01/01/2015
Date of next review	01/01/2022

9.3   Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	0

NUI Galway
2022

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

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1   Strategic QA Updates

NUI Galway continued to implement a 'tripartite approach' to enhancement and improvement by integrating quality, strategy and performance. Quality assurance is the responsibility of every member of staff through their own efforts and through their work on many organisational committees and units – including all Colleges, Schools and Professional Services. All units periodically undergo internal Quality Review (QR) while also continuously complying with over 305 internal and external Policies and Procedures. Quality is also assured through the effective implementation of these Policies and Procedures for example policies on External Examination and Student Feedback. Units also assure quality by implementation of the University's strategic plan Strategy 2020 - 2025 launched in January 2020, and the HEA's Mission-Based Performance Compact 2018-2021, both executed through an annual system for Operational Planning that incorporates quality, performance and capacity related enhancements.

Strategy 2020-2025

A Director of Strategy Implementation was appointed in March 2020 whose remit it is to work with the President and University Management Team to implement, monitor and review targets/actions of the strategic plan, via the operational planning processes across all Colleges, Schools and Units. While progress on the implementation of the strategy was somewhat challenged by the pandemic, significant progress has been made in the past year. In line with the recommendation from the CINNTE Review, a Strategy Implementation Progress Report was brought to Údarás na hOllscoille in December 2021. It is a work in progress with the aim of:

- Establishing and tracking 21 KPIs to monitor the University's performance at a macro level
- Tracking achievement towards a set of 12 Balanced Scorecard targets
- Outlining key deliverables associated with each Flagship Action
- Linking unit strategies and operational planning to the strategic plan
- Measuring the impact of our efforts in achieving these Flagship Actions and identifying gaps that need focused intervention
- Sharing examples of achievements along the way

KPI Dashboard

Following consultation with the Strategy Advisory Group, University Management Team, Academic Council and Údarás na hOllscoile, a set of key performance indicators grouped by our core values has been established. This dashboard of macro-level KPIs will show at a high level the impact of the collective work, advances and initiatives at a local level across Colleges and Units.

Respectful NUI Galway	Sustainable NUI Galway
1. Employee Wellbeing (KeepWell Mark overall score) 2. Student Engagement (StudentSurvey.ie: overall evaluation) 3. Athena SWAN (Level of Institutional Award & Number School Awards)	4. SDG Rankings (THE Impact Ranking overall score) 5. Energy & Carbon (% reduction in energy usage since 2006; progress on journey to Zero Carbon) 6. Sustainability in Teaching (% programmes with sustainability modules)
Open NUI Galway	**Excellent NUI Galway**
7. Access (% of students from under-represented groups) 8. Internationalisation (% international students; # non-EU FTEs; % students participating in mobility; % international staff) 9. International Research Collaboration (% papers co-authored internationally on Scopus/SciVal); # international research consortia involving NUI Galway) 10. Off-campus Learning (% programmes with work-based/community-based learning; # students with access to same) 11. Alumni & Friends (Philanthropic support for development, research and scholarship; Alumni participation metric to be developed) 12. Partnership (to be developed)	13. Student Progression (% student completion; % student progression UG Y1-Y2) 14. Graduate Employment (% graduates in employment/further study) 15. Student Recruitment (% of high achieving (>500) LC choosing NUI Galway; % PG students) 16. Research Citations (5 year Field-weighted Citation Impact (SciVal)) 17. Research Reputation (% of publications in Top 25% of Journals (SciVal); QS Academic Reputation positioning) 18. Research Funding (€ total research funding, from EU sources, and non-state/EU sources) 19. ERC awards (# ERC Award applications across strands; # ERC Awards across strands) 20. Innovation (# spin-outs established; # collaborative research agreements with industry) 21. Societal Impact (to be developed at sectoral level)

The Strategy Advisory Group has also agreed, through consultation with Údarás na hOllscoile, Academic Council and UMT, a Balanced Scorecard of 12 ambitious targets across the four values of the strategic plan.

The following unit/college strategies are at various stages of development/implementation and will help to deliver the KPIs, Balanced Scorecard targets and flagship actions outlined in the implementation plan:

Strategy	Status
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Strategy launched, action plan developed
Sustainability	Strategy launched, action plan developed
Library Strategy	Strategy launched, preparing action plan
Research and Innovation	Strategy launched, preparing action plan
Straitéis don Ghaeilge	Strategy launched, preparing action plan
Academic Strategy	Consultation concluded
Student Success	Early draft complete
Internationalisation	Early draft complete
People Strategy	Early draft complete
CMNHS	Full draft completed, consultation concluded
CSE	Full draft completed, consultation concluded
CASSCS	Full draft completed, consultation concluded
CBPPL	Early draft completed

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	Strategy implementation and operational planning	Ongoing. See section 1.1 above.
2	Development of a new Academic Strategy	The new Academic Strategy is aligned to the University Strategy 2020-2025. Key Principles/themes were agreed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and five sub-groups aligned to the key principles/themes were created: 1. Curriculum & Learning Design 2. Core Values 3. Teaching and Learning Environment 4. Professional Development of Lecturers and alignment with research 5. Quality/Monitoring/Review The sub-groups were tasked with identifying themes to align with the University strategy, generate ideas, gather data and consult with relevant stakeholders. Each group produced a two-page submission. This was submitted to the Strategy Development Steering Group which drafted the strategy. The Strategy was approved by Academic Council in December 2021 and an implementation plan is going before the University's Teaching and Learning Committee in February 2022 for approval. The areas of strategic importance included in the strategy are: • Our Learning Culture • Developing and Empowering our Staff • Our Teaching & Learning Environment • Our Community and Beyond • A Culture of Quality Enhancement The strategy will be launched in early 2022.
3	IRRP	Funding has been secured to begin the consultation process for IRRP 2023/24.
4	P&P Repository Project	The current processes in relation to Policies and Procedures have been in place for approximately ten years. In that time the University has gone through unprecedented growth and change. A fit for purpose policy management framework has become increasingly

		important in this new devolved world to ensure that there is a shape and a consistency to how the University operates. During autumn 2021 the Quality Office conducted a review of the University's policy repository. The Quality Office has created a Policy Framework Working Group to consider the outcomes of the review and the recommendations arising from it and will bring an outline proposal to UMT regarding a new policy management framework in April 2022.
5	Global Galway Project	The University Management Team approved the Galway Global project in December 2020 and funding for the project was approved by the University in June 2021. The formal project launch took place in March 2021 with an introductory video and website. This was followed by a series of webinars and workshops to engage staff and students with the project and the global vision. An internationalisation edition of Cois Coiribe complemented this. A new Unit is in the process of being established, Global Galway, which incorporates the International Office. The senior management structure has been created and the Director Global Galway was recruited in September 2021. Four teams have been developed within Global Galway - Global Recruitment, Global Mobility, Global Partnerships, Finance & Global Operations.
6	Learning Commons Project	The primary focus of this project has been the development of a detailed design brief responding to the ambition to create a flagship, inspirational place of scholarship and community at heart of the campus. A detailed plan for the building has been developed, incorporating a range of innovative spaces including a Learning Success Hub, Makerspace/Digital Scholarship Centre and an enlarged Teaching and Events space. A mix of individual and study spaces has been planned to offer choice and to facilitate different learning styles. It has been agreed to deploy Bookbot technology to enable efficient storage and retrieval of printed collections and flexible use of available space. Heating, ventilation and fire strategies are in development and there is an overarching focus on accessibility and sustainability. The formation of a Learning Commons Senior Stakeholder Group has been a key governance development, ensuring that that senior stakeholders in the University are informed of key developments relating to the project, are able to offer

		strategic guidance to it, and are in a position to support and champion it.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Údarás na hOllscoile	• 28th Oct 2020 • 16th Dec 2020 • 25th Feb 2021 • 27th March 2021 • 24th June 2021
Academic Council	• 27th October 2020 • 15th December 2020 • 11th February 2021 • 21st April 2021 • 16th June 2021
Quality Enhancement Committee	• 4th November 2020 • 3rd March 2021 • 2nd June 2021

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Údarás na hOllscoile
Údarás na hOllscoile began a new term in February 2021 following elections in December 2020. Two vacancies remained which were filled by-election in October 2021. The current membership can be viewed here. Dr. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, a former government minister and European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, was unanimously selected at the first formal meeting of the new Údarás on Thursday, 25 February 2021 as the new chairperson.

Academic Council
Elections were held in June 2021 for Academic Council, term 2021-2024. The new council began its term in September 2021. Elections took place online for the following categories of membership:

- **Academic Staff Elections:** to elect members across the academic grades of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Professor
- **Postdoctoral Researcher Elections:** to elect 2 Postdoctoral staff per College
- **Student Elections:** to elect 2 students per College.

College of Science and Engineering

Following the creation of the merged College of Science and Engineering, the College reviewed the schools' structure with a view to optimising the scale, efficiency, and interdisciplinary synergies. The aims of the restructure included the following:

- To create Schools of more equal critical mass (reduce from six schools to five)
- To ensure Schools carry equal and significant weight at College level
- To enable meaningful devolution of responsibility
- To define leadership roles at School level
- To ensure greater diversity
- To enable a School-wide approach to planning and prioritisation and focus on education, students and research and innovation

The restructure was approved by Academic Council in April 2021 with an agreed two year transition period to ensure support for Schools noting that any unworkable or negative impacts will be reviewed and altered as necessary.

Appointments

Professor Rebecca Braun was appointed as Executive Dean of the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies in January 2021. Professor Rebecca Braun joins NUI Galway from Lancaster University where she was currently Professor of Modern Languages and Creative Futures, and co-directed the multi-disciplinary Institute for Social Futures.

Professor Geraint Howells was appointed as Executive Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy and Law in January 2021. Professor Geraint Howells is former Professor of Commercial Law and Associate Dean in Humanities for Internationalisation at Manchester University.

Professor Jim Livesey was appointed Vice-President for Research and Innovation. Professor Livesey joins from the University of Dundee, where he served as Dean of Humanities since 2014. Professor Livesey will lead NUI Galway's research and innovation mission, building on the university's significant successes in recent years.

Ms. Sinéad Ryan was appointed Director of Governance in November 2020 to support the Secretary for Governance & Academic Affairs (SGAA) in executing responsibility for supporting the work of the Governing Authority and matters relating to good governance practice in the University. The role:
- supports the work of the Governing Authority and Committees in executing their statutory remit and effective execution of their responsibilities in relation to governance of the University
- supports compliance with the University's statutory and regulatory governance requirements, including the Universities Act 1997 and the Code of Governance for Irish Universities 2019
- provides advice and guidance to staff across the University on governance matters and governance structures

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review
1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
James Hardiman Library	3rd February 2021	Review Report
Acadamh	12th February 2021	Review Report
Student Services	16th March 2021	Review Report
School of Education	14th May 2021	Review Report
School of Chemistry	29th June 2012	Review Report
School of Engineering	25th May 2021	Review Report
School of Nursing and Midwifery	14th May 2021	Review Report
Taught Programme Reviews and Accredited Programmes	These are conducted by individual Schools and Colleges.	

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[2] involved in IQA

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

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	7	5	2	0	Managed locally	Managed locally	
of those:							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	3	5	2				
Average panel size for each process type*		4	4				

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

	Total	Gender	Internal	National	International	Institution Type

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	7				4	0	3			7	
Secretary	3		3			3					3
Academic/Discipline Specific	22	13	9		15	15	7			21	1
Student Representative											
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission											

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

The impact and effectiveness of internal QA can be challenging to assess. It can be seen through the recommendations and action plans agreed during Quality Reviews and through the approval of new or revised policies and procedures. It can also be evidenced through changes in the University's KPIs, although these changes may also arise from management practices. The following information is useful:

- Total student enrolments declined by almost 3% to over 19,210 in 2020/21
- PhD enrolments in 2020/21 declined slightly to just below 1,100
- While Mature enrolments in 2020/21 increased to 179, enrolment of international students declined by over 25% in 2020/21.
- The quality of undergraduate admissions as measured by median CAO points remained at 448 in 2020/21.
- The number of academic employees remained static in 2020/21.
- Employment rates for graduates declined from 98% in 2019/20 to 93% in 2020/21. This figure includes graduates who go on to further education
- Our QS rankings declined slightly in 2020/21 from 238 to 258, and we dropped slightly from 301-350 in Times Higher Education (THE) to 351-400 in 2020/21.
- Research quality and impact in general has improved across most metrics.
- Direct research income increased from €56m to €71m in 2020/21.
- The number of peer reviewed publications has risen year on year as measured by SciVal, in parallel with success in attracting research funding. The number of papers published in Scopus increased from 1679 to 2188 in 2020/21 (though this figure is not yet finalised so is likely to increase further), and the number of citations from papers published over a 5-year period rose from approximately 96k to over 114k.
- The student experience score from the national Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) declined slightly below the National Average for the University sector. There was a decline in 2020/21, with c.69% of students indicating satisfaction with their experience (82% in 2019/20) and 86% indicating that they would make the same decision to take their course at NUI Galway if they had to start University again (87% in 2019/20) as students' dissatisfaction with off campus learning took effect.

The impact of the pandemic is evident in many of the KPI's above. However, throughout this time the University maintained academic oversight over all changes required to teaching, learning and assessment to ensure the quality of the student experience was maintained.

Governance and Management of Quality
Policies and Procedures Repository: The current processes in relation to Policies and Procedures have been in place for approximately ten years. In that time the University has gone through unprecedented growth and change. The governance and management structures have radically changed with the introduction of devolved management of colleges and the introduction of a new budgeting model. A fit for purpose policy management framework has become increasingly important in this new devolved world to ensure that there is a shape and a consistency to how the University operates.
During autumn 2021 the Quality Office conducted a review of the University's policy repository the objectives of which were to:
- Gap analysis: Identify policies that are not currently in place for NUI Galway and that are therefore not included in the Policies and Procedures Repository.
- Assess the extent to which the guidance in QA002 Policies and Procedures is applied in practice.
- Review QA002 Policies and Procedures and assess whether the guidance provided to users is adequate and in accordance with good practice.
- Benchmark the University's Policies & Procedures Repository against International best practice

Arising from the review a set of nine recommendations has been put forward.   The Quality Office has created a Policy Framework Working Group with representation from a wide cross section of units. The Working Group is considering the outcomes of the review and the recommendations arising from it and will present an outline proposal to UMT regarding a new policy management framework in April/May 2022.

The Policies and Procedures below are a sample that were either initiated or further revised during 2020/2021:

QA002 Policies and Procedures
QA050 Curriculum Design and Management
QA051 Name Change on Student Records System
QA114 Intoxicants
QA132 Staff Harassment and Sexual Harassment
QA143 Work Placement Agreement
QA145 Parent's Leave
QA146 Recruitment and Selection
QA147 Domestic Violence Leave
QA153 Equality Impact Assessment Guidelines
QA191 Safety Training Cancellation
QA192 Legionellosis including Legionnaires Disease
QA200 PhD International Merit Scholarship
QA202 Recording of Lectures and other formal teaching sessions by students
QA205 Climate Action Sustainability and Climate
QA206 Naming of University Buildings and Spaces
QA209 Extenuating Circumstances
QA235 Updated Exam Appeal
QA398 Personally Owned Digital Devices
QA399 Cloud Services

External Examiners: External Examiner reports have been received for almost 200 programmes/modules during 2020/21 in accordance with QA005 Role of External Examiners: Taught Programmes. The main areas highlighted by External Examiners in their recommendations are summarized under the following headings:

- Feedback
- Marking
- Assessment/workload
- Covid/Retention of practices introduced during Covid
- Resourcing
- Plagiarism
- Other

The Deputy President and Registrar reviewed External Examiner reports, summarized common themes and reported on the issues highlighted by external examiners to both the Academic Council Standing and Academic Council meetings in December 2021.

Programmes of Education and Training
Curriculum Design Management Policy: A new Curriculum Design and Management Policy has been developed and is in the final stages of approval. It will provide the principles, policies and process which enable the appropriate governance of Curriculum Approval and Change at NUI Galway. See below an overview of the new processes:

New programmes & Major Programme changes: All new programmes and major programme changes were approved by Academic Council Standing in 2020/21.

The following major course changes were approved:

Programme	College	Approval date
BA Global Experience	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	15/10/2020
BA Degrees Third Year Optional Subject	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	09/12/2020
MA Film Production and Direction	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	09/12/2020
MA in Irish Studies (Literature & Music)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	09/12/2020
BA (Early Childhood Studies and Practice) to BA (Early Childhood Education and Professional Practice)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	04/02/2021
BA (English and Creative Writing)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	04/02/2021
BA Connect in Performing Arts Studies	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	04/02/2021
BA Arts with Data Science	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	04/02/2021
BA Structured PhD (Applied Behaviour Analysis)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
BA Structured PhD (Health Psychology Practice)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
MA (Landscape Archaeology)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
MA (Environment, Society and Development)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
MA (Rural Futures Planning and Innovation)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BA (Comhonóracha le Gaeilge)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BA (Joint-Honours) /BA (Comhonóracha)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
MA (Journalism)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BA Global Media	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BA Education (Computer Science and Mathematical Studies)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
Higher Diploma/Certificate (English for Academic Purposes)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
LLM	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
LLB Law – Year 3 Alternative Pathway	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BComm (Accounting)(Global Experience)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BComm with French	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BComm le Gaeilge	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BComm with German	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BComm with (Global Experience)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BComm with Spanish	Business, Public Policy and Law	08/04/2021
MHSc (International Healthcare Management)	Business, Public Policy and Law	08/04/2021
MSc Preventive Cardiology	Business, Public Policy and Law	08/04/2021
MA in Health Promotion	Business, Public Policy and Law	08/04/2021
MSc (Exercise Physiology)	Business, Public Policy and Law	08/04/2021
MSc Preventive Cardiology, optional module – Cardiac Rehabilitation	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
PG Diploma/Certificate in Applied Health and Wellness Coaching.	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
PG Diploma in Nursing (Community Mental Health)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021

PG Diploma in Health Sciences (Nursing/Professional Studies).	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
PG Diploma in Nursing/Midwifery (Advanced Practice)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
BA/Professional Master of Education (Home Economics and Biology)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
BA/Professional Master of Education (Home Economics and Gaeilge)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
BA/Professional Master of Education (Home Economics and Religious Education)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
Bachelor of Education (Home Economics)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
BSc (Physics) Degree Applied, Astrophysics, Biomedical, Climate, Theoretica	Science and Engineering	11/06/2021
PhD/MSc Computer Science (Structured and non-structured programmes)	Science and Engineering	11/06/2021
MA (Creative Arts: Producing and Curation)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MA (Development Practice)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MA (Digital Cultures)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MA (Medieval Studies)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MA in English	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MA in Literature and Publishing	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MSc in Business and Hospitality	Business, Public Policy and Law	11/06/2021

The following New Programmes were approved:

Programme	College	Approval date
MA (Public Policy)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	15/10/2020
MA (Languages with Business)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	15/10/2020
MA Languages for Commercial Purposes	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	09/12/2020
MA (International Sports Management and Communication)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
MA (Léann an Aistriúcháin)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
Teastas Iarchéime (Aistriúchán Closamhairc)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BA (Joint-Honours) and related denominated programmes: New subject: Performance and Screen Studies	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
BA (Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
Professional Diploma in Contemporary Innovations in Education	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
MPhil (Fine Art)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
Diploma in Scientific Studies (Apiculture)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
MSc in Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	08/04/2021
Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Youth Mental Health)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
MSc in Exercise Physiology and Rehabilitation	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021
MSc in Midwifery (Advanced Practice Midwifery)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	08/04/2021

MSc Global Hospitality Management and Intercultural Communication	Business, Public Policy and Law	11/06/2021
MSc in Hospitality Performance, Revenue and Asset Management	Business, Public Policy and Law	11/06/2021
PG Cert in Artificial Intelligence for Managers	Business, Public Policy and Law	11/06/2021
PG Certificate in Cybersecurity for Business	Business, Public Policy and Law	11/06/2021
PG Diploma in Hospitality Leadership	Business, Public Policy and Law	11/06/2021
PhD Structured (Home Economics)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021
MA Structured Research	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	11/06/2021

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Academic Promotion Scheme 2020/21 **(3 rounds) -** Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law (AHSSBL) & Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)

Total applicants	AHSSBL	STEM	AHSSBL promoted	STEM promoted
80	38	42	16	30

1. 47.5% of applicants were AHSSBL, 52.5% STEM
2. 34.8% of those promoted were AHSSBL, 65.2% STEM
3. 42.1% of AHSSBL who applied were promoted
4. 71.4% of STEM who applied were promoted

SCHOOLS
1. Applications have been received from 17 of the 19 schools in the University.
2. Successful applications have been in sixteen of the seventeen schools, across all four colleges.

Analysis:

Protected leave

Total applicants	Applicants with Protected Leave	Total promoted	Applicants with Protected Leave promoted	Applicants with Protected Leave not promoted
80	39	46	26	13

1. 48.8% of applicants listed Protected Leave.
2. 56.5% of those promoted had listed Protected Leave.
3. 57.5% of total applicants were promoted.
4. 66.7% of those that listed Protected Leave were promoted.

Gender:

	Applicants	Male	Female	Male promoted	Female promoted
Total	80	42	38	20	26
PP	15	7	8	2	5
SL	65	35	30	18	21

1. 52.5% of applicants were men, 47.5% women.
2. 43.5% of those promoted were men, 56.5% women.
3. 47.61% of men who applied were promoted.
4. 68.42% of women who applied were promoted.

LIFT Ireland and NUI Galway: LIFT Ireland and NUI Galway announced a unique partnership aimed at improving leadership skills among students and staff. LIFT Ireland is an initiative to raise the level of leadership nationwide, working with organisations and individuals in a variety of settings to develop key leadership attributes. LIFT's partnership with NUI Galway is the organisation's first formal partnership with a third-level institution. It will see more than 200 staff and students trained as LIFT facilitators. These facilitators will then go on to deliver the LIFT leadership programme to a further 1,500 staff and students at NUI Galway.

LIFT's leadership programme is delivered through regular roundtable sessions, led by a volunteer facilitator. Each session focuses on one of eight key leadership values, such as honesty, competence, accountability, empathy, respect and positive attitude. The programme supports participants to develop these leadership attributes and set personal goals on an ongoing basis.

LIFT Programme

2021
Facilitators trained: **55**
Participant applications: **200**
Round Table Groups: **40**

2022
Facilitator Briefing Session: **10th December**
Facilitator Training: **15th December**
Round Table Sessions: **January/February 2022**

Feedback:
"I've been able to reflect more closely on the qualities of a leader - it is helpful to have these themes laid out so
"More consciousness about my attitudes"

• *91% of staff participants felt that LIFT has changed how they might act or think in the future*

LIFT Staff Award Winners 2021
1. Caroline Ní Fhlatharta
2. Jamie Goggins
3. Kulsoom Nizami

NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Learning & Development Office

LinkedIn Learning
LinkedIn Learning has over 16,000 courses allowing people to learn at their own pace and select only the courses and videos most relevant to their teaching and learning journey. With a wide range of courses available, including; technical, business, software, leadership, mindfulness, and creative topics, staff and students will be able to grow and develop their passions-both professional and personal.

LinkedIn Learning

- Activation rates increased by 3% . Current activation rate is 19%

Hours Viewed	Course Views	Course Completions	Video Views
7,795.34	27407	4438	185991

- Used as a pre-work option to support training courses/workshops
- Introduction of Learning Paths and curator function for people managers

Learning & Development Office

FEP (Further Education Policy): This is a funding programme to which staff can apply for support when undertaking a part-time programme of study. 53 new and returning internal courses were approved for funding and 24 external courses.

The Learning and Development Unit in HR also ran:
- 82 training courses with almost 2000 attendees
- five centralized induction training sessions attended by 213 employees
- mentoring service which will be fully rolled out in 2022

Employee Assistance Service: The EAS is a free and confidential professional counselling and information service that provides support to NUI Galway employees, their partners and dependents over the age of 18 and residing at the family home to resolve personal and work related concerns. EAS is available 24/7, 365 days a year covering numerous topics such as:

- Counselling
- Mental health support for worries around COVID-19
- Infertility & pregnancy loss
- Elder care support
- Parent coaching
- International employee support
- Legal information
- Financial information and more.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Through the 2020/21 Academic Year teaching, learning and assessment continued to evolve in response to the pandemic with regular updates brought to Academic Council through the Secretary for Governance and Academic Affairs. An emergency response protocol was developed and Guidance document in relation to ventilation strategy was put in place by Buildings and Estates. Relevant policies were updated including Marks and Standards, Extenuating Circumstances and Student Code of Conduct. Teaching continued in a hybrid model with the level of on campus teaching reflecting the relevant Government restrictions. Assessments adapted to meet the needs of the hybrid teaching arrangements that existed throughout the year and relevant supports were put in place to support international students arriving to Galway in such difficult circumstances. With

support from the Higher Education Authority, enhanced mental health and wellbeing support for students were put in place including additional student counsellors. The Counselling, Chaplaincy, Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing supports continued to help students who encountered difficulties throughout the academic year. Significant time and resources were also dedicated to planning for the return to campus in the Academic Year 2021/22.

Designing Futures: NUI Galway's Designing Futures was awarded €7.57m in funding for a period of 5 years, 2020-2025. The aim of this programme is to enhance graduates' employability, through promoting greater engagement with civic society, community and enterprise during their studies, while enhancing their overall education and preparedness for life in the challenging future now emerging, post-pandemic.

There are four core pillars to Designing Futures:

- Student success coaching, incorporating an innovative personal development module, Designing Your Life (DYL), based on this approach developed by Stanford University.
  o A new state of the art human centred design studio: IdeasLab, which intersects with our enterprise partners to develop curricular and co-curricular experiences driven by design thinking, technology-enhanced learning, curiosity, creativity and empathy.
- A new suite of modules focused on trans-disciplinary learning, promoting innovative thinking and problem-solving across the university curriculum.
- Modelled on the approach of Georgia Tech University, vertically integrated projects (VIPs), which bring together multidisciplinary teams of staff and students to solve research challenges in culture, enterprise and society.

Designing Futures will create a sustainable system that ensures every undergraduate student entering NUI Galway embarks on a personalised and assessed learning journey that combines discipline-specific and transversal skills development, with students being formally recognised for those skills. The programme will deliver this with a unique mix of skills coaching, trans-disciplinary modules and co-curricular engagement, all underpinned by technology.
Designing Futures has been designed in partnership with enterprises, students and international academic partners. These partners will be actively co-creating innovative curricula and co-curricular activities with us. Designing Futures has changed how NUI Galway engages with enterprise on enhanced graduate skills for work and life and is moving us from a transactional model to a fully developed and cohesive framework for partnership. The objectives of Designing Futures are:
- Differentiation of the NUI Galway student experience
- Student-centred transdisciplinary learning
- Sense of belonging and ownership for students
- Clear personal pathways and supports
- Increased retention and progression
- Open curriculum that makes the most of a generalist university experience
- Enterprise integration though managed engagement
- Preparation for life after university: from employability to personal empowerment
- Clearer signposting of professional skills achievements to potential employers

Designing Futures has introduced the new role of Student Success Coaches at NUI Galway to support students to achieve their unique academic, personal and life goals during their undergraduate student life. Inspired by programmes created by Stanford University, NUI Galway Student Success Coaches are implementing the innovative principles of the 'Design Your Life' (DYL) framework to enable students to make the most of their university journey. Through Design Your Life workshops and coaching sessions, students develop personal and professional skills to complement their subject specific skills. The programme is currently being piloted with

undergraduate students across the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, and the College of Science and Engineering. It is offered through in-curriculum or extra-curricular workshops.

Three Student Success coaches have been appointed under the Designing Futures project, supporting students in the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, and the College of Science and Engineering. They have been introducing DYL workshops to students since the beginning of Semester 1 this academic year. To date over 300 students have experienced Design Your Life in practice, and learned new ways to approach decision-making, map energy levels, work-view and life-view and understanding their strengths. Recently, students had the opportunity to create their own individual odyssey plans, where they imagine three possible future lives for themselves. The odyssey plans offers a powerful way to open student's thinking to new possibilities. It provokes students thinking to 'imagine multiple ways you could launch the next chapter of your life's journey – your quest' (Burnett & Evans (2018) Designing Your Life p.80).

Inclusive Learning at NUI Galway:

Undergraduate: The College of Business, Public Policy and Law (CBPPL) led a flagship project (2018-2021) to promote an inclusive teaching and learning environment for all students. The core aim of the project was to improve the learning experience and environment for students. The project explored the barriers to inclusion that students may have experienced, and sought to address those. The project team conducted online student surveys of all second and final year undergraduate students in CBPPL over the last three years. This continuous monitoring enabled CBPPL to identify and address issues. In addition to the three years of survey data, the project has conducted a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups, and explored the experiences of students with disabilities, international/ intercultural students, LGBT+ students, transgender students, and students of both genders (including parents).

The project provided training workshops on inclusive teaching and learning, on intercultural conversations and Universal Design for Learning (UDL); the latter was expanded to include a pilot for the UDL digital badge. The training workshops were heavily informed by the student lived experience. The project developed a wide range of teaching and learning resources which are available on Blackboard to all staff who teach in NUI Galway. Those resources which model good practice include: video recordings of student testimonies, teaching exemplars from the Dean's Awards for Inclusive Teaching, and top tips for inclusive teaching practice. At the University level, an inclusion session was incorporated into the first year induction programme for all students, following a successful pilot in the School of Law.

The project also sought to encourage inclusive practice through the creation in 2018 of two Dean's Awards for Inclusive Teaching. The aim of the Dean's Awards is to recognise and reward inclusive teaching practice and promote a positive learning environment for all students (including students with disabilities, international and intercultural students, and LGBT+ students). The awards highlight examples of inclusive teaching practice that can hopefully be replicated by others. Videos and teaching exemplars of awardees are made available to other staff on Blackboard.

The Dean's Awards for Inclusive Teaching and Learning initially comprised two separate awards: a team award and an individual award. In the first year of the awards there were 56 nominations received across both award categories, which increased to 78 in year two and increased further to 103 in year three. In light of the very significant increase in individual nominations, a recent review recommended the award structure should be reconfigured to four individual awards, and this revised scheme has just been launched.

Individual Award Winners:
2019 – Ms Danielle Martin (Shannon College)
2020 – Dr Patricia McHugh (J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics)
2021 – Ms Ursula Connolly (Law), Ms Kirsten Horan (Shannon) and Dr. Brian Tobin (Law) (split award)

Team Award Winners:

2019 - MSc Business Analytics, Business Information Systems (programme director: Dr Denis Dennehy – SBE).
2020 – Shannon, Food and Beverage Team (team lead: Dr Sean T Ruane, Shannon College)
2021 – Maureen Maloney and Ger Ahearne of the J.E Cairnes School of Business and Economics and Adult Education.

Postgraduate: At postgraduate level the project set out to enhance the learning environment at the university for postgraduate students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. Funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, the goal of the project was to centre the student voice – to hear directly from our students, and to learn from their lived experiences, with a view to improving the learning experience for all students.
This project focused on the experiences of international and intercultural students, students with disabilities, LGBT+ students, students of different genders, and students with caring responsibilities (particularly those who are parents). It also explored the experiences of students during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to remote learning. The project focused on the postgraduate experience in five selected Schools of the University: the School of Law; the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics; Shannon College of Hotel Management; the School of Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Statistics; and the School of Physics. The range and choice of school was broadly representative of the University. The five schools included both STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) and AHSSBL (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law) schools, as well as a professional discipline and a satellite campus. The participating students included both students from taught and research programmes. The project report identifies a range of issues and makes recommendations to address systemic and attitudinal barriers to learning and to build a truly inclusive learning environment.
A second element of the project was to employ a range of methods to raise staff awareness of inclusion and help them to develop their inclusive teaching practice. These methods include the university-wide roll out of the Digital Badge in Universal Design for Teaching and Learning (UDL). 70 people had completed the badge by September 2021. The project also purchased the online accessibility tool, Ally for LMS, which enables staff to make the online material more accessible and also allows students to download learning materials in multiple formats, to support their learning needs. This proved particularly important as a student support during periods of remote learning. The project also provided seminars on inclusive teaching practices, racism in higher education, inclusive teaching practices and UDL. Finally, an international symposium on inclusive learning was held in April 2021, with over 500 registrations.

Symposium on Inclusive Learning
The project team also organised a two-day virtual symposium on Inclusive Learning in Higher Education, in which a range of local, national and international speakers shared their knowledge and experiences of diversity and inclusion. Originally envisaged and planned as an in-person event, COVID restrictions would necessitated a move to online.
The symposium aimed to raise awareness of issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education, with a particular emphasis on centering the student voice and other traditionally marginalised voices in higher education. It showcased and shared inclusive pedagogies, practices and approaches, including presentations by NUI Galway staff who have been awarded the College of Business, Public Policy and Law's Dean's Award for Inclusive Teaching and recordings are available here.
The event was free and students were encouraged to attend and contribute. Over 500 people registered their interest, and over 300 participants from Ireland, the UK and around the world took part over the two days.

Supports and resources for learners
On an ongoing basis and throughout the pandemic students are supported in a multitude of ways:
- Career Drop-Ins: The Career Development Centre ran virtual 'First Year Drop-Ins' in October to give students unsure of their course an opportunity to meet with one of the team and discuss options and get advice and support.

- Students living away from home: The University endeavored to ascertain how many students were still in accommodation in Galway in order to provide adequate supports and services to them.
- NUIG 50808 – Crisis Textline: If students experiencing a crisis of any kind, there is no need to suffer in silence. NUIG 50808 is a free and confidential 24/7 text response service available to all NUI Galway students or staff members experiencing a personal crisis, such as in your relationships or finances, through loneliness, job loss, assault, high anxiety or low mood. By simply texting 'NUIG' to 50808 you will receive a reply within 5 minutes from a highly trained and motivated volunteer who will provide a warm listening ear and help you to find local supports and services.
- CARA Connect: This is a peer buddy programme to increase social interactions amongst our student population. It aims to support the power of conversation and connection between students to help combat the feelings of isolation, loneliness, and disconnection during the beginning of college.
- Extra Study Space: As the demand for study space grew additional and more flexible student spaces were provided:
- Library PC Access: Facility provided to reserve a PC in the Library using the online booking system. This was in addition to the Library's seat booking system and the Click and Collect and Scan and Deliver services. All Library services are listed here.
- Bailey Allen Hall: Additional study space for 50 students was made available in the Bailey Allen Hall, 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday. This facility was noise tolerant, meaning that students could work collaboratively via MS Teams, Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate through their laptops. Invigilators were appointed to look after the space and ensure social distancing. Students could reserve a two-hour slot in advance via the Library booking system.
- The Cube: Noise-tolerant study zone with space for 20 students.
- Exam Stress Helplines: These were available to students experiencing unmanageable exam stress. Support staff were available to talk it through and offer help and guidance: 9am-7pm, Monday-Friday during the exam periods.
- Online Student Services: Our Student Services – like Counselling, Accommodation and Welfare, the Student Health Unit and the Chaplaincy – continue to offer remote services at this time, via phone, email and MS Teams. See you can avail of the support of these caring professionals in the Important Contacts section of the Alerts page.

Academic support continues to be available to our students across a number of different platforms including:

- *Academic Writing Centre*
- *CÉIM*
- *ComputerDISC*
- *SUMS*

Career Development Centre: The Career Development Centre provides students of NUI Galway with ongoing quality career guidance and an information service focused on facilitating and empowering students to manage their own career development and make effective career transitions.

Students and recent graduates can use Careers Connect to view upcoming events and job / internship / funding opportunities. Appointments are available during term for current, registered students just use Careers Connect to start a conversation with one of the team.

Student Experience Executive and the Student Success Project
The Student Experience Executive is a partnership developed by the Student Services directorate with academic, student and professional service representation. The Executive has obtained funding to roll out the Student

Success Project to augment and optimise student success for students. This inclusive process will provide a clear roadmap to support transitions and cultivate belonging, provide relevant training and scope the use of enabling technologies. The project involves two work packages.

Work Package 1 – focus on the student journey beginning with student orientation/induction, aligning academic skills and support through to skills for success.
Work Package 2 – focus on academic and professional service staff to build their capacity and effectiveness/

The Student Experience Executive has been established and work is underway to deliver on the objectives of the project.

Information and Data Management (including analysis and impact of information gathered via the national Student Survey)

Student Digital Pathways: The Student Digital Pathways programme was established in December 2018 to fulfil the recommendations of the University to implement a new student record management solution as the current system can no longer meet University needs. The programme has a core aim to review and improve the organisation, processes, underlying technology and data used to manage the students' journey at NUI Galway – from recruitment to graduation.

The programme involves significant investment for the University and relies upon our stakeholder's engagement and commitment to effectively manage this change and deliver effective solutions to meet our stakeholders needs. From project initiation, the Student Digital Pathways has engaged with our students and staff, academic and professional services colleagues. The team encourage all stakeholders to get involved and provide input and feedback to maximise project impact. Information about the programme stakeholder representatives can be found here.

The Student Digital Pathways (SDP) programme set a timeline for delivery in 2019 and has consistently met time commitments, even during the pandemic.
The SDP programme will deliver a new student records management solution (SRMS) in 2 key phases:
1. Student Admissions Management in September, 2022
2. All other functionality (Registration to Graduation) in September, 2023

Details on functionality and timelines are available here
To ensure effective delivery of the new SRMS, the SDP team will manage 12 separate projects or work streams, each with different timelines and deliverables. Further information is available here

The 12 projects encompass the critical stages of the student journey and data management. These will underpin the design, development and implementation of the new student records management solution at NUI Galway. Each project will have a governance structure in line with the ISS PRINCE2 project management methodology. The project teams will also provide updates to stakeholders directly on behalf of the Student Digital Pathways.

Student Survey:
2020-2021 academic year was truly unprecedented, which was reflected in StudentSurvey.ie results. Less students responded to the survey in 2021 than in 2020, which is an indication of weaker engagement by itself. 3,415 of NUI Galway students responded to StudentSurvey.ie (formerly known as ISSE) survey in 2021. This number yields a response rate of 30.7% (38.3% in 2020 or 26% Other Unis in 2021 (28.8% Other Unis in 2020)). Of these 1,689 were First Year students (Y1), 922 were Final Year students (YF) and 804 were Postgraduate Taught students (PGT) (response rate 39%, 28%, 22 respectively).

All universities saw a decline in general satisfaction amongst students as evidenced by the decline in positive responses to the 2 questions – "How would you evaluate your entire experience at this institution" which saw a decline on average from 81.8% in 2020 to 69.3% in 2020, and "If you could start over, would you go to the same

institution you are now attending" which declined from an average of 86.5% to 86%. However, as detailed below, NUI Galway saw a larger decline in both these questions compared to the overall average, and went from being above the Irish average in 2019 to below the average in 2020.

In 2021 in addition to regular questions, 7 extra questions, directly related to COVID were added to the StudentSurvey.ie – 5 Likert scale questions (Definitely agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Definitely disagree) and 2 open-end questions.

COVID questions revealed the following:
1. Although around 80% of NUI Galway's students had a positive association with communication from the university, online learning and felt connected to the university despite restricted access to campus, this is 4.5% lower than Other Unis average.
2. 3% less NUIG (6% less YF) students compared to national average indicated that they had "a suitable study environment at home (space to work, internet access, computer, etc)."

Main messages from the rest of the survey:
3. 66% of NUI Galway's respondents evaluated their overall experience as Excellent/Good, which is 3.3% below the Other Unis average of 69.3%.
    o 6% less of YF cohort responded positively to overall experience questions than Other Universities average (70% of NUIG vs 76% Other Unis) for the same cohort o 3.5% less Y1 NUIG students responded positively to the same question than Other Unis on average (60% NUIG vs 63.5% Other Unis) for the same cohort.
4. 81% of students would choose NUIG again, which is 5% below the national average of 86%.
    o 6% less (74%) of YF NUIG students indicated they'd choose NUIG again vs 80% nationally
    o 5% less Y1 NUIG than Other Unis cohort indicated the same (85% NUIG vs 90% Other Unis)
    o PG cohort responded in line with the national average.
5. In 2021 NUI Galway outperformed Other Unis averages in only one Index category – SF (Student-Faculty Interactions) – and underperformed in 8/9 indices.
6. While HO[3] RI, LS and CL are below the national averages by less than 1 point (only HO & RI are statistically significantly), ET, QI & SE fall short of the national averages by more than a point (statistically significantly).
7. Cohort analysis revealed that: ET & SE are "problem" areas for all cohorts, while SF is a relative strength at NUI Galway.
8. The sum of NUIG's Indices is 2.1% below the national average (vs 0.6% below in 2020, 1.3% above in 2019).

Public Information and Communication
Cois Coiribe is NUI Galway's online platform which came on stream in January 2021 highlighting the views and opinions of some of the university's top academics and researchers. This online platform was developed with the following objectives in mind:

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[3]

H O	Higher-Order Learning	L S	Learning Strategies	E T	Effective Teaching Practices
RI	Reflective and Integrative Learning	C L	Collaborative Learning	Q I	Quality of Interactions
Q R	Quantitative Reasoning	S F	Student-Faculty Interaction	S E	Supportive Environment

- To act as an always on window into the world of NUI Galway - with interesting insights, views, stories, people, profiles and news updates across every area of our University
- Increase global visibility, brand awareness and reputation to elevate rankings position and support increase student numbers & academic profiles
- Engage with a national and international audience including students, academics, partnerships and alumni
- To connect the university community with influential, international audiences
- To curate large amounts of information in a centralised, user-friendly space.

COIS COIRIBE PERFORMANCE
Jan 2021 - Jan 2022

FIGURES

3,312,493   **113**

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS   PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Performance summary through Sprout Social.
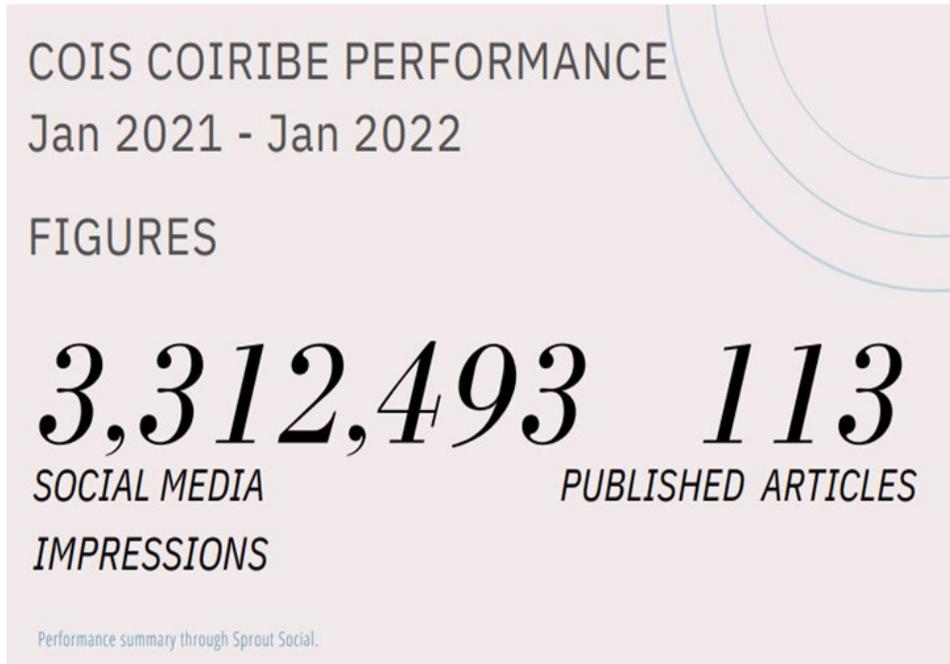
The aim of Cois Coiribe is to

- Drive quality engagement with exciting multimedia content
- Offer content and design that mirrors academic excellence and a vibrant university community
- Extend reach, plugging into other media platforms such as The Conversation, RTE Brainstorm
- Build the reputation of the university
- Deliver higher equivalent in advertising value

CONTRIBUTORS

We count researchers, industry experts, students, staff, collaborators and high-profile alumni among our contributors.

No. of articles: 113

Previous contributors include:
- Mary-Ellen McGroarty, Country Director of the UN's World Food Programme for Afghanistan
- Sean Ridge, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, UNOCHA
- Bill Schmarzo, Honorary Professor, NUI Galway, Data Management Innovation Customer Advocate, Dell Technologies
- Award-winning novelist, short story writer & NUI Galway lecturer, Mike McCormack
- Irish poet and essayist Doireann Ní Ghríofa
- Prof Derek O'Keeffe, Medical Device Technology, NUI Galway & Consultant Physician (Endocrinologist) at University Hospital Galway (UHG)

NUI Galway Website: At the request of senior management, a high-level review group on Web, Social and Digital Communication was established to review:
- current standard of the services
- governance and management of services
- resourcing of web, social and digital communications across the University

The report identified that the NUI Galway website is a significant strategic resource and a valuable recruitment platform for attracting high calibre international students and showcasing world-leading research and innovation. The site attracts 2.4m unique visitors annually, with 5.8m sessions (2020). Likewise, the University's social media channels are a key tool in communicating the University 'story' to a wide range of stakeholders, with 240,000 followers across all channels (LinkedIn (94,556), Facebook (80,612), Twitter (50.2k), Instagram (18.6k), Snapchat and YouTube (3.83k); as well as acting as a global recruitment tool. However, it concluded that the website feels out of date; structurally it prioritises function rather than showcasing research and academic programmes, and it is being used both as an internal and external communication platform. In short it lacks the dynamic look and feel of a modern, globally-focused university and is in need of significant and immediate overhaul.

The group produced a report and has highlighted five recommendations requiring immediate attention and five specific recommendations in the areas of governance, strategy and staffing. The University has just recently appointed a new Vice President of Engagement and this report will be actioned through the Engagement office.

Other Parties Involved in Education and Training
NUI Galway continues to engage with a number of institutions in the provision of education including two linked providers: St. Angela's College and Burren College of Art. However, it was announced in November 2021 that St. Angela's will be incorporated into IT Sligo and subsequently will become Atlantic Technological University. A quality review of Burren College of Art will take place in 2023/24.

In relation to the recruitment and engagement of external examiners, quality reviewers and expert panelists we continue to implement the guidance outlined in the relevant policies to ensure that those engaged are recognized experts and independent.

NUI Galway has 59 programmes approved by Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs) and works to ensure that all programmes reach the quality standards required by these bodies.

Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

CINNTE Recommendations: The University continues to implement the recommendations highlighted by the CINNTE Review. Five of the ten key recommendations are complete. The remaining recommendations are in progress including those related to long-term projects e.g. *Student Digital Pathways, Galway Global Project*.

Recommendation	Status
1. That the University consider the future role and development of the Quality Office on the departure of the Director of Quality. It further recommends that the University consider linking the Quality Office with related support services - for example, the Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching, where sharing of good practice from reviews and direct developmental activities would be supported.	Complete
2. That the University consider requiring the Quality Enhancement Committee to report to Academic Standing Committee and onwards to Academic Council.	Complete
3. That the University conduct a thematic review on a cyclical basis to consider the main themes arising from School and Programme Reviews as well as from the reports from External Examiners.	Ongoing
4. That the University conduct a Portfolio review (particularly at Masters level) to provide a comprehensive understanding of NUIG programme provision (a). In addition, develop comprehensive guidance and application processes for new programme proposals that will drive change in culture and recognition of programme delivery costs and requirements (b).	Ongoing
5. That the University undertake a comprehensive risk assessment in respect of the risk associated with transfer of student data in the development of the new Student Records System.	Ongoing
6. That the University develop a Research Communication Strategy and incorporate a register of IPs to ensure that industry is aware of activities and potential areas of collaboration.	Complete
7. That the University establish ongoing annual monitoring (beyond the 12-month period) of School review outcomes to assess progress, this could be achieved through the annual operational planning cycle.	Complete
8. That the University develop a system to mainstream projects that are successful and demonstrate impact (for example CÉIM and the Academic Writing Centre) to manage the increasing numbers of students and complexity of issues (International, widening access, disabilities, mental health) and that the University continues ongoing monitoring of the resourcing of the Counselling Service.	Ongoing
9. That the University develops an explicit Implementation Plan to accompany the next Strategic Plan, one in which each target is assigned a clear owner, and each plan is given the resources to deliver.	Complete
10. That the University develop a comprehensive and sustainable transition and support arrangements for International students that will have capacity to meet the projected increased demand.	Ongoing

Quality Reviews – development of online review process
QA003 and QA013 outline the University's policies and processes in relation to the quality review of schools and professional services. A key part of the review process is the site visit carried out by an externally led review team on campus over three days. The visit includes meetings with all key stakeholders in the school or unit including head of unit, self-assessment team, staff, students and external stakeholders.   In accordance with government guidelines including travel restrictions, in person review visits could not be facilitated in 2020/21 (this did not impact NUI Galway in 2019/20). As a result, the Quality Office developed procedures to carry out reviews online. Three reviews were held online during 2020/21 including the Library, Acadamh and Student Services. The development of these procedures included:

- pre-planning meetings at an earlier stage in the review process
- changes to the review timetable
  - o building in additional time to the review schedule to allow the review team to consider and discuss the content of their meetings with units
  - o the inclusion of sufficient breaks between meetings to allow people some time away from screens
- development of guidelines and etiquette for the conduct of online review meetings

Overall, online reviews have worked well with some benefits including no travel, the increased efficiency of online meetings and increased efficiency of review teams meeting online a number of weeks in advance of the online review visit. These online procedures will continue to be used until such time as it is safe to return to in person review visits.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes: Per the university guidelines, QA245: University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes (2.4.2.1 Annual Report of Research Degree Programmes) each College submitted their annual report, under three main areas;

1. Accounts of feedback from research students and research supervisors for the previous year
2. Yearly Progress Reports Review
3. Comment on Completion Rates and Completion Times for each School

From these reports a *Summary of College Annual Reviews of Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes 2019-2020 and Key Actions* was agreed and presented to Academic Council in February 2021. The equivalent report for 2020-21 will be presented to Academic Council in April 2022.

Planning is underway for the rollout of IRRP 2023.

Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

Our commitment to wider society and community engagement is underpinned by the value of Openness in our strategy. NUI Galway is committed to community and the development of lasting relationships for a positive impact on peoples' lives within society. We believe that the best learning takes place when students have many opportunities to engage their learning in real world contexts. That's why we have created many pathways to apply knowledge in community through real learning in the curriculum, volunteering and researching real world problem projects including:
- Access to Education
- CKI
- Learning within Community
- ALIVE
- Community Education Centre
- Outreach activities

University of Sanctuary

NUI Galway is a University of Sanctuary, a movement aimed at promoting the inclusion of International Protection Applicants, refugees and Irish Travellers within the community in meaningful ways. As part of the University of Sanctuary initiative, NUI Galway hosted 12 full time scholarships in AY 20-21. This was an increase from nine scholarships offered in AY19-20.

An Mheitheal Rothar

An Mheitheal Comhshaol, is a not-for-profit Cooperative based in the NUI Galway Business Innovation Centre. The Cooperative, operating as An Mheitheal Rothar from two locations on the NUI Galway campus, uses income

from enterprise activities to lead progressive change for a more sustainable society. The Community Workshop provides hands-on bike maintenance workshops; this initiative is particularly popular with students and people on lower incomes. Participants learn in a peer-to-peer environment how to repair and maintain their bikes; the workshop operates on a donation basis. The University Bike Shop, scheduled to open in late 2021, will provide a bike repair service on the campus grounds and offer new and second hand bikes for sale to students, staff and the wider community. The shop aims to promote active and sustainable transport and complement the bike-to-work-scheme. The second hand bikes will come through ReCycle your Cycle, a flagship circular economy initiative that provides training and employment opportunities for the long term unemployed.

Some Good Food Stories
All caterers on the NUI Galway campus offer vegan, vegetarian and meat free options on campus every day. The campus boasts outdoor herb gardens maintained by the chefs and all are committed to ensuring that locally sourced ingredients are served that are both fresh and in season. The community of Sodexo dining services have established a food waste watch programme, which champions the reduction of food waste on their 'watch'. Sodexo teams rapidly capture food waste data, giving clear insights into what is being wasted in their kitchens. With this knowledge, teams implement targeted operational and behavioural changes to help end avoidable food waste. The Food Space dining service raises the sustainability bar by using only local, seasonal ingredients and aim to have zero-waste kitchens. Vegetable trimmings are turned into pickles and ferments, coffee grinds are used as soil fertiliser, waste milk is made into ricotta cheese and the resulting whey is added to pickling liquor, all activities of a highly motivated and environmentally aware kitchen.

Education and Outreach Initiatives
In April 2021, three NUI Galway public engagement and education outreach initiatives were awarded funding of over €300,000 through the SFI Discover Programme. The funding is to support projects dedicated to engaging over 385,000 members of the public in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. Cell EXPLORERS is a science education and public engagement programme locally delivering educational science outreach activities to school children and the Irish public. Science Waves, led by CÚRAM, the SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices, is an education and public engagement programme that aims to raise awareness of its research and increase understanding of preventative behaviours which can reduce the incidence of chronic illness. CÚRAM is working with children from underrepresented communities to create accessible, engaging, and fun radio shows. ReelLIFE SCIENCE is a nationwide science video competition, which encourages young people and the general public to discover more about STEM and its impact on individuals, society and the environment. Young people from schools and youth organisations are challenged to research a STEM topic and communicate it to the public through an engaging and educational three-minute video. Lifelong learning is also a real focus of our partnership with the Galway Science and Technology Festival engaging the general public, schools and all ages.
NUI Galway's Youth Academy works with high ability 4th, 5th and 6th class primary school students to support their learning and academic development. NUI Galway's Uni 4 U is a primary schools initiative aimed at increasing participation, diversity and equality of opportunity in third level education.

Gender Equality within Higher Education
In 2021, NUI Galway secured a renewed Athena SWAN Bronze Award in recognition of the University's continued progression on gender equality. The Athena SWAN Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education (HE) and research. The renewal of the award highlighted a range of initiatives being taken at the University, including improvement in the representation of women in senior academic roles. Bronze award status has also been granted to five of NUI Galway's Schools taking the total of school awards to eight. The Office of the Vice President for Equality and Diversity (OVPED) leads on embedding Athena SWAN principles across the university. The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) sets out actions, responsibilities and times lines relating to Athena Swan and other areas including culture, governance, training & development, recruitment, and promotion. The GEAP is updated by the Vice President for Equality & Diversity every 2 months to ensure progress and oversight. The OVEP hosted a series of events from March 8th to 12th, 2021 to celebrate International Women's Day 2021.

Saol Café

SAOL Café is the first social inclusion café in a higher education institution in Ireland, founded by the CKI in partnership with the NUI Galway Commercial Services office and a community based innovation and enterprise centre (SCCUL Enterprises). Since its opening in 2015, the café has provided a safe environment for people from all backgrounds to learn soft and hard skills in the hospitality industry. The café provides an opportunity for people who would not normally be considered for employment in the hospitality industry. Our vision for SAOL café is to make it a commercially viable business, but also one that can make a real change and prepare people for economic labour.

Internationalisation

Galway Global Project: The Global Galway Project is about building a strong international future for NUI Galway and it marks a step-change in the University's internationalisation ambition. It will create a new and sustainable internationalisation structure with robust processes and collaborative ways of working that will position the university for global growth. The University Management Team approved the project in December 2020 and funding for the project was approved by the University in June 2021.

Phase 1: January – October 21 & looking forward to Phase 2: October 21 - March 22

The formal project launch took place in March 2021 with an introductory video and website. This was followed by a series of webinars and workshops to engage staff and students with the project and the global vision.

A new Unit is in the process of being established, Global Galway, which incorporates the International Office. The senior management structure has been created and the Director Global Galway was recruited in September 2021. Four teams have been developed within Global Galway:

1. Global Recruitment
2. Global Mobility
3. Global Partnerships
4. Finance & Global Operations

Plans are in place to develop priorities under each of these areas with an initial priority for 21/22 being the establishment of an expanded regional structure for Global Recruitment.

ENLIGHT: Extensive mapping exercises are currently being carried out across all areas of partner institutions to establish commonalities and agree the best approach for the various work packages and deliverables of the ENLIGHT project.

Establishment of an ENLIGHT University System Working Group

The network is currently working on establishing an 'ENLIGHT University System' which will involve the creation of a governance structure and a common quality approach, integrating all partners' national quality assurance and recognition procedures. The project needs to develop a common vision for this system among all 9 partners to establish a framework agreement for a functioning European University System by the end of the three year pilot phase, including time-lines for implementation and gradually linking our institutions' structures, as well as establishing an ENLIGHT legal structure. In order to achieve this at NUI Galway we are establishing a University System working group with input from the following areas:

- Governance
- Registry
- Quality
- ISS
- Legal and Corporate Affairs
- HR
- Research

Data Processing Agreement

The ENLIGHT project requires that certain data will be shared across all partner institutions. There is a data processing agreement currently circulated to all legal representatives for comments and recommendations on national legal frameworks to reach a suitable agreement for all partner institutions.

Teaching and Learning Working Group
ENLIGHT proposes to share education across all partner institutions starting with a small number of pilot modules in 2021/22 that relate to the flagship challenge areas:
•Health and well-being
•Digital revolution and Impact of digitalisation
•Climate change
•Energy and Circular economy
•Equity

There are currently five NUI Galway academic representatives providing input on the five challenge areas and working towards creating joint modules to be shared across the network.A first meeting of the ENLIGHT Teaching and Learning working group to include the Vice Deans for Teaching and Learning is set for late May to discuss proposals for curriculum integration and widening academic participation in the project.

Outreach and Establishment of the NUI Galway ENLIGHT Regional Academy
NUI Galway are leading on the outreach work package for ENLIGHT with the University of Uppsala. The first deliverable in April was for each partner institution to create a network of strategic regional partners to establish a dialogue on the key challenges faced by their city/region. The objective of the regional academy is to identify ways in which these societal issues can be both integrated into ENLIGHT challenge- based education courses or 'Living Labs' and also be linked with research expertise in each institution, to support regional partners and integrate cities and universities. The ENLIGHT regional academy will create a city network and a European dialogue of shared best practice linking cities and regions across the network. NUI Galway's key strategic partners in our regional academy for this first phase are:
•Galway City Council
•Galway Chamber
•Western Development Commission

ENLIGHT Doctoral Network
The ENLIGHT Doctoral Network has been established and is currently working on mapping training and education opportunities for doctoral students to be shared across the network.

ENLIGHT Rise
The ENLIGHT Rise Horizon 2020 funded project will commence in September and the initial planning phase has begun. The ENLIGHT Research and Innovation agenda with and for Society (RISE) project aims at establishing the foundations and initiating the implementation of a common research and innovation (R&I) agenda within the ENLIGHT European University Alliance. ENLIGHT RISE will support the development of joint strategies on research and innovation building on this education-focused Erasmus + funded project and connecting in with other relevant EU or national funding sources.

Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG)

At NUI Galway we recognise the critical role that universities must play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Delivering sustainable development is central to our new strategic plan; Shared Vision, Shaped by Values. The Plan presents sustainability as one of four pillars with ten associated Flagship Action across the university mission.

NUI Galway received an Overall Rank of 82nd place out of a total of 1,118 Institutions in the 2021 Sustainable Development Goals World Ranking. NUI Galway did particularly well in SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy achieving a rank of 14th place and also in SDG 3-Good Health & Wellbeing where we climbed over 50 places to reach 44th place. This was the first year that NUI Galway submitted an application for SDG 5-Gender Equality and SDG 10-Reduced Inequalities achieving excellent ranks of 71st place and 62nd place respectively.

- SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing 44/871
  Measuring the University's research on key diseases and conditions, international collaborations with global health organisations and support for healthcare professions and the health of students and staff.
- SDG 5 Gender Equality 71/776
  Measuring the universities' research on the study of gender, their policies on gender equality and their commitment to recruiting and promoting women.
- SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy 14/560
  This measures the University's research related to efficient energy consumption, our own energy use and policies and our commitment to promoting energy efficiency in the wider community. NUI Galway was awarded Energy Team of the Year at last year's Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland awards. At 36% energy reduction, NUI Galway continues to work towards an ambitious target of a 40% energy reduction by 2020.
- SDG 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure 201-300/680
  This measures universities' research on industry and innovation, their number of patents and spin-off companies and their research income from industry.
- SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities 62/669
  Measuring the universities' research on social inequalities, their policies on discrimination and their commitment to recruiting staff and students from under-represented groups. NUI Galway has recently joined the International Education and Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) Alliance, this Partnership with IIE-SRF makes a commitment to provide practical support for threatened and displaced scholars.
- SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 44/656
  This measures the university's research on sustainability, our role as custodian of arts and heritage and our internal efforts on practicing and promoting sustainability. NUI Galway performed particularly well for its research and support for sustaining and promoting Arts and Heritage.
- SDG 14 Life below Water 26/379
  Measuring the University's research on life below water and efforts at supporting, educating and sustaining aquatic ecosystems both locally and globally, NUI Galway were ranked in the Top 10 for education and actions to support aquatic ecosystems, both locally and globally.
- SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions 62/653
  Measuring the University's research on Law, Human rights and international relations, and our participation as advisors and influencers of government policy, the University performed particularly well for its research and work with government and policy makers.
- SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals (101-200)/1,154
  This measures the broader ways in which the University supports the UN SDGs through collaboration with other countries, the promotion of best practices and the publication of data for informing research and decision making. The University has a long tradition of partnership regionally and globally on projects for the benefit of communities.

NUI Galway is committed to the implementation of all 17 SDGs and has reported progress on this implementation under the following headings in its Annual Sustainability Report for 2020/21:

- Students and Learning
- Research
- Community Engagement

Sustainability Strategy: The 2020/21 academic year marked a milestone year in our campus sustainability efforts with the conclusion of our inaugural Sustainability Strategy. Some of the major milestones reached as a result of the first strategy include:
- academic staff embracing sustainability as part of the curriculum
- becoming a Green Campus Ireland awarded site
- the appointment of the University's first Sustainability Officer
- exceeding the Public Sector 2020 Energy Efficiency target of 33% reaching the university target of 40% in 2020
- receiving the first Green Lab Certification in Europe
- managing the campus in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Building on the success of the first strategy and after a yearlong consultation process the University's second sustainability strategy was launched. The NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy from 2021 to 2025 sets out our vision and commitment to be a leader in the transition to a sustainable future and embed sustainability in our culture, operational policies and governance structures and empower our communities to be champions of sustainability. The Strategy was launched by Dr. Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the 9th March 2021.

Building on successful first steps, the Strategy is based on a Learn-Live-Lead model organised around 6 themes:

- Research And Learning
- Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Nature and Ecosystems
- Health and Wellbeing
- Built Environment
- Governance and Leadership

Each theme is comprised of a series of aims, objectives and targets for the next five academic years. The Strategy identifies 25 key measures of success across the six themes of the Learn-Live-Lead model.

Progress on the roll out of the strategy under *Research and Learning* is gathering pace with numerous actions already complete including. The strategic aim is that ***"Through our teaching and research activities, using the UN SDGs as a framework, we will develop the next generation of students, researchers and innovators for tackling society's evolving sustainable development challenges. We will embed sustainability across our learning, research and the student experience so that individuals across our entire campus community gain the necessary knowledge and skills to become sustainability role models and leaders."***

Highlights include:

- the publication of a new Biodiversity Action Plan for the campus
- completion of the University's inaugural carbon footprint
- submission to STARS
- joining new international sustainable campus networks and ranking 14th in the world in the Times Higher Societal Impact Ranking for SDG 7 Clean and Affordable energy
- The number of modules with environment/sustainability content increased from 231 modules in 2018 to 303 modules in 2021.

- The Introduction to Sustainability module has been launched to a cohort of students in the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies. Module rollout will be extended in AY21-22 and also offered to students in the College of Science and Engineering. The overall aim is to develop the module as a university wide module available to students in all four Colleges.
- Continued roll out of the 'Green Lab Principles and Practice' graduate module. This module introduces students to a range of topics, including: atmosphere & climate; global warming; the psychology, sociology and communication of climate change; climate change communication; sustainability and the SDGs; chemistry and manufacture of plastics; doughnut economics; the circular economy; and how to implement green lab practices. Since January 2020, 53 students have taken the module, with uptake from universities in England, Scotland, Germany and Denmark.
- The NUI Galway grant management system has been aligned to the SDGs and requires Principle Investigators to select the SDGs that their funded projects align to. All new funded research projects now set out how the project aligns with the UN SDGs.
- In the last 5 years, 43% of all research papers in the Scopus database authored by NUI Galway affiliated researchers are attributed to the UN SDGs, with 74% of our research active staff having at least one peer reviewed publication aligned to the UN SDGs in this period.
- A pilot study to investigate the utility of Sulitest, a UN-backed international sustainability literacy assessment method, commenced in AY20-21. The test has been trialled among cohorts of undergraduate and postgraduate students (including the BSc Environmental Science, BSc Applied Social Sciences, MSc Sustainable Environments and MSc Environmental Leadership). The aim of the study is to assess Sulitest as a possible method to measure and improve sustainability literacy.
- Sulitest was also deployed among two cohorts of graduate students enrolled on the Green lab Principles and Practice module.
- NUI Galway hosted a Student Sustainability Summit on March 4th 2021 to support student organisations, clubs and societies focused on sustainability and to provide a platform for sharing sustainability ideas for the city and campus. The event brought together students from sustainability themed societies, the student volunteering programme ALIVE, the Student Union (SU) Sustainability Working group and representative form the CUSP team.
- The NUI Galway Student Volunteering Programme ALIVE, working in collaboration with James Hardiman Library, IdeasLab, CUSP and the non-profit organisation the Ladder, hosted the Global Goals Jam in September 2020. The Global Goals Jam is an international event where creative teams work together on local challenges related to the SDGs. The 2020 JAM event focused on public health and education for all.
- In AY 20/21, NUI Galway operated a Laptop for Loan Scheme to support disadvantaged students, in accessing computer devices. Over 900 students received a laptop on long-term loan in order to assist with online learning, Examples of target group prioritised under the scheme included students disadvantaged by socio-economic barriers, students with disabilities, lone parents students who are members of ethnic minorities.
- A new sustainability toolkit was developed for students.

The NUI Galway Sustainability Report 2020/21 outlines the progress achieved under all six aims.

External publications or presentations about the institution's QA system, e.g. EQAF, journals, etc.

N/a

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Developments in academic integrity have focused on two main areas:
- staff and student education
- policy review

With regards to staff and student education the following resources have been developed:
- a staff workshop on contract cheating
- an online lesson on contract cheating for students
- joint staff-student workshop on how to ensure good collaboration

The Teaching and Learning Committee approved the revision of the current plagiarism policy to address the wider issues of academic integrity that are now emerging and set up a subgroup of that Committee to work on writing the new broader academic integrity policy. This work is underway. In addition, we have collaborated with the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), shared our work with them, and ensured that their guidelines informed our process and revisions.

The Library's Academic Skills Hub continues to support all NUI Galway students to develop the key skills required for academic success. The Academic Skills Hub:
- Provides brief introductions to, and top tips on, eight key academic skills, as well as some information to help get started.
- Offers advice and resources for studying in the online learning environment.
- Links to a range of additional sources of support for students, including Library resources and academic skills workshops.

The Hub offers support to students and a useful Library Guide to Academic Integrity.

Information provided to students was significantly upgraded to reflect the pivot to online due to COVID, with a number of webpages to support key approaches to study online through CELT.

Issues of academic integrity and plagiarism continue to be part of the core content in the assessment module of the PgCert in Teaching and Learning and the Pg Dip in Academic Practice.

Research Integrity: Since June 2018 the Research Office has been delivering Research Integrity training as part of the national pilot programme and in order to meet mandatory funder requirements. So far, approximately 700 academics, researchers and postgraduate (research) students have completed integrity training.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1　QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
	Strategy implementation and operational planning	NUI Galway will continue to implement Strategy 2020-2025. As we approach the midway point of the strategy an in-depth review will be carried out by the Director of Strategy Implementation. Implementation is supported by Guidelines to embed the strategy in college and unit strategies and operational plans.
	Galway Global Project	Four teams have been developed within Global Galway: 1. Global Recruitment 2. Global Mobility 3. Global Partnerships 4. Finance & Global Operations An initial priority for 21/22 will be establishing an expanded regional structure for Global Recruitment. This will provide the base structure to support the delivery of international student recruitment targets, enable a broadening of the countries we recruit from an increase in programmes available to international students, in line with College & School strategies. There will also be cross team working with Global Mobility and Global Partnerships and the global teams within the Colleges. An initial business case was discussed to transition the English Language Centre into the University (from Commercial Services) with further work on a final business case due for UMT sign-off in Spring 2022. This will provide pathways into study by supporting the English language and academic skills of incoming international students. It will also expand its English for academic purpose support to students and staff during their studies.

		Work to identify and develop the detailed structures, processes and ways of working to improve and streamline cross-Unit working has begun. More work on international mobility, recruitment, partnerships, registry and student support structures and ways of working will start from November 2021. A proposal has been drawn up for an International Committee within the governance structure responsible for supporting and overseeing international strategy. An on-going priority is to increase understanding of and buy-in to the benefits of internationalisation through events and specific stakeholder engagement.
	Policies and Procedures Repository	The Policies and Procedures Project Team has created two sub-groups: • Policy Framework Working Group – this group will develop an outline of new policy framework for NUI Galway based on the recommendations and benchmarking completed through the review in autumn 2021. • IT Development Working Group – this group will develop an outline of new IT solution that will operationalize a proposed new policy framework based on the recommendations and benchmarking completed through the review in autumn 2021. A high level proposal will be brought to UMT for consideration following which a complete proposal will be developed, funding sought and a new framework and online repository developed. This will be developed within the wider context of the overall University governance framework which is also currently being developed.
	IRRP2023	NUI Galway aims to create a quality culture by assuring and enhancing the quality of research, teaching and associated services through our academic staff, support staff, researchers and students. NUI Galway's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 states that respect for teaching and research is central to our mission. As a research led and research driven University it is important that we demonstrate our commitment to the quality of research. NUI Galway has an established process for Quality Reviews that combines an assessment of teaching, research, and administration. Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP) is a process of expert review of research quality. To facilitate a detailed analysis of research quality the University conducted its first quality review of research performance in 2012. IRRP2016 was a continuation of the assurance of the quality of research, addressing Reviewer's recommendations during IRRP2012 for a "second stage" review focused on the "quality of the research output produced". The next round will run for three years beginning academic year 2023/24. Expert reviewers will be appointed to evaluate areas based on their Subject Area expertise, proven research track record and also on their general expertise in

		conducting research assessments. The anticipated outcomes will embody the values of respect and excellence and may include the following:
		1. Enhance the amount of research being carried out at a higher quality level 2. Enhance the capacity for research, by coaching and mentoring all staff to engage in high quality research 3. Improve PhD recruitment and completion rates 4. Enhance Research funding activity 5. Enhance Research Strategy that is more conducive to producing better quality research 6. Enhance the impact of research for the benefit of society The framework for IRRP2023 will be developed in consultation with key internal stakeholders and work will begin in Autumn 2022.
	Student Success Project	Work Package 1 • Map the NUI Galway student journey, identify key transition points, enablers of success and 'pinch points' in order to make recommendations regarding student support and developmental opportunities. • Build on the current quantitative evidence base on NUI Galway student success (e.g. extensive in-house surveys and StudentSurvey.ie) and augment this with extensive qualitative engagement via consultation with a diverse cohort of 100 NUI Galway students and the Students' Union. • Develop an improved, elongated, blended approach to student Orientation / Induction. Align academic skills / support, social and wellbeing support to enhance student engagement, knowledge and skills for success. Work Package 2 • Build the effectiveness and capacity of academic and professional service staff to maximise opportunities to cultivate belonging, particularly peer support and peer-assisted learning. This will include • Identification of the continuing professional development needs of NUI Galway staff and students in relation to provision of peer support, particularly in a blended learning environment • Training in relevant areas, with a particular focus on coaching and building student and staff resilience

		• Explore, pilot and make recommendations regarding opportunities for Artificial Intelligence (AI) / bot technology to provide relevant learning and wellbeing information and skills. • Evaluation, communication and reporting on the impact of the project

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods
3.2.1   Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
1. School of Business and Economics (T)*	March 2023	2015/16
2. School of Hotel Management, Shannon (T)	March 2023	2014/15
3. School of Mathematical and Statistical Science (T)	March 2023	2014/15(T) 2017/18 (R)
4. School of Medicine (T)*	March 2023	2014/15 (T) 2017/18 (R)
5. School of Natural Science (T)	March 2023	2013/14 (T) 2017/18 (R)
6. School of Biological and Chemical Science (T)	March 2023	2013/14 (T) 2017/18 (R)
7. School of Political Science and Sociology (T)	March 2023	2014/15 (T) 2017/18 (R)

(T): Teaching; (S): Support and Services; (R): Research; (L): Linked Provider

3.2.2   Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Details of all upcoming reviews can be found here.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Establishment of an Innovative Telehealth Speech and Language Therapy Placement as a Rapid Response to COVID-19

Students on the BSc in Speech and Language Therapy are required to complete their practice education training through clinical placements in hospitals and healthcare facilities where they acquire and develop these skills. As a consequence of Covid-19, clinical placements became scarce due to reduced speech and language therapy services, increased measures of infection control and the redeployment of therapists to COVID-19 related duties. To deal with this crisis and provide enough clinical hours for our students, the discipline of Speech and Language Therapy at NUI Galway turned to telehealth.

Staff and students in Speech and Language Therapy students embarked on a telehealth clinical placement offering approximately 30 online appointments daily in English and Irish. This clinical placement, using the HSE online platform Attend Anywhere, was run in collaboration with therapists from the HSE West, HSE Donegal and Voices for Down Syndrome Galway. The telehealth clinic was proposed to address the acute situation that arose during the pandemic in relation to clinical placements for Speech and Language students at NUI Galway.

The new facility offered learning opportunities and the ability for students to complete their practice education training through clinical placements, but also allowed clients to access health care services and therapy from the comfort and safety of their homes.

This was the first time that clinical placements for Speech and Language Therapy students were based on providing telehealth and not face-to-face work with clients. Every week, under supervision, 27 fourth year Speech and Language Therapy students offered approximately 30 telehealth appointments daily. To support the delivery of appointments the students created a bank of video podcasts which demonstrated activities they targeted in therapy. This helped to ensure families had support material to review between sessions. Sessions lasted from 20-45 minutes and were supervised by a qualified Speech and Language Therapist.

The telehealth clinic provided an insight into how the students' confidence, team work, problem solving and adaptability developed and there was a hugely positive response from clients. The telehealth clinical placements also allowed a way to future-proof students for the world into which they will graduate, making them highly desirable healthcare employees.

An evaluation of the telehealth clinic was carried out. The aim of the evaluation was to explore practice educators' and students' experiences of the placement experience and a paper has been published on this which is available here.

VIDEO-BASED LEARNING TO ENHANCE TEACHING OF PRACTICAL MICROBIOLOGY

Two main difficulties have been consistently encountered in large group laboratory based teaching:

1. The inability to effectively demonstrate complex, intricate techniques to large classes

2. Poor engagement of students too physically removed or who need individual attention to follow the presented material.

In order to promote student engagement and enhance learning throughout the microbiology programme at NUI Galway funding was secured to develop 40 expert demonstrations of laboratory-based techniques taught throughout the four-year BSc in Microbiology[1].

 The methods were demonstrated by Ph.D. students and the professionally-produced videos were made widely available via the free Microbiology teaching videos YouTube channel at NUI Galway. The video-based, blended learning approach has greatly increased students' engagement with course content and improved the quality of their learning across all undergraduate years. Independent learning has also increased with over 90% of students consistently watching the relevant videos before attending practical sessions and 97% reporting increased understanding of lab principles and methods as a result.
By combining rational design, technical expertise and professional production, the video learning resource has captured an important niche in STEM video learning in higher education. At NUI Galway research is integrated into practical teaching and the video-learning initiative strengthens these links by underlining the research context of techniques performed in undergrad labs and utilizing PhD researchers to demonstrate the methods on camera. The videos are also central to final year students' science communication training in which they teach undergraduate practicals, which is a core component of their research training and career development.

The videos accumulated over 40,000 views across 47 countries in its first 15 months online. A survey of students who used the videos in their teaching and learning identified a greatly increased understanding of experimental principles and ability to carry out techniques; greater engagement with practical teaching sessions; particular benefits for visual learners; and increased confidence in teaching and in communicating science amongst undergraduate teaching assistants. The videos will be central to microbiology teaching at NUI Galway over the coming decade and will benefit many third-level institutions exploring online and blended learning approaches in the coming years.

The team responsible for this project, Dr. Katrina Lacey and Professor Gerard Wall, were awarded the team award at the annual Teaching Excellence Awards in 2021.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ACADEMIC STAFF USING THE EUROPEAN DIGITAL COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

NUI Galway is a partner in an Erasmus+ project, CUTE: Competences for Universities - using Technology in Education, which is focused on the professional development needs of academic staff in the area of digital teaching and learning. The project uses the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu) and has adapted it to application in higher education, exploring its potential in planning training and professional development needs at individual, departmental, and institutional levels.

One of the challenges of DigCompEdu has been the lack of a well-designed, user friendly means of self-assessing for individuals to identify their position on each of the competency levels and domains. The team at CELT has developed an online, interactive tool which meets this need, and provides instant, visual feedback to the user, does so anonymously, and aggregates results from all those who complete it to enable analysis of the spread of responses. It also helps CELT to plan training and support, and gives staff at NUI Galway an opportunity to make training suggestions pertinent to their school/discipline.

The tool was developed during 2020/21 and has been more widely deployed in 2021/22. It is available openly at https://www.allaboardhe.ie/DigCompEdu/story.html

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY AND BLACKBOARD ALLY AT NUI GALWAY

Blackboard Learn was adopted as NUI Galway's virtual learning environment (VLE) as far back as 2003, but its use did not become widespread until around 2013/14. Since then, there has been an inexorable rise in the number of staff and student users, and the volume and variety of content and activities posted to Blackboard. After COVID-19 forced the sudden closure of campuses in March 2020, the VLE became even more central to student learning and engagement, and the primary gateway to learning materials, activities and assessment for almost all modules at NUI Galway.

Ally for LMS is a piece of software sold by Blackboard that can enhance the accessibility of some materials in the VLE by giving students (and staff) the option of downloading content in alternative formats, and by providing feedback and guidance to instructors on the accessibility of the materials they upload to the VLE. It also provides detailed accessibility data at the institutional level. Although produced and sold by Blackboard, Ally for LMS is 'LMS-agnostic' (that is, it works with most VLEs).

The project team purchased the Ally pilot licence in February 2020 and initially considered a limited rollout of the tool within the College and Schools participating in the Inclusive Learning initiative. Our Information Solutions and Services (ISS) were in the process of onboarding the software, and the project team was starting to develop a training, communications and evaluation plan, when COVID struck. After all teaching and learning moved online overnight, Ally was made available to all NUI Galway staff and students with very little fanfare in March 2020, six days after the sudden closure of our campuses, effectively as an emergency measure. NUI Galway was the first Irish university to make this tool available to students. Despite a relatively soft launch and minimal promotion of the resource to students and staff as the COVID crisis engulfed us, thousands of alternative formats have since been downloaded from NUI Galway's Blackboard site via the Ally tool (we assume mostly by students).

The Ally license was initially purchased for a pilot period before being included in the renewal of the overall VLE contract in June 2020 for a further year. The cost for the period up to June 2021 was €26,307.68. Funding has since been found for a further year's license, which means that Ally will be available to staff and students at least until NUI Galway's overall contract with Blackboard expires in June 2022.

Ally works best with 'static' documents such as Word, PowerPoint and PDF files, as well as images. It cannot generate alternative formats for video or audio content, or produce captions or transcripts for such content. Nor will Ally generate an accessibility score or instructor feedback for audio-visual content.[2]

Alternative formats: Some students require learning materials in different formats to those provided by their instructors, usually due to the impact of a disability. Ally enables users to download files in alternative formats without the assistance of a third party.

The total number of downloads between March 19th 2020 and July 2nd 2021was 82,560. There are a number of points worth noting here:

- We assume that most of these downloads were made by students, but it is not possible to distinguish between student and staff downloads.

- Downloads were made across 4,098 courses.

- Tagged PDFs were by far the most popular alternative format, accounting for 45% of all downloads.

- The project team chose not to enable the translation feature – this would have required extensive prior consultation with language disciplines. Irish/Gaeilge was not one of the languages supported by Blackboard Ally at the time of purchase, an issue that was flagged with Blackboard and has since been resolved.

- The number of braille downloads (1,476) is somewhat surprising, as we are not aware of any active braille users at NUI Galway.

- Not all launches of alternative formats translated into successful downloads. The average conversion rate over the period was almost 58%, but there was significant divergence in this rate over time.

- There were obvious peaks and troughs in launches and downloads of alternative formats over time. Peaks occurred after the initial launch of the tool, during exam periods, and at the start of the new academic year.

Although Ally provides detailed data about the number and types of alternative formats launched and downloaded, there is no way of identifying who has done so (whether staff or students), and the data tells us nothing about the reasons that students (or others) make use of the software tool. The project team conducted two student surveys and a staff survey over the course of the project to attempt to learn more about student awareness and use of Ally and detailed analysis of these surveys will be available in a report on the outcomes shortly.

Given that about 6% of NUI Galway's student population is registered with the Disability Support Service (circa 1,300 students), a small minority of whom rely heavily on screen reader technology, it is highly unlikely that students with disabilities account for the majority of the alternative formats downloaded over the relevant period. Again, however, there is no reliable way to discover what proportion of Ally users have a disability.

The reasons offered by student respondents for using Ally are of particular interest, and they strongly suggest that students with disabilities are a minority of Ally users. The most common reason offered across both surveys was 'just curious/experimenting'. This was closely followed by 'Alternative formats work better on my device'. Anecdotally, we are aware of significant numbers of students accessing Blackboard content via mobile devices (phones and tablets), especially since the closure of campus in

March 2020, and this feedback, along with the popularity of HTML and ePub formats, would seem to support that observation.

Other popular reasons for downloading alternative formats included a desire to interact with digital content (i.e. copy/paste/search/highlight/annotate/bookmark) and a preference for listening over reading. One student remarked that they 'couldn't bring themselves' to read another lecture slide, and another observed that they liked to listen to lectures while walking or multitasking.

Some of the reasons students gave for using Ally we had not anticipated; for example, a number of students mentioned that PDFs were quicker to download, easier to use, and took up less storage space than other formats. One student downloaded documents in alternative formats to reduce the impact of broadband connectivity problems (presumably while also saving on storage space), while another observed that PDFs were more compatible with note-taking software.

One student mentioned that the software didn't read mathematical equations very well. This appears to be a problem with many technical or scientific documents and more work is needed in partnership with the relevant Colleges, Schools and Disciplines, as well as with Blackboard, to address this issue.

Ally for LMS is a powerful tool that has significant potential for enhancing both digital accessibility, and accessibility awareness, at NUI Galway. It also has great potential as a tool for investigating and reporting on compliance with accessibility regulations. However, there is much work to be done to maximise its impact.

NUI Galway has less than one year left with Blackboard Learn as its VLE (and with the Ally license). Now would be a good time to put additional efforts into raising awareness about digital accessibility in the teaching and learning environment, with a view to ensuring that this is a priority for all those who teach at NUI Galway in future.

Until the launch of Ally, responsibility for the provision of alternative formats fell, in the main, to NUI Galway's Disability Support Service, and students who required alternative formats often faced long delays before receiving them. In many ways, the sudden move to online learning necessitated by COVID improved matters: in general and on average, electronic content tends to be more accessible than hard-copy content, although by no means is all electronic content fully accessible by default. The Disability Support Service noticed a dramatic drop in the number of student requests for alternative formats in the 2020/21 academic year. However, the shift to online learning and the consequent explosion in the volume and types of content and activities on the VLE gave rise to new accessibility issues and requests, including inability to follow live or recorded video content due to absence of captions, inability to access audio-only content due to absence of transcripts, and increased requests for transcripts of audio-visual content to aid search and information processing.

One of the difficulties around promoting and supporting accessibility awareness (whether physical or digital) at NUI Galway is that no unit has real ownership of the issue. While short-term initiatives such as

the Inclusive Learning at NUI Galway project are fantastic for getting things started, the purchase, rollout and evaluation of Ally for LMS has underlined a lack of leadership and ownership around accessibility in our University. It is to be hoped that the Universal Design and Access Working Group will work on a long-term and adequately resourced approach to ensuring that NUI Galway meets its accessibility obligations, and will put in place a clear plan for promoting, supporting, monitoring and evaluating the accessibility of our teaching and learning environment (both physical and digital) at NUI Galway. An information and awareness campaign targeted at all students and staff, coupled with digital competence capacity-building initiatives, could go a long way towards improving digital accessibility at NUI Galway.

[1] Video-based learning to enhance teaching of practical microbiology | FEMS Microbiology Letters | Oxford Academic (oup.com)

[2] Ally checks the accessibility of the following formats: PDF files, Word files, PowerPoint files, OpenOffice/ LibreOffice files, uploaded HTML files, image files (JPG, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, TIFF), in addition to WYSIWYG 'What you see is what you get' content. YouTube videos embedded in WYSIWYG or VTBE 'Visual Text Box Editor' content can also be scanned for accessibility, but scores are not available to instructors.