

[Independent College Dublin]

2022

**Annual Quality Report
(Independent College Dublin)**

Reporting Period 2020-2021

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(Independent College Dublin)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2020-2021**

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

Submission Process and Timeline

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

Completing the AQR

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

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

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

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

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

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

Case Studies

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

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

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

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

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

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Independent College for the reporting period **1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021**.

Independent College Dublin is part of, and 100% owned by the Indigo Education Group, which is a fully owned Irish education group. Independent College Dublin is a higher education college specialising in business and law related programmes. Founded in 2007, the college enjoys a central Dublin location, strong collegiate academic and administrative teams, and recruits some of its learners via a small number of high-quality student recruitment partners. The College has enjoyed recent success with reengagement with QQI and the review and validation of QQI validated programmes at Level 8 and Level 9. Moreover, it enjoys a positive reputation in the local market, across a range of business, law and professional courses. In addition, the Group, through its ownership of International House Dublin has offered premium adult and young learner English Language courses since 1998. In 2015, the Group developed and moved to its current campus in Dublin 1 and has invested significantly in the Education sector in Ireland with plans for further expansion over the coming years.

Since 2015, the College has grown significantly, has moved premises, expanded its facilities and overall programme offering. However, this growth has been more significant in relation to increases in the numbers of International Students and the College is keen to broaden its attractiveness in both national and other new markets. With increasing levels of higher education providers offering programmes and courses in a variety of delivery methods, Independent College Dublin is seeking to improve its market positioning, extend its reach, and continue to broaden its offering in key relevant areas.

The Irish Government published the Irish Educated Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020^[1] which included plans to significantly increase the international education sector. This was considered a significant opportunity for the College to grow its academic numbers.

In addition, private colleges perform well in attracting predominantly Irish learners for part-time evening courses, and given future demographics, the College will continue to play an increasingly important role in the delivery of third level education.

Independent College Dublin successfully completed the Re-Engagement Process with QQI in 2019, securing approval of its QA processes and procedures. The approved [Quality Assurance Manual \(QAM\)](#) can be found here and is referred to throughout this Annual Quality Report.

Independent College Dublin's Strategic Objectives are as follows

- Distinct and excellent learner centric education and community
- Sustainable growth and expansion
- Operational excellence in all we do
- Flexible and Distributed Learning (FDL) included optimal use of Blended Learning approaches
- Creativity and Innovation
- Financial Stability

Process for Development and Approval of the AQR

Independent College Dublin appreciates the opportunity to engage with the Annual Quality Reporting process for the first time. This has been a chance for the organisation to formally follow up on activities related to the Re-Engagement process in 2019. This coupled with a period of significant change and development for the College, which includes a body of work relating to policy development, new programme development and preparation for extension of scope to include blended learning.

In terms of completion of the report, initial preparation was carried out by the Registrar and Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Familiarisation briefings were provided by the Registrar at meetings with the Senior Leadership Team, Academic Council and Quality Assurance & Enhancement committee meetings prior to Christmas 2021. Documentation was reviewed by the Registrar, and main areas of responsibility identified and designated.

Following the first AQR meeting in November 2021, the Registrar generated a detailed report and action plan for each section of the report against members of the working group.

The Registrar and Head of Quality and Enhancement then convened weekly to review progress under each area to ensure that the AQR is representative of the wider institution and reflects the input of all relevant stakeholders.

Meetings were held regularly with key stakeholders throughout the AQR preparation period.

The College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee was used to facilitate discussions and to ensure that the AQR is populated with data and information from quality assurance, enhancement and monitoring activities and reports in particular re-engagement. Feedback and suggestions were then collated and reviewed for completeness. A near-final draft of the document was presented to the Quality and Enhancement on 16 December 2021 for consultation and approval. The Independent College Dublin Annual Quality Report was presented for review, recommendations and approval in January 2022 by Academic Council ahead of the QQI deadline on 25 February, 2022.

This Annual Quality Report has been approved by Academic Council and is submitted by **Professor Andrew Deegan, Registrar, Independent College Dublin.**

As per the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016, p.5) Independent College Dublin is aware of the importance of a structure which ensures separation of decision-making powers and approval. In designing its structures and processes Independent College Dublin has also considered governance mechanisms of other higher education institutions in Ireland and the UK, including other similar private higher education providers.

Full details of the governance and management of the college, including key decision making measures, terms of reference, representation of learners and external stakeholders is documented in the [QAM Governance & Management of Quality - Overview](#).

The Governance structures of Independent College Dublin outlined below underpin the College's commitment to quality assurance and enhancement across all its activities. The commitment to appropriate governance is one which is evidenced at all levels within the organisation and is designed not only to ensure that the College is operated in a proper manner, but allows for enhancement, improvement and regular consideration of risk management within the organisation. Overall corporate governance is the direct responsibility of the Board of Directors, the governing authority of the College. The organisational structure for overall corporate governance is shown as follows:



Fig. 1.1 Independent College Dublin Organization Chart

Given the mission of Independent College Dublin as a substantial Higher Education Institute, the issue of academic governance is particularly important due to its key role and importance in the delivery of the College's mission and strategic objectives.

The Board of Directors has delegated the academic governance of the College to Academic Council, with responsibility for developing and maintaining the quality assurance infrastructure, setting and overseeing academic standards, and ensuring compliance with external and internal academic policies and regulations. Academic Council is assisted in this context through the formation of subcommittees to assist in monitoring and decision-making in specific areas of academic activity.

The organisational structure shown below demonstrates the college's commitment to quality assurance and allows for transparency, accountability, reporting and control of quality assurance and enhancement in the College.



Fig. 1.2 Independent College Dublin Quality Assurance Structure

In implementing the governance frameworks outlined above, the following objectives are prioritised by College:

- Clear identification of decision-making responsibilities and accountability
- Independence and autonomy of academic governance
- External objective input to ensure best practice in academic Quality Assurance

- The upgrading of governance structures to a new level of effectiveness in achieving these objectives was enhanced by the QQI Reengagement process.

Reengagement with QQI took place in 2019/2020, the site visit by the Expert Panel taking place in December 2019. Whilst the panel made a number of commendations to Independent College Dublin, they also set out a number of mandatory changes and items of specific advice that were required to upgrade College QA policies, procedures and documentation. Independent College welcomed the comments made by the panel during the panel visit and considerable reflection has taken place since receipt of the report. The college were particularly grateful to the external review panel for their time and thorough exploration of the programmes with respect to areas such as structure, content resources and learner support. The review process identified the many positive aspects of the programmes and highlighted areas and themes for enhancement which the College is committed to sustaining.

Specific advice provided by the panel was also welcomed by College, and relates mainly to strategic issues that are the basis of guidelines that are being progressively implemented by College as it evolves. The mandatory changes were also positively received by the College and implemented in full. Approval for QQI reengagement was confirmed by the panel in September 2020.

Mandatory changes required by the panel are shown in detail in Appendix 1. These changes dealt in detail with aspects of the basic organisational architecture of the College governance system, and the efficacy of the QA documentation. The required changes to QA policy, procedures and documentation were seen as a positive development for the college and an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to ongoing quality assurance and enhancement.

These changes were approved by the Reengagement Panel in June 2020. The strategic impact of the changes is discussed in Section B, 1.1 Strategic QA Updates. Going forward into the next reporting period the College is committed to enhancing the organisational architecture of the College governance system, along with the efficacy of the QA system. It is envisaged that the creation of a new role of Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will contribute significantly to this process. In June 2021, the College appointed Dr. Paula Kenny to this role. Dr. Kenny has considerable experience of quality assurance, academic governance and

enhancement in higher education, nationally and internationally. She has returned from the Middle East to assume the role.

External Stakeholder Representation in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

External Chair of Academic Council

Please refer to QAM [Appointment of External Chair to Academic Council Policy](#)

Independent College Dublin is keenly aware of the value, and indeed necessity, of external input to the strategic, tactical and operational activities of the College.

The College Board of Directors decided that it in order to support this commitment to quality assurance and enhancement that it was crucial to appoint an External Chair to Academic Council. The person appointed would ideally be an academic, highly qualified in areas germane to the Independent College mission and objectives, and should have substantial experience at a senior level of academic governance and quality assurance in higher education. This would potentially reinforce the separation between academic and commercial decision-making in the College, and introduce an effective external independent stimulus to the application, maintenance and enhancement of academic standards in the College.

Dr. Orlaith McCaul an excellent candidate with appropriate levels of qualification at a senior level was located and engaged for the position. Dr. McCaul will bring her theoretical and experiential background in academic governance to bear in the role of Chair of Academic Council in the College.

Her commencement as External Chair of Academic Council is scheduled to commence in October 2021.

Other External and Learner Representation in Academic Committee System

Independent College Dublin has also established the External Quality Assurance Advisory Panel (EQAAP) as part of its commitment to ongoing commitment to quality assurance and enhancement. The EQAAP's main objective is to assess the main academic functional activities of the College and on a rotating basis, to assess the policy and operations of these functional areas from a quality assurance perspective.

This committee comprises one external senior academic as chair, a second appropriately qualified and experienced external academic, and an internal facilitator from the College.

In addition, the College has formed an Industry Advisory Panel to leverage the knowledge of external academic and commercial management in the design of new programmes. This further demonstrates the College's commitment to upholding the highest quality assurance standards in its delivery of programmes as well as its key strategic objectives. The IAP has is vital in ensuring an essential degree of relevance and professionalism in developing learning outcomes and consequent programme syllabi for potential new educational programmes.

Learner representation is provided for in almost all of our academic committees, and this provides a valuable perspective on learner opinion and learner requirements for the College as well as enabling participating learners to gain experience in collaborative representation in governance committees.

Academic Committees and Subcommittees

The committee structure is designed to achieve appropriate accountability throughout corporate and academic governance in the organisation, and in particular to ensure appropriate separation of responsibility and decision-making between academic and commercial functions.

Through this interconnecting and layered group of committees, each with specific terms of reference, the policies and processes essential to the delivery of a comprehensive, effective and transparent quality assurance and enhancement throughout the College are implemented.

Board of Directors

The Board has overall strategic, financial and administrative responsibility for the College which includes operations, corporate governance, quality assurance, financial stewardship and major capital expenditure. This responsibility includes appointing members of the Senior Management Committee, Academic Council and the External QA Advisory Panel. The Board is ultimately responsible for determining and monitoring the strategic direction of the College and ensuring that policies and plans developed by executive management are consistent with this overall strategic direction.

Senior Management Committee:

The Senior Management Committee (SMC) brings together the senior Leaders from across the College.

This Committee is responsible for the day to day running of the College's functions as well as implementing the Strategic and Annual Plans.

Academic Council:

The Academic Council is the most senior academic authority in College, and as such, oversees the academic governance of the College, ensuring compliance with relevant external and internal regulations, policy and quality assurance standards.

Academic Council is chaired by an independent external academic of high standing, currently professionally active, or recently retired, to provide an external benchmark for the quality of academic standards and their implementation in the College, and to further underpin the autonomy of Academic Council with regard to academic policy and decision-making. The current holder of this position is Dr. Orlaith McCaul, an academic with extensive qualifications and experience at the highest levels in academic governance, both nationally and internationally.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee:

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee has responsibility for the monitoring and review of quality assurance policies, procedures and their implementation, and the identification and delivery of enhancements to improve existing QA arrangements in College.

External Quality Assurance Advisory Panel (EQAAP):

The External QA Advisory Panel (EQAAP), established in 2019, has been set up to provide an ongoing external and objective review of College academic governance processes to enhance oversight of academic standards and their implementation.

Programme Board:

Programme Boards are the formal bodies responsible for the ongoing oversight and monitoring of a programme or suite of programmes, in accordance with best practice and the requirements of validating authorities.

College Learner Facilities and Support Systems Committee:

This committee's remit is to ensure College promotion and oversight and oversight of learner well-being through effective support provision ranging from academic and pastoral support through to the availability of appropriate physical and pedagogical facilities essential to a successful learner experience.

Research and Ethics Committee:

The main function of the Research and Ethics Committee is to promote a research ethos in the College and support both staff and students to carry out research of the highest quality and the highest ethical standard as part of the College's research strategy. This committee has responsibility for ensuring that research conducted both by learners and faculty is aligned to quality assurance standards and best practice in conducting research.

Appeals Board:

The purpose of the Appeals Board is to review appeals of examination and assessment grades or challenges or any decision-making committees. This committee has a vital role to play in ensuring that quality assurance mechanisms related to assessments, examinations and grading are fair and follow quality assurance standards.

^[1] <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/International-Education-Strategy-For-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Not applicable

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Please refer to QAM [Design & Approval of New Programme Policy](#)

Overview of Programme Development and Review

A core objective of the Independent College Dublin programme development policy is to achieve the highest possible quality standards by complying with the methodologies set out by the validating bodies. In addition, particularly important areas of emphasis are ensuring that the proposed programme is academically appropriate to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels involved, that the quality assurance framework is robust and comprehensive, that there is a need in the marketplace for the proposed new offering, and that the proposed development and implementation is economically feasible.

Programme Development and Review takes place in Independent College Dublin through a variety of internal mechanisms. For existing programmes, programme monitoring takes place via formal discussion and feedback received through quality assurance reporting and programme boards (held twice a semester). If any proposed changes to a programme are identified (within the scope of validation) these are formally discussed at a programme team level, agreed and approved across the programme team and formally brought to the Quality and Enhancement Committee for review and final approval. The process is laid out in more detail for new programme development below.

New programme development and approval is a seven-stage process for on-NFQ-framework programmes (i.e., externally validated). The systematic seven-stage approach to the development and approval of new programmes is shown as follows.

Stage	Title
1	Programme Proposal Development
2	Programme Development
3	Internal Review and Approval

4	Submission and Pre-Site Visit Arrangements
5	External Validator Panel Visit
6	External Validator Panel Report (for Externally Validated Programmes)
7	External Validating Body Outcome

Stage 1: Programme Proposal Development

New programme proposals are considered at the [Senior Management Committee \(SMC\)](#) in the first instance. They are presented by the Dean. At this initial stage only summary details may be available, however the SMC will be particularly interested to receive information regarding, for example, how the programme fits into the current range of programmes, target audience, availability of internal expertise, delivery modes, financial implications, timescales and validation requirements. The College also seeks the advice and expertise of its [Industry Advisory Panel \(IAP\)](#). The SMC provides feedback to the Dean and approval or otherwise.

If the SMC approves the programme in principle, then the Dean will advise [Academic Council](#) that said programme is being developed with an outline timescale.

Stage 2: Programme Development

If approved by SMC, a Validation Lead and validation team is appointed. The Validation Lead will report to the Dean directly for the duration of the validation.

The Validation Lead and Dean will produce a project plan showing the tasks involved in the validation and key targeted milestone dates (for example, document production date, validation panel date, QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC), and [Interim List of Eligible Programmes](#) application dates). For QQI programmes, the Validation Lead will be informed by [Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, QQI \(November 2017/QP.17-V1.03\)](#). The Validation Lead is responsible for the production of all documentation.

Stage 3: Internal Review and Approval

The Validation Lead will provide a complete set of validation documents to the Dean for review. The Dean will review for completeness and compliance with external validation policy/criteria, as appropriate. The criteria for acceptance are extensive, but relate largely to academic, resourcing, market and feasibility issues, and consistency with overall college mission.

Stage 4: Submission and Pre-Site Visit Arrangements

The Dean will arrange for the new programme documentation to be submitted to the external validation body for initial review to confirm completeness. Some external validating bodies, such as QQI, will confirm to the Dean a proposed panel date, a proposed agenda, and a proposed panel and seek assurance that there is no conflict of interest. Once confirmed by Independent College Dublin, then the College will issue documentation to the panel as required.

Stage 5: Panel Visit

The QQI-appointed external panel will attend the campus having read the documentation supplied. The external panel will meet with senior management from the College and members of the admin and/or teaching team. They may also require a tour of the campus. The panel discussion will be based around a set of criteria as provided by the external validating body. At the end of the panel visit, the Chair of the panel may give indicative feedback as to any recommendations of the panel to the external validating body. A panel report will typically be received by the College following the visit.

Stage 6: Panel Report

The panel's report will be received by the Dean. The report may require the Dean and Validation Lead to write a report in response recommendations and conditions. Once written, the Dean will forward the response to the external validating body. Assuming the panel is satisfied, then the panel's recommendation for validation will be advised to the external validating body for approval.

Stage 7: External Validating Body Outcome

If the programme is approved by the external validating body, a formal document/schedule will typically be provided to the College. The schedule will be reviewed by the Dean to confirm that the information contained within is correct and the latest version, if multiple iterations were provided.

The normal duration of validation of a programme is 5 years for QQI programmes. If the programme was not recommended for validation by the panel this will be noted by the external validating body.

Learner Involvement in Programme Development and Review

Learner input provides valuable information on perceived quality of existing and future programmes in three typical scenarios:

- On an ongoing basis from a routine QA monitoring point of view
- As useful supplementary information ahead of a programme revalidation which may include programme changes
- In the provision of opinions and potential ideas in relation to the development of a new programme

In each of these scenarios, the Dean, validation teams and programme leaders as appropriate consult and take into account learner views and suggestions. This process takes place through regular learner feedback, and through joint academic/learner brainstorming sessions.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Please refer to QAM [Admissions, Transfer & Progression to Further Studies Policy](#), [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)

Overview

In the admission of learners to its programmes, and associated transfer and progression matters, Independent College Dublin's policy is based on compliance with the following:

[Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training \[NQAI 2003, Restated 2015\]](#)). Independent College Dublin commits to an admissions, transfer and progression to further studies policy that is fair, transparent, and merit based. In pursuing this policy, the College commits to providing the fullest relevant information to prospective candidates, applicants and registered learners on access, transfer and progression issues.

Admission to Programmes of Education

Each programme will have clearly stated entry requirements. These will be confirmed and validated as part of the programme validation process. In the various marketing and public information media the College uses to describe its programmes, including the College website, the fullest possible information is made available to prospective learners. The [College website](#) shows the most up-to-date entry requirements for each programme.

It is College policy to individually interview all applicants for places on College educational programmes. Independent College Dublin will always make every effort to ensure that any applicant (having met the course entry requirements) with a disability can participate in the programme, as far as is reasonably possible, and as the College facilities and resources permit. See [Learners with Additional Needs Policy](#) for additional information.

The majority of applications are currently made directly to the College. As a result, the [Admissions Officer](#) (admissions@independentcolleges.ie) is the first point of contact for the College for the majority of applicants. This stage is particularly important for international students or students requiring any special assistance.

All information provided to potential learners must be approved in advance of publication or issued through the approval process that requires the sign off from the [Registrar](#) following confirmation of accuracy from the [Dean](#).

The applicant will be informed as soon as possible of an unsuccessful application for a programme and the reasons for the rejection.

Should the applicant wish to appeal they may do so by following the [Appeal Application](#) process, details of which are available in the Learner Handbook, and QAM, within 5 working days to the Registrar (registrar@independentcolleges.ie) with any additional evidence that may support their application.

Every appeal will be assessed by the Registrar, and the applicant will be informed of the outcome usually within 5 working days (this may vary depending on each individual case). If the appeal, and therefore the application, is rejected, the rationale will be communicated in writing to the applicant. The applicant has no further right of appeal.

Transfer

The College accepts external transfer learners and the relevant admission level for each application will be determined based on the previous achievement, and comparison of previous

relevant module attainment, with particular reference to prior attainment of learning outcomes as appropriate to the [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\) level](#) in question. Such transfers will be considered by the Dean. Transfer from Independent College Dublin to another institution will be facilitated through the provision of transcripts of results. Academic guidance will also be offered to assist the learner.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Independent College Dublin's policy is informed by the following: [The Principles and Operational Guidelines for The Implementation of a National Approach to Credit in Irish Higher Education and Training \(NQAI\) June 2005, republished by QQI in 2015](#) . Independent College Dublin commits to a RPL policy that is fair, transparent and merit-based. In pursuing this policy, the College commits to providing the fullest relevant information to applicants and current learners.

RPL for Entry/Advanced Entry

RPL is advertised to all applicants and can be sought for admission to a programme, advanced entry to a programme or exemptions from part of a programme.

RPL for Exemptions

Exemptions from modules may be sought by applicants or current students. Applicants should identify their intentions at the point of enquiry / application and will be directed to the Dean or appropriate Programme Leader.

Current students should approach the Dean or Programme Leader directly and outline their intentions to apply for exemptions. Such approaches should be undertaken in a timely manner to allow for an exemptions application to be completed prior to the module(s) commencing. Retrospective applications will not be considered.

As per [QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013](#), if a module exemption is being sought which contributes to the overall award classification, a grade must be awarded for the award to be classified. Where a grade cannot be awarded an unclassified award is made. There may be circumstances where the learner may be advantaged by waiving their right to exemption.

RPL for Award

A learner may achieve a minor or special purpose award (maximum of 30 credits) on the basis of previously acquired formal learning for which they do not have a formal QQI (or similar) certificate. Once the evidence and application form are received the Dean or appropriate Programme Leader will assess the application (this will be informed by the programme documentation).

A grade for exemption should only be awarded where a fair, consistent and transparent process for grading can be applied. The decision will be communicated to the applicant who may accept the decision or appeal.

A learner can appeal the decision on the following grounds:

- The decision-making process did not properly address their case.
- There was procedural irregularity in the completion of the decision-making.

Note: the introduction of new material that could have been provided previously to inform decision-making will not normally be accepted as valid grounds for appeal.

Should the applicant wish to appeal the decision they should complete the Application to Appeal within 5 working days and send to the Registrar (registrar@independentcolleges.ie).

Disagreement with the decision is not grounds for appeal. The Registrar will review the appeal including any additional supporting evidence that has been allowed and normally communicate the result of the appeal in 5 working days. This decision will be final.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Not Applicable

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Teaching, Learning and Assessment is a strategic area of development for the College. Independent College Dublin is committed to further increase its professional education programmes along with specialist, skills-based programmes responding to industry demand

and Irish state initiatives. The College has increased digitisation of the campus and committed to maximising the use of technology to enable and enhance teaching and learning.

Please refer to QAM [Teaching & Learning Policy](#)

Teaching and learning structures, standards and implementation are based on best practice in education and training as evidenced by a wide range of authoritative publications, including:

- [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\) 2015](#)
- [ECTS Users' Guide 2015 European Commission](#)
- [Understanding the National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\) QQI](#)
- [Bologna Framework](#)

Independent College Dublin's award structures conform with the three-cycle degree plus diploma model adopted by the [Bologna framework](#). Knowledge, skill and competency level requirements for learners are mapped to the appropriate award levels as per the [National Framework of Qualifications](#). All the module workloads are specified in terms of ECTS ([European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System](#)) credits.

Independent College Dublin's overall policy for teaching and learning is informed by the following main considerations:

- Adherence to best practice in international higher educational and training standards
- An alignment strategy that effectively integrates College activities across the entire educational cycle from institutional objectives through to higher education and training programme delivery
- A learner-centred and learner-active teaching/learning approach
- A clear focus on educating for employability
- Comprehensive and consistent academic support for learners
- Targeted and rigorous staff recruitment and development policies
- Ongoing review and quality assurance of implementation of teaching and learning

Independent College Dublin recognises that teaching and learning has moved from traditional content-centred approaches to methods that emphasise Learner-Centred Learning. The College encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning to the greatest extent that is desirable and/or practical. The teaching and learning process, which is essentially learner-centred, will encourage and develop active learner participation that is conducive to beneficial personal development by the learners.

The objectives of Independent College Dublin, therefore, encompass a teaching and learning process that is characterized by diverse methods that result in balanced, manageable learner workloads, and experiential learning, oriented towards the development of independent active learning approaches by learners.

Peer group review sessions take place to evaluate the effectiveness of some of these methods, and peer group output is an important element of formulation and adaptation of the College's teaching and learning strategy (see [Groupwork Policy](#) and [Learner Feedback Policy](#) for additional information).

The teaching-learning process is supported and enhanced by a philosophy that maintains an appropriate balance of individual and group participation to achieve the learning outcomes. The lecturing staff obviously comprise an essential component in delivering on the College objective of operating, and continuously monitoring and improving, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Substantial guidance on this is provided in the [Lecturer Handbook](#), particularly on topics such as learner group dynamics and management, best-practice teaching strategies, and rationale and implementation of peer group assessment. The handbook also contains detail for the lecturer on a range of other guidance such as exam paper submission, use of the [Virtual Learning Environment](#) (VLE), and relevant College policies.

Educating for Employability

An important goal for Independent College Dublin is the design of programmes and modules which are informed by an appropriate balance of best-practice academic considerations and the employability-related skills development as needed in current and prospective labour markets. See [Alumni Policy](#) for additional information.

Learner Workload

Learner workload is the amount of time spent by learners on study, including both scheduled contact time (lectures, tutorials, laboratories, workshops, etc.) and individual (or group) independent study, and is measured through the [allocation of ECTS credits](#). Where a [Programme Board](#) determines that the overall workload for a particular learner in a particular semester or academic session is unsustainable, the Programme Board will require such a learner to adjust their workload.

Integrated Alignment across Institutional Strategy, Programme Design, Module Design, and Implementation

Learner objectives for programmes and modules are specified in terms of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are specified to be comprehensive, focused, relevant, achievable, and demonstratable by learners. Learning outcomes are cohesive and are applicable at both the programme and module level. Learners are provided with clear opportunities to achieve, and are required to demonstrate that they have achieved, the required learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are specified with reference to both the programme and module aims and are consistent with the levels of knowledge, skill, and competence associated with the stage level in the related National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

In designing modules, module aims, as represented in learning outcomes, are mapped to appropriate module assessment components. It is a mandatory programme design requirement that all of the programme learning outcomes are achieved through the aggregate of the module learning outcomes (see Design & Approval of New Programme Policy and Annual Programme Monitoring & Programme Modification Policy for additional information).

An essential requirement is that learners are fully informed on the detail of the learner outcomes, and how they are achieved, before the start of a programme of study. This is ensured by a combination of factors:

- The [Programme Handbooks](#) detail expected learning outcomes
- Lecturers distribute specific module descriptors to learners
- The [Virtual Learning Environment](#) (VLE) also displays the expected learning outcomes for each module.

The programme learning outcomes, or Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs), underpin the programme aims and objectives and ensure alignment with the institute strategy. Thus, there is a clear linkage from institutional strategy all the way through to assessment.

Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning

Learner Feedback: Learner feedback on all programmes and their delivery is obtained from learners twice per semester, the first in the early stages of the semester, and the second towards the end of semester.

Programme Boards: One of the primary supports for academic management in maintaining and upgrading the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is through the Programme Board.

Duties of this Board include, but are not limited to:

- Monitor the implementation of the programmes of study in accordance with the Programme Document and Approved Programme Schedule
- Address issues that may arise from time to time with student performance in individual modules or with the programme as a whole
- Review learner feedback, formal and informal, on the programme, and carry out action as appropriate
- Assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods and procedures as applied to the programme and make recommendations for improvements where necessary to Academic Council.
- Monitor and manage good assessment practice, including ongoing coordinated planning of assessment, and regular assessment feedback to learners

Assessment

Independent College Dublin operates assessment, assessment regulations, and QA policy to reflect the good practice guidelines of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\), 2015](#), as evidenced in the Independent College Dublin policies and procedures for Assessment. The assessment policy outlines Independent College Dublin's approach to assessment and summarises the assessment regulations applied.

The types of assessment employed and contribution to the overall grade are decided as part of the Programme Assessment Strategy during Programme Design and Validation.

Independent College Dublin's programmes leading to QQI awards are governed by the [QQI Assessment and Standards, revised 2013](#), the assessment regulations of Independent College Dublin and the approved programme schedule of the programme in question. Any special regulations are articulated on the approved programme schedule as part of the validation process and are communicated to learners at the outset of their studies and as part of the assessment brief.

In accordance with QQI Assessment and Standards, Independent College Dublin assessment practice supports the following principles:

- Learners are responsible for demonstrating their achievement
- Assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes
- Assessment promotes and supports effective learning and teaching
- Assessment procedures are credible
- Assessment is fair
- Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements
- Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed

Assessment Strategy

Assessment in Independent College Dublin is learning outcomes focused with the learning outcomes having been interrogated for their suitability as part of the programme validation process. The learning outcomes for Independent College Dublin programmes are documented at module and programme level, reflecting the framework level applicable.

Assessment feedback provided to learners should be learning outcome focused indicating how the outcomes may be more fully addressed or how they may be exceeded.

All assessments are subject to the assessment regulations of Independent College Dublin and the results of these assessments are reported to the [Examination Board](#).

Grading of Assessments

Marking of assessments is based upon the extent to which learning outcomes have been attained or exceeded. There must be a clear, demonstrable relationship between the learning outcomes and the mark awarded. Except where otherwise stated, learners must submit their assessments via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) - [Moodle](#).

Details of the allocation of marks, in line with the marking scheme, must be clearly apparent to second markers, external examiners and learners, as appropriate. Internal moderation and external examination of a sample of all assessments takes place as standard in Independent College Dublin.

Recheck, Review and Appeal Policies

Independent College Dublin appreciates that there may be occasion when learners may wish to question the assessment grade and/or feedback they receive on their assessment. The College is committed to ensuring assessment procedures are reliable, valid, accurate and fair and therefore implements appropriate procedures to facilitate learners to seek a view, recheck, review, or appeal of an assessment decision. All requests to view, recheck, review, appeal (as defined below) and disputes will be addressed in a fair, transparent, and timely fashion. The outcome of a recheck, review or appeal may result in an increase, decrease, or no change of the original marks received.

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures

Independent College Dublin is fully aware of the increasing challenges to academic integrity through several factors, notably the accessibility and extent of previously published material on the web. Breaches of academic integrity in the submission of academic material may be deliberate, or may be at least partly due to a misunderstanding of good academic practice in this context.

A major support for learners in understanding the nature and potential consequences of academic misconduct is provided by the College through [\(re\)induction sessions](#) for new and returning learners, refresher sessions on the topic, and reiteration by academic staff during regular classes and tutorials.

The Quality Assurance Manual provides substantial guidance in this area, and College policies explaining the position on prevention, detection, communication and penalties, and the appeal process, if activated, are covered in detail.

External Examining

External examining provides an important external perspective on the quality of assessment in the College. The subject external examiner is copied in the first instance with examination

papers and model solutions for comment and required modification if necessary. S/he will subsequently review the grades of internal examiners, and form a view on the appropriateness or otherwise of the grades in question. This may, or may not, trigger a revision of some grades at the Examination Board meeting. The external examiner is required to furnish an annual report to college, which essentially addresses in detail the adequacy or otherwise of the examination(s) in question, which will be dealt with by the QAE committee and Academic Council.

Examination Boards

Please refer to QAM Examination Board Policy

[Examination Boards](#) are responsible for the monitoring and moderation of the assessment process, for determining learner progression, award eligibility, and the classification of awards. These decisions are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Approved Programme Schedule as set out in the validated programme document and the [Programme Handbooks](#). The Board is accountable to the [Academic Council](#), and its decisions remain provisional until approved by that body.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Introduction

As part of our CoVID-19 Contingency arrangements lectures moved online rapidly. Investment was made in terms of hardware, software and ongoing CPD training and support (staff & lecturers) and supporting learners (access support and pastoral care). Staff, faculty and learners are positively disposed to online/blended/hybrid delivery.

Independent College has drafted a policy on online/ blended delivery as part of its intention to seek extension of scope in terms of delivery of its programmes validated by QQI.

Please refer to [QAM Section 08](#): provides details of the resources, infrastructure and supports provided to learners. To ensure a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment a standard of conduct is necessary on the part of learners, staff and faculty.

- Learner Supports, Conducts, Appeals & Complaints - Introduction
- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)
- [Induction of Learners Policy](#)
- [Learner Refund Policy](#)
- [Learners with Additional Needs Policy](#)
- [Library Policy](#)
- [Misconduct Policy \(Non-Academic\)](#)
- [Pastoral Care Policy](#)
- [Premises & Facilities Policy](#)
- [Protection of Enrolled Learners Policy](#)

Care and support policies, procedures and services are intended to enhance each learner's experience of education by providing supports focused on the development of the whole person - academic, professional and personal. Working alongside academic policies, they foster equality and fairness, providing inclusive provisions for an increasingly diverse learner population.

The College supports this through its commitment to the provision of adequate and appropriate academic supports to learners to facilitate them in successfully completing their studies.

College Physical and Technical Infrastructure

Premises

In 2015, the Group developed and moved to its current campus in Dublin 1 and has invested significantly in the education sector in Ireland with plans for further expansion over the coming years.

The College campus is home to over 25 lecture rooms all equipped with computers and AV equipment. Dedicated study-rooms and a modern library are available to learners throughout the year. Additional dedicated study rooms are made available to learners during reading weeks and examination periods. There is also a multi-faith room in the College.

Information Technology Resources

The ICT infrastructure is subject to regular review as technology develops and new technologies emerge.

Computer Labs

There is currently one computer lab in the College. Due to the increased demand on the current computer lab as a result of the inclusion of new IT modules and subject pathways, the College is committed to the creation of a further computer lab to satisfy future teaching and research demands. This is also intended to maintain the open lab access availability for learners who are not in a timetabled class and wish to use IT facilities on a casual basis.

Software required for teaching is installed on the PCs in the lab and in all classrooms. All learners have access as registered students both privately and via the lab to Moodle (the VLE) and to the electronic library databases.

As technology is ever evolving, the platforms, software and resources are reviewed regularly to ensure learners provided with up-to-date ICT support via the College's IT strategic partner.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The VLE at Independent College Dublin (Moodle) is an important and ongoing source of communication between the College and the learners. It is the main medium for non-personal interaction between lecturers and learners, and supports continuing dialogue particularly in the areas of teaching, learning and assessment. The VLE is a core component in any online or blended learning activities conducted by College.

Content is authored by various academic staff (lecturers, module leaders, Programme Leaders, Dean), and is managed by the library team, and overseen by the Librarian.

Independent College Dublin Library Resources

Independent College Dublin library comprises a physical library at the premises in Dublin 1 and an extensive online library which is accessible via the Library Website. Independent College Dublin Library is an institutional member of the Library Association of Ireland and of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK. The library employs one professionally qualified librarian plus one library assistant plus a number of support staff when required.

The main library collections support the College programmes in Law and Business at the undergraduate and post graduate level. Reference assistance is available via email and on a walk-in basis. The Librarian is also available for research assistance and support on a range of matters including use of Moodle, academic writing, and research issues.

The physical library is open 5 days a week from 9 am until 5pm Monday to Thursday and from 10am until 5pm on Friday. The online library is available 24/7 on and off campus.

Library Resources and Services

Number of staff	One full time staff (all professionally qualified librarians with a master's qualification in librarianship) plus one library assistant. There is access to support staff at busy periods.
Institutional and Personal Membership	Library Association of Ireland, The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK, Edugate Federation (HEAnet), Business Librarians Association
Study Rooms	There are three collaborative study rooms in the premises at Foley Street. Additional available rooms can be booked

	via the library or the College Operations Manager as needed.
Electricity Supply	Additional power points have been added to allow for learners to charge their portable electronic devices.
Books	500 print titles, over 17,000 e-books via Dawson era/EBSCO e-books/Westlaw cases, e-books, journals.
Journals	35 print titles and 53,774 e-journals available via A-Z software
Electronic Resources	Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Cataloguers Desktop, Computer and Applied Sciences Complete, Dawson era, Greenfile, Film and Television Literature Index with Full Text, Hospitality and Tourism Complete, JSTOR, Justcite, Justis, Lexis Legal, Library and Information Science Source, Mintel, MTA MOAC e- books, Passport, Pep Archive, PsycArticles, Proquest Central, RDA Toolkit, Regional Business News; SOCIndex, WARC, Westlaw IE, Westlaw UK
Inter-Library Loans Services	Various interlibrary loan options were investigated including the British Library before an interlibrary loan agreement was made with Athlone Institute of Technology.
Photocopiers	1 photocopier. Photocopiers are also networked for printing. They also offer high quality colour photocopying and printing.
Printing software	Papercut

Academic programmes at Independent College Dublin's are supported by a range of electronic databases, including:

- Westlaw IE (Thomson Reuters)
- Westlaw UK (Thomson Reuters)
- Business Source Elite (EBSCO)
- Dawson Era Books Online Link to Library Catalogue
- Open Access Journals
- SAGE Research

Standard Library Services available to patrons include:

- Athens/ Moodle Support
- Photocopying and Printing
- Loans, short loans, library reserves and bookings.
- Inter-Library Loans service
- Query Desk/Walk-In Reference Help
- Information Literacy Program
- Library Subject Guides

Library Resources for Business

In addition to its print and e-book collection (via Dawson Era and EBSCO), the library subscribes to the databases Regional Business News and Business Source Elite, which provides digital access for over 1000 business publications.

Library Website:

The library website can be accessed through a link on the College website (<https://independentcolleges.ie/current-students/library/>). The site has a content management system in place, and displays library information in a user friendly and intuitive fashion. Until the new library website is fully complete, resources to assist learners some existing services such the essay writing process; referencing, avoiding plagiarism and more are available on the library's Moodle page.

Plagiarism Detection Software:

For a number of years, the College has used the plagiarism detection software package Turnitin. The library has played a leading role in promoting Turnitin in the College as a tool in dealing with plagiarism, and in upskilling learners and lecturers on the appropriate application of the package, and how it should be used in a positive fashion to preserve academic integrity and improve the quality of research.

The Library Information Literacy Programme and a reference assistance programme delivered by library staff, are designed to allow library patrons to use the library content effectively and ethically. A complementary objective is to enable learners to research effectively with an outreach to lecturing staff.

The library also operates a well-established Collection Development Policy which was one of the recommendations of the external 2018 Library review.

The Learner Experience

The Learner Experience and Careers Manager (LECM) works to enhance the experience of learners at all stages in their journey through Independent College Dublin by providing a range of support services in a learner-friendly, accessible way. The objective is to ensure Independent College Dublin learners have the best possible College-life experience and to promote a community and culture that is focused on learner wellbeing and success.

The LECM coordinates the provision of services to learners. This covers a wide range of supports from pastoral care and counselling to careers events to wellness supports such as yoga and meditation for learners.

The LECM is often the first port of call in dealing with a learner issue, be it academic or non-academic. Such issues are dealt with promptly and sympathetically, and the LECM ensures that they are correctly routed for resolution if outside the remit of the LECM.

A primary goal of the LECM and support team is to contribute to healthy levels of learner retention and progression through continuing enhancement of the learner experience.

The Learner Experience and Careers Manager and support staff help to:

- Provide advice and support to learners on sourcing accommodation.
- Assist learners with any concerns regarding their health and wellbeing.
- Enable learners to run clubs and societies.
- Facilitate connections for learners with cultural and other support organisations.
- Assist international learners in acquiring and renewing learner visas.
- Lead the development and maintenance of an Independent College Dublin fraternal community amongst both learners and alumni.

- Work with employers as a means of sourcing placements and jobs for learners.
- Source and provide up-to-date information about fields of work, job vacancies, postgraduate courses and research opportunities.
- Provide relevant advice, guidance and opportunities for learners and graduates to understand their competencies, aspirations and options that will enable them to develop the necessary skills to successfully seek employment.
- Organise Careers Events throughout the Academic Year such as CV Clinics. The College at various times facilitates lunchtime sessions for learners with an external consultant who specialises in CV and LinkedIn workshops.

These services are provided impartially, confidentially, efficiently and free from discrimination, adhering to national codes of good practice and professional standards.

Disability and Learning Support

Independent College Dublin is committed to ensuring, as far as possible and within the framework of current legislation that all learners are supported to reach their academic potential and become independent learners. If a learner has any of the following disabilities, he/she is encouraged to register with the College Operations Manager and avail of a range of support that may assist him/her at the College:

Categories of Disability

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Blind/Visual Impairment
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Mental Health Condition
- Neurological Condition
- Neurologically based Speech, Language or Communication condition
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Physical Disability
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (Dyspraxia)
- Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)

In order to register with the College Operations Manager to avail of disability/learning support, a learner must provide verification of a disability with supporting documentation at the beginning of a Stage. Supporting documentation shows what the disability, significant ongoing illness, Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD) or mental health condition is and how it affects him/her. If a learner has an SLD. e.g., dyslexia, then an Educational Psychologist's report of not more than 5 years old which clearly states that the learner has an SLD must be submitted. If a learner has any other disability, he/she must provide a report from an appropriately qualified consultant or specialist.

Evidence of a Disability

There are a range of supports available for learners with enduring disabilities in the Independent College Dublin. To access these disability supports, evidence of each disability must be provided. The evidence of disability provided is used to assess the impact of said disability and ensure each learner gets appropriate support.

Support for learners with short term or temporary disability/issues

For learners who experience a short term or temporary disability/issues, there are other learners' services available for example: Student Counselling Service and the guidance of the LECM.

Academic Supports

A primary college goal is to ensure that learners are properly supported in their academic progress with a view to success overall in their chosen qualification.

An important feature of this support is the induction and reinduction sessions provided at the start of each semester.

These are extensive and informative, particularly so for Stage One learners, but also for continuing learners. In addition to information on college facilities and programmes, explanatory materials on issues such as academic impropriety and its avoidance are routinely provided in these sessions.

Other Support Offered

After learners have provided the relevant documentation, the necessary support will be resourced and provided as appropriate, e.g., additional time during exams, use of scribes, literacy support, etc.

Learner engagement and participation

Independent College Dublin fully commits to encouraging and facilitating learners to engage and accept responsibility in academic and related activities as appropriate. Each learner cohort elects two representatives, termed 'Senators', one to represent fellow learners on academic issues, the other on non-academic issues. The senators form a useful channel between learners and staff for communication in both directions for conveying useful information, for example learner attitudinal data on new College developments, and clearing any possible misunderstandings. In addition, learner representation on the academic committees is encouraged and provided for (typically one undergraduate and one postgraduate learner), with the exception of Programme Boards and Examination Boards.

College Facilities and Learner Support Services Committee

Please refer to QAM Section 03 [Quality Assurance Policy](#)

The basic objective of this committee is to monitor compliance with the relevant resourcing and access requirements for effective learner support, and report to Academic Council on the extent to which these requirements are achieved in College, and how they might be improved.

The terms of reference of the committee span the whole range of learner support from physical and technical support on campus, including infrastructure for remote provision, to qualitative specialist supports in both academic and non-academic areas.

Membership of the committee is drawn from a wide range of academic and support personnel, together with a learner from undergraduate, and a learner from postgraduate programmes.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Independent College Dublin provides staff with access to resources, expertise, and support to engage in and with scholarship, professional development, innovation and research having confirmed it is relevant to the activities of the College. The College promotes a culture of collaborative professional learning; encouraging the dissemination of new knowledge with peers through a variety of dissemination activities including presentations, learning lunch seminars, “virtual cuppas”, townhalls, conferences, and workshops.

As part of the [\(Re\)Induction](#) event for all staff prior to the start of the semester, there is a provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). All new staff are required to attend, and current staff are strongly encouraged to attend.

The College also encourages applications for further study, up to and including PhD level, and can offer financial support for this. Attendance or presentations at conferences is also actively promoted at (Re)Induction and throughout the semester by email from the Dean and support is also provided for this.

Through the annual faculty review, faculty have the opportunity to be involved in the identification of development needs and their personal career development plans.

Research in Independent College Dublin is overseen by the Research and Ethics Committee, a subcommittee of Academic Council. The Research and Ethics Committee is made up of research active faculty from across the College who represent various disciplines including law, business, marketing, management, finance and information systems, along with staff who support research including the Registrar, Dean, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and a Programme Leader.

The Independent College Dublin Research and Ethics Committee oversees and promotes a research ethos, along with support and good practice in ethical research. It supports staff and students to carry out research of the highest quality and highest ethical standard. The committee contributes significantly to quality assurance of College research activities through its development of Independent College Dublin’s research and ethics policies and procedures. The Committee also has responsible for reviewing and approving undergraduate, postgraduate research, and staff research and ethical proposals.

The Research and Ethics Committee deals with undergraduate and taught masters' research and is required to ensure that proposed research/projects are in line with the ethical guidelines outlined in this policy document. It is Research and Ethics Committee's responsibility to develop detailed research and ethics policies and to oversee and refine procedures.

The Research and Ethics Committee will promote the welfare of all human and animal participants while at the same time respecting academic freedom. These may include:

- The confidentiality of information provided by those taking part in the research
- The anonymity of the respondents
- Any consent which may be required
- The transparency to both researchers and those taking part in the research as to the purpose, methods, application of the research and any risks involved
- Arrangements for the publication of the results, including issues of co-authorship
- Legal restrictions governing access to or the use of research resources and data
- Terms of Reference and the composition of the committee [can be found here](#).

In August 2021 the Research and Ethics Committee in collaboration with the School of Business held its first research symposium entitled the "The Research Journey". This one-day symposium was made up of faculty and postgraduate presentations followed by q&a sessions. The event was hugely successful and they are plans to run the event bi annually.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Staff constitute one of the most critical resources in delivering the objectives of Independent College Dublin. Independent College Dublin consistently recruits, develops, and reviews the performance of high-quality and high-potential academic and non-academic staff to contribute fully to the design, development and delivery of the College's portfolio of programmes. A well-functioning academic staff complement has a particularly important role to play in the stimulation of a culture of innovation and enterprise necessary to continuously add value for all stakeholders in a constantly changing and increasingly competitive higher education sector.

Recruitment

The Dean prepares an annual plan for the staffing of all programmes. This plan is based on projected programme staffing needs and will also consider medium-term requirements. The [Senior Management Committee \(SMC\)](#) reviews and finalises [draft staff plans for the upcoming academic year](#).

The decisions to recruit are made in response to clearly identified need within the College, although in some cases, requirements can be satisfied through reallocation of existing staff.

When the need for a new employee is identified and agreed, a job specification and person specification are produced for the position. A job specification will be drafted by the Dean in conjunction with the most appropriate [Programme Leader](#) (as appropriate). This will set out the detail of the position in terms of its objectives, duties, and reporting responsibilities. The person specification sets out the requirements of the job in terms of the technical, personal and experiential qualities needed by the successful candidate.

A critically important element of the person specification is that relating to the required academic qualification(s) for the position in question. A minimum requirement is that the successful candidate should normally be academically qualified to at least one [National Framework of Qualifications](#) (NFQ) level above the module(s) that he or she will teach.

For modules of a substantially professional nature, such as accountancy or legal studies, it is a requirement that potential appointees hold an appropriate professional qualification.

Given the importance of preparing graduates for employability, business or practitioner experience is a heavily weighted factor in the assessment of applicants for academic staff positions. Personal attributes, such as communication and presentation skills, and interpersonal skills, such as the ability to work in teams, are similarly highly regarded in the selection process.

An increasing consideration in the person specification is the candidate's propensity for research/advanced scholarly activity. The College view is that teaching informed by research can significantly improve the quality of the programme, resulting in several qualitative benefits. These include more interesting educational content, better learner engagement, sounder and more effective stimulation and management of learner research projects. In addition, more satisfying and career-developmental opportunities are afforded to research-active academic staff.

Once a position has been approved, the Dean plays a lead role in the sourcing of potential candidates. The objective is to target the widest possible pool of potential applicants and to ensure that all candidates, internal and external, have equal access to the College's positions. Selection is based purely on merit. A criteria-based selection approach is adopted by an interview panel which is clearly set out and applied consistently to all candidates. An interview panel is normally made up of the Dean, a Programme Leader and the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement⁰. The College aims to have a balanced interview panel (gender, age, background, etc.) and will review membership prior to each interview to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

Staff (Re)Induction

All new staff receive an induction by the Dean and/or the relevant Programme Leader(s). The main topics covered in this process for academic staff are:

- Introduction to the College
- [College academic structures](#)
- College support systems, in particular the [Virtual Learning Environment](#) (VLE) and [library](#)
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies
- Academic and administration procedures and regulations
- Information on the College equality, diversity and inclusiveness policy

- Terms and conditions of employment, including the provision of the [Employee Handbook](#)
- Expectations in relation to new academic staff, including appraisal/professional development issues
- Overview of safety requirements
- Provision of system access

Prior to the start of each semester a staff (re)induction event takes place where new and existing staff are invited to attend for a day of orientation related to updates on significant changes related to the College (including the [QA Manual](#)). All new staff are required to attend the induction session and current staff are strongly encouraged to attend.

Lecturer Handbook

The [Lecturer Handbook](#) is an important document, revised and published prior to each semester, which contains a range of information for lecturers setting out their rights, responsibilities and the practical support details to enable them to discharge their duties in as professional a manner as possible. This handbook is available to lecturers on the internal shared drive and on the VLE.

Among the important items included in the Lecturer Handbook are:

- Administrative staff and their institutional contact details
- Academic Calendar
- Institutional support facilities
- Lecturer and Learner Codes of Conduct
- Specific lecturer responsibilities in teaching, learning and assessment
- Learner feedback systems
- Attendance monitoring requirements
- Institutional policies, e.g. Academic Misconduct Policy
- Necessary administrative forms, e.g. Advanced Scholarly Activity application form
- List of internal moderators and their institutional contact details

6.0 Information and Data Management

Independent College Dublin recognises the importance of reliable information and data management for a number of purposes.

These include the efficient management of the College's operations, the provision of information for management planning and decision-making, and full compliance with a range of institutional and statutory requirements such as appropriate data retention policies, [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#), provision of information to validation bodies such as [QQI](#), and [Garda National Immigration Bureau \(GNIB\)](#) attendance record-keeping and reporting.

The QA systems are designed to ensure the integrity of information and data management through the various phases of data capture, data storage, data access, data protection and privacy.

The aim of the policy, therefore, is to define and provide a framework to:

- Ensure effective operational management of the College's data processing and record keeping.
- Provide for the generation of accurate, timely and relevant management information for College planning, control, and decision-making.
- Clearly identify accountabilities to ensure the integrity and security of all data captured, stored and used in College information systems.
- Ensure the accurate and timely provision of required information of a regulatory nature to QQI and for other legal/regulatory purposes as required.

In the course of operating its mission to design and deliver approved higher education and training programmes, the College captures, stores, and uses an extensive range of data, much of its personal data, relating to learners, staff and other stakeholders such as applicants, alumni and external contacts of various categories. A core objective of our data protection policy is to ensure full compliance with recently enacted General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) set out in the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).

Personal Data

The term “personal data” refers to any information relating to a living person who is identified or identifiable (such a person is referred to as a “data subject”).

The policy applies to data held by the College, whether in manual, electronic, or other media, and relates to all personal data collected, processed and stored by College, including special categories of personal data (sensitive data) processed in relation to data subjects.

Statement of Commitment

Independent College Dublin ensures that the following requirements associated with GDPR are fully applied in all relevant areas, and most particularly in the context of personal data.

- The College will keep data for purposes that are specific, lawful and clearly stated and the data will only be processed in a manner compatible with these purposes.
- The College will obtain and process personal data fairly and in a transparent manner in accordance with the fulfilment of its functions and its legal obligations.
- Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed.
- Personal data should be accurate and kept up to date; every reasonable step will be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay; College will have procedures that are adequate to ensure high levels of data accuracy and completeness.
- Personal data, in a form that identifies the data subject, should be stored for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it is required. Exemptions in relation to the public interest and research may apply.
- The College will take appropriate security measures against unauthorised access to, or alteration, disclosure or destruction of the data and against their accidental loss or destruction. The College acknowledges that the highest standards of security are essential for processing all personal information.
- Principles of accountability in GDPR emphasise the requirement for College to keep records of data processing activities. Not only is College required to be compliant with the GDPR, but it shall also be able to demonstrate this compliance through clear and well-documented procedures.

Preservation of the Rights of Data Subjects

Under the GDPR legislation, data subjects have increased rights and data controllers are required to notify data subjects of their rights. Individuals have the right to:

- Be informed about the collection and use of their personal data. This applies to situations where the data has been provided by the data subject, and where the data originates from other sources.
- Access their personal data (a data subject access request). This includes information on the nature of the data, its retention period, and the rights of the data subject.
- Have inaccurate personal data rectified or completed if incomplete.
- Have personal data erased in certain circumstances e.g. Where the personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was collected or processed.

- Request the restriction or suppression of personal data in certain circumstances. This may be for legal reasons or pending clarification of the accuracy of the personal data.
- Avail of data portability, allowing individuals to reuse their data across different services, where feasible.
- Object to personal data processing, in certain circumstances. This might apply, for instance, where personal data processing is being used for direct marketing without the data subject's prior consent.
- Exercise specific rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

Personal Data Breaches

A personal data breach is a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. It may be accidental or deliberate.

Under GDPR requirements, breach notification will be mandatory where a data breach is likely to “result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals”. Such data breaches must be [notified to the Data Protection Commission](#) without undue delay and in any event within 72 hours of first having become aware of the breach.

Submission and Processing Procedure for a Data Subject Access Request (DSAR)

A Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) is any request made by an individual for information held about them by College. Applications must be directed to the Data Protection Officer, in the case of Independent College Dublin, the [Group Operations and People Director \(Ops.Director@independentcolleges.ie\)](#). All written DSARs should be addressed to:

c/o Data Protection Officer
Independent College Dublin
Foley Street
Dublin 1
D01 X997

Records Management and Retention

Records, through various media both electronic and hard copy, are captured, generated and stored by the College, and provide evidence, accountability and information on its operations, and the basis for management control, decision-making and planning.

The objectives of Independent College Dublin with regard to records management and retention are to:

- Ensure the validity and integrity of the records in question in order to conduct College activities in an orderly, effective and consistent manner
- Provide for only properly authorised access to organisational records as needed
- Comply with statutory and regulatory requirements,
- Classify record types and develop an agreed retention schedule prior to archiving or destruction as the case may be, and ensure that the latter takes place with appropriate documentation and confidentiality

Identify high-risk record categories and any specific disaster recovery provisions in the event of unanticipated record loss or corruption.

Document Retention Schedule

The Documents Retention Schedule sets out the organisational records created and maintained by College and indicates the minimum length of time they will be retained as active before final disposition. This schedule serves as the legal authorisation for the disposal of records.

The College regularly updates the schedule to deal with new and additional record categories. The Document Retention Schedule provides a mechanism to help ensure the College is maintaining necessary records for an appropriate length of time.

On completion of the scheduled retention time span for a record category, the records in question are disposed of. Disposition involves either secure archiving of the records, or confidential shredding, as set out in the [College Record Retention Schedule](#).

Further benefits of effective records retention include:

- Optimising the use of space
- Minimising the cost of record retention
- Destruction of outdated and useless records

The [Registrar](mailto:registrar@independentcolleges.ie) (registrar@independentcolleges.ie) is responsible for overseeing the development of the records retention schedule with senior managers and other staff members and is responsible for promoting the maintenance and monitoring of the records management system.

An ongoing College Record Retention Schedule provides a detailed overview of the types of records, associated role responsible, the period to be retained, and the final disposition.

Main IT Data Processing Systems

The data processing and information generated to support College operations and management information requirements are described here with reference to the 'learner journey', and the associated organisational information system capability for the main activities therein - application for admission, registration and enrolment, learner engagement, attendance monitoring, management information systems, data maintenance and security. The main subsystems in question here are:

Organisational Function

- Learner Application for Admission
- Learner Registration and Enrolment
- Learner Class Engagement
- Learner Attendance Monitoring

Information Processing Subsystem

- Cognito Forms and MS Excel
- Quercus and Xero
- Moodle, Liberty, Zoom, and Open Athens
- MS Excel

Learner Application for Admission - Cognito Forms and Excel

The first activity through which a student will interact with the College is as an applicant for a College programme. Applicants are directed to the College website where they are required to fill out an application form electronically. This form is hosted on a system called Cognito Forms. Currently, this step is primarily assisted by Excel spreadsheets and digital copies of application forms/files resulting in online application folders.

Learner Registration & Enrolment - Quercus and Xero

After an applicant has been accepted and has paid for the course, they will then be enrolled on our main learner data management system, Quercus. The accounts team manage and reconcile any payment made through the fully GDPR-compliant accounting system, Xero.

Learner Class Engagement - Moodle, Liberty, Zoom, and Open Athens

During the learner academic cycle, Moodle is the primary system which allows lecturers to effectively monitor and engage with learners. Zoom is a cloud platform enterprise video communications system for video and audio conferencing used to stream and record teaching events. The other two systems noted above, Liberty, and Open Athens, are concerned with library lending and library management.

Learner Attendance Monitoring

This is an important function based largely around detailed lecturer attendance recording of learners, and input and analysis and reporting through MS Excel.

Management Information Systems

A comprehensive range of management information is generated by College systems to provide ongoing control of operations and enable informed decision-making and planning. The formal information system-based -reporting and enquiry facility is supplemented by qualitative sources such as learner, staff and external examiner feedback, views of alumni, employers and other external stakeholders, and the outcome of regular QA monitoring processes.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative feedback is essential in monitoring College performance against the College's KPIs (key performance indicators), relating to programme provision, day-to-day operations and College strategic objectives.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A number of the [College's KPIs](#) have been identified across a range of key activities. These include:

- Overall quality control policy and structures
- Educational programme quality in relation to programme structure, content, delivery and assessment
- Learner recruitment and access
- Learner attendance rates
- Learner retention, progression and success.
- Learner satisfaction.
- Staff recruitment, development, and the maintenance of an intellectually satisfying environment
- College financial stability

Role of IT-based systems and processes in generating KPI's

The IT-based systems that are most relevant in generating KPI-focused information are:

- Quercus: The main Learner Management System, is the source of much of the information on learner admission, retention, progression, and learner awards.
- Moodle: The Virtual Learning Environment, which provides the teaching/learning interface between learners and staff.

The other subsystems noted above also play an integral role in providing a range of management information for College.

Information System Maintenance and Security

Information for control, planning and decision-making in the College is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, and emanates from two main sources:

- Reports and feedbacks from the various academic subcommittees, mainly set up by, and reporting to, Academic Council
- Formal and semi-formal IT-based systems delivered through our computer-networked infrastructure, which is maintained technically by an external specialist service provider

The Group Operations and People Director, who reports directly to the College President is responsible for the security and integrity of the IT-based systems. Operational responsibility for these systems is devolved to the College Operations Manager.

This is shown in figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Operational Responsibility for IT-based Systems

IT Systems Security

Security issues in relation to the IT systems are applied as follows.

Quercus

At present, the Quercus system is backed up daily by the IT service provider to the Cloud. If there is a concern regarding data integrity, a previous version of the system can be restored online by the provider.

Quercus has a facility to grant selected members of the administration team restricted local access to various functions depending on their role in the College. At present, this feature is not currently fully utilised, but it can be used more extensively as the team grows, and roles become more specialised. Quercus is not fully GDPR compliant, and options on commissioning bespoke modification to ensure this are being considered, together with other alternatives.

Xero

Xero, the financial accounting system, is fully GDPR compliant and basic accounting information is saved here. System access is restricted to the accounts team, who are the only people that have access to this information. Personal data can be removed/forgotten within 48 hours by one of the accounts team, subject to proper documentation and process.

Daily security backup is conducted as for Quercus.

Cognito Forms

Information entered through Cognito Forms has been retained since the system was installed in 2015, and a seven-year retention period has been set. Cognito Forms is fully GDPR compliant. Student data can be removed/forgotten within 48 hours of the request by one of the admissions team, subject to proper documentation and process. Daily security backups are carried out.

Moodle

Moodle is a cloud-based virtual learning environment (VLE). For assessments, lecturers typically download any learner assessment material to grade it offline, and they also have the option to send digital submissions through to the administration team, so it can be archived and saved on the shared drive for up to 5 years. Any in-class tests can be batch scanned and saved as a single PDF, and these can then be archived on the shared drive. Hard copies of assessments are kept and stored for up to seven years. Personal data can be corrected/suspended/removed/forgotten within 48 hours by the local administrators, subject to proper documentation and process.

In addition, Moodle has a GDPR plug-in that ensures that the product is GDPR compliant. Like other systems, administration access is limited to a small number of authorised key administration staff members - and within Moodle itself, different access and update permission levels can be set up for lecturers, internal moderators, external moderators, learners, and academic leaders.

Zoom

Zoom is a cloud platform enterprise video communications system for video and audio conferencing used to stream and record teaching events. Administration access is limited to a small number of authorised key administration staff members. Access to Zoom recordings is via Moodle.

Liberty

Liberty is currently only accessible to library staff. They are responsible for the recording and maintenance of current learners. The library staff are enabled to initiate requests to remove/forget users within 48 hours, subject to approved documentation and process. Library information systems are subject to the same backup schedules as the other IT-based systems.

MS Excel / MS Word

MS Excel spreadsheets, and MS Word documents are stored on an internal College shared drive accessible only on a 'need-to-know' basis determined by the College Operations Manager. Sensitive documents, such as final examination papers and rubrics, through their various stages of moderation, approval and finalisation, are password protected - with the password transmitted through an alternative medium of communication (e.g., password-protected files are sent by email, but the password by SMS message). For spreadsheets, some are shared via the internal shared drive previously mentioned, but others which require larger numbers of participant-involvement can be shared through an online drive, such as One Drive - but again with selective and restricted access determined by the College Operations Manager.

Specific Security Issues Relating to Assessment Processes and Materials

Basic processes are in place to ensure effective information access and security control.

- Objectives are to ensure that Information users are appropriately identified and have access to information for which they have a legitimate need.
- IT systems are appropriately managed and controlled in line with the requirements of this policy.
- Information assets are identified and protected.
- There is clear assignment of responsibilities, which is particularly important in the case of highly sensitive processes and materials such as those relating to learner assessment.

Security in the Drafting and Production of Examination Papers

The Dean is responsible for security at all times in relation to the production of examination papers. This official should satisfy himself/herself on the processes that include authoring of papers, moderation, external examiner involvement, final approval and related information transmission and storage activities. The number of persons handling draft examination papers through the various stages of the process should be kept at a minimum.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Clear, accurate, up-to-date and accessible information is provided by Independent College Dublin through the publication of a comprehensive range of information about its activities, for the benefit of prospective and current learners and staff, alumni, various other stakeholders in education, business and the professions, and the wider public.

College Web Site

Website content and format are developed under the supervision of the [Group Commercial Director](#), with input from the [Dean](#) or [Programme Leader\(s\)](#) on academic detail. The [Registrar](#) is responsible for assuring the accuracy of the information relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement to be published (with particular regard to QA).

The main vehicle for communicating information to the various target audiences is the College website (www.independentcolleges.ie). This is supplemented by several other mediums, such as hard copy promotional material (including the College prospectus), [learner handbooks](#), [lecturer handbook](#), and [programme handbooks](#). All of the above are available on the web, but some, such as the lecturer handbook, are restricted to internal institutional access.

The College website contains information such as:

- Academic Calendar
- Awarding Bodies
- Calendar and news
- College Library
- Contact details, location and information about Independent College Dublin
- Courses on offer
- Details for Prospective Learners
- Facilities
- How to apply
- Link to Moodle
- Programme Details
- Programme Handbooks
- Protection of Learners
- QA Policy & Procedures
- QA Reports and Evaluations
- Refund Policy
- Staff profiles

Information for Learners and Prospective Learners

Current learners and prospective learners comprise two of the most important target audiences addressed by the College website.

In addition to descriptive information about the institution, its staffing, and its location and amenities, the website deals with essential information regarding the programmes of education and training, including the following:

- Programme titles and award types, validating bodies, NFQ levels
- Programme content, duration and maximum/minimum registration periods
- Admission entry requirements, including description of direct entry opportunities, and applications based on informal and non-formal learning
- Programme fees
- Assessment overviews

All programmes advertised will have been validated by the appropriate bodies, except on rare occasions where the validation/revalidation process is taking place, in which case 'subject to validation' will be made clear on the web site or other information source in question.

The College website has a specific section for international applicants, detailing any requirements relevant to them, in areas such as visa issues, finance, English language requirements, and support services provided by the College for international learners.

The Learner Handbook contains details of procedures for appeals or complaints in relation to current or candidate learners, and also a very clear articulation on College procedures on learner attendance.

The arrangements in place for the [Protection of Enrolled Learners \(PEL\)](#) are also set out on the website.

Learner Handbook

The learner handbook sets out the learner code of conduct, the College policy on access, transfer and progression, harassment and bullying, on equality and diversity, IT services acceptable use policy, and a whole range of other information content of benefit to learners.

This document is produced by the [Head](#) of Quality Assurance & Enhancement, and approved by the Dean and Registrar.

Programme Handbook

Each Programme Handbook provides detailed information for learners on many aspects of the programme modules by stage, on assessment, progression, transfer and awards issues. This document is produced by the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement, and approved by the Dean and Registrar.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The VLE ([Moodle](#)) is an important and ongoing source of communication between the College and the learners. It is the main medium for non-personal interaction between lecturers and learners and supports continuing dialogue particularly in the areas of teaching, learning and assessment.

Content is authored by various academic staff (lecturers, [module leaders](#), Programme Leaders, Dean, managed by the [Librarian](#), and overseen by the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement.

Publication of Quality Assurance Manual and Quality Evaluation Reports

The current [Quality Assurance Manual is available to the public on the College website](#), together with documentation relating to the results of revalidation and re-engagement events with validating authorities.

Relationships with Educational Agents and Other Collaborative Entities

Since international learners comprise an important component of the College's body of learners, relationships with educational agents require comprehensive management to ensure quality assurance in all its aspects.

This applies particularly to the provision of information that is accurate, up-to-date, and easily accessible to the agent and is transparent to all potential consumers. Information so provided must be complete and must be fully representative of College policy and procedures as relevant to potential programme applicants.

It is College policy to maintain close contacts with agents used, and to monitor to the greatest extent possible the accuracy of College-related information provided by agents to target audiences.

A relatively small and selective set of agents is used by the College, and only sustained if a professional and effective trust relationship is seen to be built.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Please refer to:

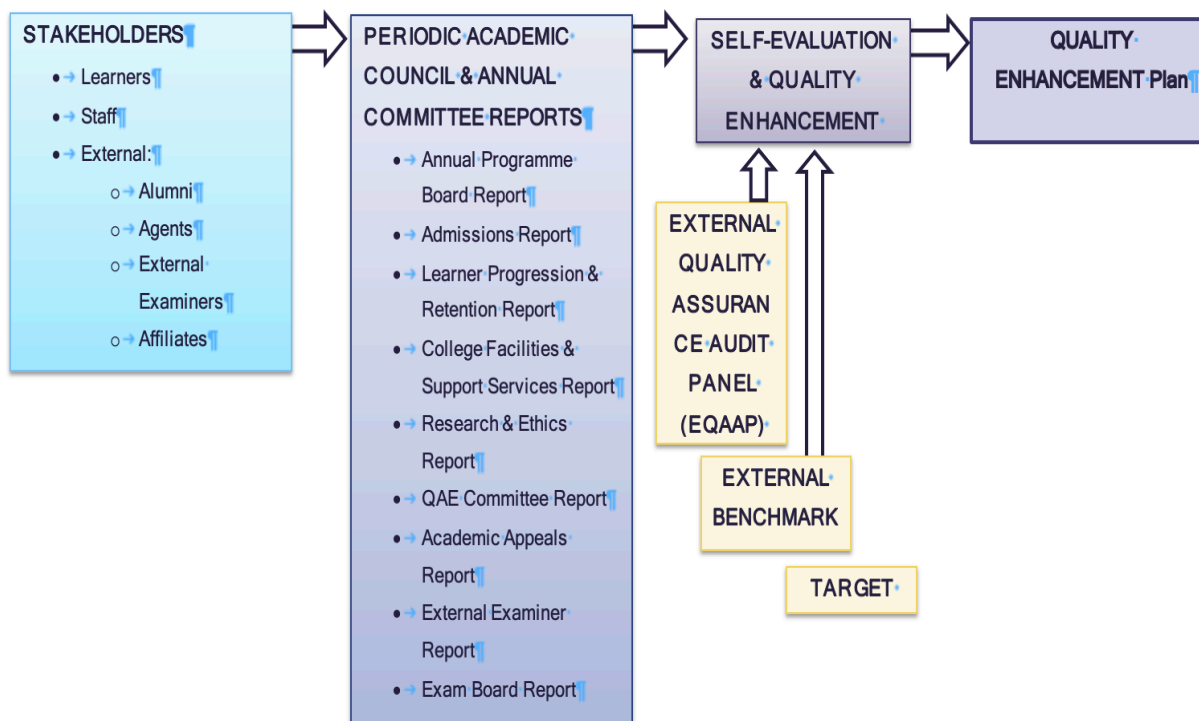
[Annual Programme Monitoring and Programme Modifications Policy](#)

[End of Semester Module Quality Enhancement Report Policy](#)

[Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review Policy](#)

Independent College Dublin conducts an extensive set of scheduled self-evaluation monitoring and review measures to enhance the quality of the management and operation of all of its educational programmes and related activities on both an ongoing and a periodic basis. This process includes the use of both internal and external input to ensure that projected quality levels are being achieved and that quality problems or opportunities are detected and dealt with in a timely and effective manner. Annual monitoring of programmes is included in this process and these are completed as standard through the governance framework and inform the ongoing enhancement and strategic development of the college. Actions are identified and monitored through the Quality Improvement Plan.

ANNUAL QUALITY REVIEW, MONITORING AND ENHANCEMENT PROCESS



Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy

Regular Monitoring and Review

A key element of operational monitoring is the College Operations Meeting, which is held in the College at a fixed time each week. The meeting includes the main College officers from the academic and administration areas, under the chairmanship of the President or a nominated SMC member. Current and upcoming issues in the management and operation of College programmes and other events are discussed in detail. These issues include -

- Academic operations including programme operational updates
- Learner support and communications issues
- Attendance statistics

- Examinations preparation and operation
- Staffing and timetabling issues
- Facilities, environmental and health issues
- QA operational issues, and events
- Admissions and Marketing

The College Operations Meeting enables the management and support group to identify and discuss current and potential problems in good time to take appropriate action. The meeting is action-oriented, and generates an action list for processing by the responsible officers or departments. Position on previous week's action list is the first item on the meeting's agenda. Another important advantage of the approach is that there is extensive information sharing across the group which eliminates potential 'silo' effects and improves service levels to stakeholders overall.

Internal QA Reports and Feedback

These include:

Learner feedback, which is encouraged and facilitated by the College in a number of ways.

Programme evaluations by all learners are invited twice per semester, firstly early in the semester and subsequently towards the end of semester.

The feedback is routed to the Dean, the Learner Experience and Careers Manager, and lecturers on the basis of modules they teach.

Feedback of a critical nature is discussed by the Dean with the lecturer involved, with a view to constructively addressing the issue(s) involved.

The Class Senator system, whereby a learner cohort elects two senators, one of whom focusses on academic issues, and the second who deals with other aspects of learner support. The senators represent the cohort, and are in touch as required with relevant College officers to deal with issues that might arise, and the system is effectively a useful medium of communication between staff and learner representatives.

Learner representation on academic committees is also provided for and encouraged by College, and this provides a further channel of communication between staff and learners.

Academic Staff Feedback is encouraged and welcomed by the College. This takes a number of forms. Programme Boards are an essential mechanism for reviewing and monitoring the quality levels in College programmes, and they provide a regular opportunity for staff to provide essential information on core areas of activity such as teaching, learning, assessment, and learner supports. These meetings take place at the end of each semester, once for the undergraduate programmes, and once for the postgraduate programmes.

End-of-Semester Module Quality Enhancement Reports

At the end of each semester, each lecturer is required to compile and submit to the QA office a report on the module s/he has delivered. The report contains quantitative data on learner numbers and on assessment distributions, as well as important qualitative comments. A critical element in the report is the lecturer's view on how successful the module has been in relation to delivering on module objectives and learning outcomes. Through this report the lecturer is given the opportunity to recommend on how the quality of the module might be improved through factors such as pedagogical method, content, better resourcing, if these or other factors need to be addressed.

End of year lecturers' review sessions with the Dean.

These meetings are important both from a staff career development point of view and the fact that they provide an opportunity for the Dean to obtain a better insight on a range of issues relevant to module/programme quality, and potential enhancement of same.

Annual Programme Reports

At the end of the academic year, the Dean and Programme Leaders produce the annual programme reports, one for each programme. The annual programme reports for each programme include -

- Admissions/RPL profile
- Learner feedback summary (learner evaluations and senator meetings)
- Assessment distributions: qualitative interpretations and identification of relevant trends
- Learner support issues
- Learner retention and progression, including trend analysis
- Learning/Teaching/Assessment strategies
- Programme Board summary
- Employer feedback
- Status of actions recommended in prior year Action Plan
- Recommendations and actions for the coming year

These reports take an overall view of the programme in question, and are designed to ensure:

- The programme is successfully delivering the programme objectives as per validation
- Learner outcomes are being achieved
- Academic standards in teaching and learning are maintained
- Assessment systems are appropriate to programme objectives and learning outcomes, and academic integrity is ensured
- Progression and retention levels on the programme are satisfactory
- The programme continues to be economically feasible, and relevant to industry or further study needs

The Annual Programme Reports are submitted to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and to Academic Council for consideration and further action as appropriate.

Academic Committee End of Year Reports

At the end of the academic year, the following subcommittees of Academic Council submit an annual report to the Council.

- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
- Research and Ethics Committee

- College Facilities and Learner Support Committee

These reports contain summaries of the proceedings of the relevant subcommittee during the year, with particular reference to items of note subject to discussion and recommendation by the subcommittee.

The reports are considered and discussed by Academic Council, and this reporting system is designed to underscore the utility and accountability of the academic committee structure.

Risk Management Policy

Please refer to [Risk Management Policy](#)

The [Senior Management Committee](#) (SMC) is responsible for identifying, evaluating and monitoring the key risks faced by the College and for scrutinising the actions taken to manage these key risks.

This involves responsibility for determining the appropriate level of risk exposure for the College, monitoring the management of the key risks, and for gaining assurance that risks identified are being activity managed with appropriate controls in place that are working effectively. An important aim of risk management is to be proactive in supporting the achievement of the College's agreed objectives and not simply to avoid risk.

SMC maintains a Risk Register. The Risk Register details identified key risks and, for each key risk, will include coverage of its associated controls and actions as appropriate. SMC reviews the corporate Risk Register on a three-monthly basis, or more often as the situation requires.

Other Internal QA Reviews

The College arranged for a root-and-branch review of the library just before the AQR reporting period, conducted by an external library specialist, with a view to assessing Library operations, services and appropriate strategies going forward.

The report recommendations were implemented by College and resulted in a substantial improvement of many aspects of the library's offerings and corresponding user satisfaction.

With the continuing rate of change resulting from the impact of technology, the effect of public health issues, and changing attitudinal preferences of users, the College decided to update the strategic review to reflect the changing environment and update the library strategic plan. This review has taken place, and its recommendations are currently under consideration.

External QA Reports and Feedback

Independent College Dublin is committed to the principle of externality as an important aid in the pursuit of best practice in Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

External Chair of Academic Council

At a senior academic governance level, the College committed to the appointment of a prominent academic, appropriately qualified and experienced, to the position of External Chair of Academic Council. The new Chairperson, Dr. Orlaith McCaul, has been appointed, and will work closely with the Council, and with the College President and Board of Directors, to bring her knowledge and experience to bear in guiding the College to achieve the highest academic standards in its strategy and management

External Examiners

Please refer to [External Examiner Policy](#)

External examiners play an important role in ensuring the standard and integrity of College assessment systems.

The selection and appointment of an external examiner is a rigorous process. Potential externs must be proposed by a senior academic from the subject area to be examined. CVs of the proposed externs are submitted to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee, and if approved passed to Academic Council for noting.

External examiners are involved at a number of stages in the College assessment process:

- Approval of examination question papers and solutions ahead of the examinations cycle, and feedback to Examinations Office and internal examiner(s) if changes are recommended.

Proposed assessment materials will have already been moderated by a second internal examiner

- Review of samples of examination scripts and continuous assessment materials to assess the quality of the grading by internal examiners
- Participation in the Examination Boards to observe the correctness of Board procedures and contribute to decisions that may need to be made on borderline cases
- Completion of an end of year report on the examinations externalised, including
- Quality and fitness for purpose of the assessment procedures,
- Accuracy of the grading system and its application,
- Quality of information and support provided for the external, and
- Compliance of assessment outcomes with programme validation requirements.
- These reports are submitted to both the Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee and Academic Council for consideration and action where appropriate.

Industry Advisory Board

The College has set up an Industry Advisory Board to further enhance the degree of externality in planning and decision-making. The Board comprises a number of members from industry and commerce, together with representation at a relatively senior level from other Higher Education Institutes.

The IAP has been used largely in fact-finding and brain-storming exercises to enhance the practitioner and professional dimension in the design and development of new programmes.

Whereas this has been very useful in informing the programme design process, the IAP activity has been relatively limited in the reporting period due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic. College intends the remit of IAP members to expand to more student-contact activity such as career opportunity and preparation when conditions permit.

External Quality Assurance Advisory Panel (EQAAP)

EQAAP was set up to enlist external expertise to conduct selective QA audits on different academic functional areas such as admissions, assessment, and various aspects of teaching and learning. Whereas the membership of EQAAP is in place, with an external chair (Prof. Aidan Kelly), another external academic (Mr. Vincent McDonnell), and an internal facilitator in place, at the end of the reporting period, the audit methodology was still in preparation. The selected area for review is how the College deals with academic impropriety, and in particular the use of technologies such as Turnitin. It is intended to conduct this review in the next reporting period.

External (Re)Validation and Reengagement Events.

Programme proposals, including associated QA policies and procedures, are subject to intense scrutiny during regular revalidation and other QQI events such as Reengagement, and the revision of QA policy for Blended Learning.

Such events generate a substantial amount of engagement and consultation between panel membership and College staff, in addition to the formal panel recommendations which include mandatory changes and strongly recommended supplementary advice.

Independent College Dublin welcomes both the formal and informal recommendations emanating from QQI-appointed expert panels, and the College has, where possible, updated quality assurance and enhancement systems to take full advantage of these.

[Independent College Dublin]

2022

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

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Introduction

The reporting period represented a year during which Independent College Dublin was faced with two extremely important QA challenges, successfully implementing the outcome of the QQI Reengagement process, and dealing with the issues related to the COVID19 pandemic. It should be noted that the period under review represents an overlap on the implementation of the College's Strategic Plan. Reviews of the strategic plan and related documents reached draft stage within this period but were not approved due to the government decision on March 12th, 2020 to close all education providers due to the public health risk posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant the immediate transfer online of provision, supports and services which were previously face-to-face, on-campus. The ratification and implemented of the College's 5-year Strategic Plan is a priority in the 2021/22 academic year.

In June 2020 Independent College Dublin successfully completed four programme revalidations with QQI which took full effect from September 2020.

Major Awards

- BA (Honours) in Business Studies NFQ Level 8
- BA (Honours) in Marketing NFQ Level 8
- BA (Honours) in Accounting and Finance NFQ Level 8
- Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution NFQ Level 9

Programmes with QQI for validation

Independent College Dublin has also developed for validation the following programme offerings:

Major Programmes

- BA (Honours) in International Business, top-up, one stage Level 8. This programme will be open to award-stage candidates only and is intended to open a new market which has been identified and researched by the College.
- MSc in Digital Marketing, at Level 9, addressing a College strategic objective of extending the scope of Level 9 offerings, and supporting progress towards more extensive research activity in College
- New part-time mode for the Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution, an existing Level 9 programme, which is expected to extend programme reach as a result.

Special Purpose Awards

- Certificate in Public Service Pensions Management NQF Level 6
- Certificate in Professional Legal Studies NQF Level 6
- Certificate in Marketing Communications Data and Legal Aspects NQF Level 7
- Certificate in Theory and Practice of Negotiation and Arbitration NQF Level 9
- Certificate in Understanding Conflict, Mediation Theory and Practice NQF Level 9

These proposed validations are in progress with QQI at end of the reporting period.

A further important strategic development during the AQR reporting cycle was the acquisition by Independent College Dublin of Public Affairs Ireland (PAI), an education and training delivery institute which specialises in programmes for the public and civil services.

The College is also seeking to introduce an extension of scope - blended learning during the AQR reporting period.

- **Public Affairs Ireland (PAI) integration into Independent College QA policies and systems**

Independent College Dublin has integrated Public Affairs Ireland (PAI) into its organisation.

PAI is a specialised educational group with extensive experience in public sector programmes, and strong record and recognition in that sector.

This strategic development is regarded by the College as an opportunity to develop and deliver programmes such as the Certificate in Public Sector Pensions Management (CPSPM) to a new and potentially receptive public sector market with a range of needs. The CPSPM programme, which had been operated by PAI as a pilot non-accredited programme prior to acquisition by Independent College Dublin, has now been updated by Independent College Dublin and submitted to QQI for validation, with a view to implementation in early 2022.

From a structural perspective, PAI is formed as a school within the Independent College Dublin organisation. Relevant programmes are wholly integrated into College QA systems including Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and Academic Council oversight, and are to be managed and staffed by Independent College Dublin personnel.

- **Extension of Scope - Blended Learning**

Over the past number of years, but particularly between October 2019 to October 2020, Independent College Dublin has made a significant investment in information and communication technologies for learning and teaching in support of its objective to provide a modern, supportive learning environment for its learners (on all programmes). The College is committed to supporting institutional learning and teaching priorities as they relate to the use of information and communication technologies, while building on and advancing the College's record of achievements and supporting growing interest across the College in harnessing technology to enhance and facilitate learning. Within this strategic priority area key objectives include expanding investment in and use of innovative learning technologies including the use of virtual learning platforms, facilitating the provision of flexible and blended programme provision. As a direct outcome of this strategic priority, the College has been investing in the infrastructure, resources (human and physical), and systems to support the submission of an application for extension of scope for blended learning programmes.

- **Enhancement of the Virtual Campus and Facilities for the Provision of Blended Learning**

The College invested in a wide range of software solutions to enhance the virtual campus and better support effective teaching and learning in an online context. In addition to the enhancement of the virtual campus, 2019/20 saw the continued investment in the campus building at Foley Street to facilitate the delivery of blended learning programmes. This included the upgrading of audio-visual equipment in classrooms to facilitate live streaming and recording of lectures. Faculty training and professional development in relation to the effective use of virtual campus resources was provided as standard and continues to be available. The investment in resources was further supported with technical support and administration provided by library staff and the Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Training and Training Officer (QEITTO) to provide assistance to faculty, staff and learners in the use of learning technologies and engagement in teaching and learning activities in the blended/ online context.

Specific Changes to QA During the Reporting Period

The Government decision on March 12th 2020 to introduce an extensive countrywide lockdown as a result of COVID19 had a transformational effect on College operations, and presented many challenges from the point of view of Quality Assurance.

It was necessary for the College to convert delivery of all teaching, learning and assessment, together with essential supports, from face-to-face mode to online delivery within a very short time period.

The Independent College Dublin Contingency Plan 2020 to guide this conversion was approved by Academic Council and was speedily implemented. The transition from face-to-face to online delivery was accomplished within a period of one week. The speed of conversion was materially facilitated by the fact that the College had developed considerable expertise over time in critical software facilities such as Moodle, Zoom and Turnitin, and had used some of these technologies on both a pilot and/or a full operational basis prior to the onset of the pandemic.

Features of the transition to online delivery included:

- All teaching, learning and assessment migrated to online mode
- Upskilling of academic, support and administrative staff to work effectively in the online delivery environment
- Engagement of, and extensive support for, learners in all aspects of the online environment, particularly guidance on technical issues, new teaching/learning approaches, and changed assessment procedures
- Maintenance of learner achievement of approved learning outcomes as per programme validation documents
- Adherence to existing Academic Calendar timelines for teaching/learning and assessments
- Attainment of new and upgrade of existing technological infrastructure as necessary to support universal online delivery of programmes

Communication with faculty, administration staff and learners were treated as an absolute priority in relation to the online environment, and feedback from all stakeholder groups was, and continues to be, encouraged and acted upon as appropriate. Innovations such as the 'virtual cuppa' and 'virtual town halls' were very effective in maintaining clear lines of communication between staff and other stakeholders.

Changes in assessment methods necessitated by online assessment were approved by Academic Council and by extern examiners, and updated in QA documentation.

Academic Council approved the continuation of the contingency arrangements for academic year commencing September 1st, 2020.

Despite the short notice in its development and introduction, the overall experience with the online mode is regarded as successful, as outlined in feedback mechanisms, by the range of stakeholders including the external examiners.

Furthermore, the pivot to online has further developed understanding and capability in the College for -

- The effective use of technology in teaching, learning and assessment, including enhanced knowledge and competency in appropriate pedagogical models in the online environment,
- Ensuring that academic integrity is preserved, particularly in learner assessment, in the online delivery environment.

These developments have a beneficial and continuing effect in the College progression to hybrid teaching arrangements and development of comprehensive blended learning policies.

Ongoing updates to Quality Assurance documentation and systems

The College is particularly cognisant of the necessity to maintain QA policies, procedures and documentation that is fully comprehensive and up-to-date to fulfil QA intended functionality for the benefit of all stakeholders. Updates are necessary on an ongoing basis to reflect new developments in College, to ensure learner interests are always fairly dealt with, and to clarify and deal with any anomalies that might arise.

The updates on the following issues were presented by the QA department during the reporting period and approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, and by Academic Council.

- QA modifications due to online or hybrid programme delivery
- Appeals policy updated to clarify notice period on learner appeals
- Learners' position on completion of stage after module failure clarified
- Definitions of 'extenuating circumstances' made more explicit for learners
- Policy on College suitability issues for external premises and facilities specified
- Mature learners' policy for programme admission decisions updated
- RPL policy further clarified
- Assessment moderation rules for Level 9 dissertations set out
- Treatment for assessment purposes of marginal learners at grade boundaries clarified
- Failed module policy clarified with particular reference to 'pass-by-compensation' and resits
- Feedback documentation from staff for learner dissertation proposals to aid learners in their research projects provided

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This is the first AQR completed by the College. In 2020 the panel that recommended Independent College Dublin for reengagement also identified several advised changes to the quality assurance procedures of Independent College Dublin which were addressed in the 2020/21 update of the College's Quality Assurance Manual.

Completion of QQI Reengagement process

In December 2019 the site visit by the QQI Reengagement Panel to Independent College Dublin took place. The Panel made a number of commendations to the College including its 'positive disposition towards continuous improvement which is conducive to embedding a quality culture across the organisation', and in addition specific commendations for the QA Officer and the teaching staff.

The reengagement resulted in the recommendation by the Panel of a number of mandatory changes, and further specific advice for the College in relation to QA structures, policies and procedures.

The mandatory changes were completed by the College, submitted to QQI, and approved by the Reengagement Panel in June 2020. The further advice offered by the Panel, slightly longer-term in nature, was also addressed in the College response.

The changes brought about by the reengagement process were welcomed by the College as insightful and extremely positive in terms of the efficacy of the whole approach to quality assurance and enhancement, among other benefits addressing a College objective of significantly improving the level of engagement in QA by the various categories of stakeholder, notably learners, staff and faculty.

The mandatory changes requested by the Reengagement Panel and the College responses are shown below.

<i>Mandatory Change</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Response</i>
1	Revise current governance structure to ensure a more consistent and clear separation of academic and commercial decision-making	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Membership of the Academic Council revised, commercial representation no longer facilitated on AC. Clarifying language included to strengthen separation between academic and commercial. External Chair appointed to Academic Council.</p>
2	Rationalise academic committee structure to design a more sustainable architecture	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Subcommittees of Academic Council normalised to five standing subcommittees. Terms of reference written for each of these. Membership in all committees streamlined to reduce overlap insofar as possible.</p>
3	Address inconsistencies in naming policy areas in QA documentation and ensure policy ownership is clear	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>All terminology has been cross-referenced to ensure clarity and consistency. All policies now include the relevant ownership for each policy and links to associated policies, forms, appendices and processes. A glossary of terms written to ease understanding of key terms and maintain standard terminology.</p>
4		

	Revise policy documentation in relation to version control and information to learners	<p>Status: Complete & continuing</p> <p>Comprehensive review of all policies undertaken. New policies created to demonstrate transparency. All appendices, forms, policies have been hyperlinked and will be accessible from the College website in addition to the relevant handbooks. Language reviewed to ensure clarity.</p>
6	Revise Ethics & Research Committee's TOR to improve clarity	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The TOR for the Research & Ethics Committee has been reviewed to include reference to their role in approving research ethics applications. The Ethical Research policy has been further developed, and supplemental forms and processes have updated to reflect the inclusion of this policy.</p>
7	Improve policy and procedures to clarify decision-making for staff research support	<p>Status: Complete & continuing</p> <p>A number of policies have been created to detail staff development at the College: Advanced Scholarly development Policy, Faculty Review Policy, and Staff Recruitment and (Re)Induction Policy. This includes, but is not limited to, the criteria for support/refusal of support for advanced scholarly development</p>

8	Recheck, review and appeal processes to be presented more clearly in QA documentation	Status: Complete & continuing The View, Review, Recheck, and Appeal Policy now provides a more comprehensive guide to the processes in place for learners who wish to avail to at least one of these services. Links to all associated documentation are included within the policy and included in other relevant policies. These all align to QQI's Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Committee	Meeting Dates
ACADEMIC COUNCIL	Oct. 20th 2020 March 16th 2021 March 25th, 2021 June 2nd, 2021 July 27th, 2021
Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	December 1st, 2020 April 7th, 2021 August 5th, 2021
Research and Ethics Committee	December 17th, 2020 April 20th, 2021 July 23rd, 2021
College Learner Facilities and Support Systems	March 23rd, 2021 July 22nd, 2021
Programme Board Meetings	December 2020 April 2021 July 23rd 2021
College Operations Meetings	Weekly, Mondays 11.00 a.m.

Corporate Governance Meetings

Committee	Meeting Dates
Board of Directors	Quarterly
Senior Management Committee	November 17th, 2020 July 20th, 2021

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Implications for academic governance resulting from implementation of Reengagement mandatory conditions:

- Revision of academic committees' structure to clarify decision making and accountability, and to ensure clear separation between academic and commercial responsibilities
- Commercial representation no longer explicitly facilitated on Academic Council
- Appointment of external chair of Academic Council with prominent academic governance background to further ensure academic independence throughout academic committee structures and decision-making
- Terms of reference of academic committees revised and membership of all committees streamlined to eliminate overlap insofar as possible
- Quality assurance documentation revised to eliminate inconsistencies, and to improve accessibility and navigability for relevant stakeholders
- Quality assurance documentation also modified to include more substantive and focussed content in the areas of research ethics application approvals, staff research applications, and learner rechecks, reviews, and appeals
- Accessibility, transparency and navigability enhanced for all QA documentation including the various handbooks

Strategic Staffing Developments

Several important staff appointments, all of them with a direct and beneficial effect on the management and operation of quality assurance within the College have been made during the reporting period. These include:

- *Appointment of External Chair for Academic Council.*

The appointment of a new external Chair was confirmed by Independent College Dublin in July 2021. This appointment will have the effect of extending the level of externality in setting, monitoring and enhancing academic standards in the College in line with best practice, and contributing further to the autonomy and independence of Academic Council in the conduct of its affairs.

- The new incumbent will keep the Board of Directors and the College President informed through regular, and formal, reporting of Academic Council proceedings and decisions after each Council meeting.
- *Appointment of Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.*

The management of quality assurance has been upgraded through a new College role of Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The change of title and job specification emphasises the increased importance of continuous QA enhancement recognised by the College in this critical area. The appointee to this position, who is extensively qualified and experienced in quality management, both nationally and internationally, commenced in the role in April 2021.

- *Creation of role of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Training and Training Officer (QEITTO), and appointment to position*

This role was created in the first instance in the early stage of the pivot from the traditional system of face-to-face of teaching and learning to the online delivery environment necessitated by COVID19 and associated lockdowns. The purpose of the role is to assist learners, lecturers and the various support parties to adapt to the new teaching and learning approaches, taking account of technical, psychological and the pedagogical challenges associated with online delivery. With the ubiquity now clearly evident in the increase of blended learning, the role of QEITTO is progressively more important. The incumbent of this position has made a substantial

contribution to the successful operation of the online programme delivery, and has an important role to play as the College becomes more involved in hybrid and blended learning.

- *Appointment of an Examinations Officer*

Several other important staff appointments, including the roles mentioned below were reviewed during the AQR reporting process. Appointments will be made if deemed necessary to support the continuing enhancement of quality assurance in the College.

- Students Services & Learner Support
- Academic Operations

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Guide:

In this section include the reviews completed or in progress during the reporting period. (QQI acknowledges that the institutional review schedule may not be aligned with the AQR reporting period, and that reviews may be in progress and not completed at the point in time when the report is submitted.)

The unit of review may be programme [private HEIs], department/school, service delivery unit, school, or faculty.

Please include the schedule for reviews included in the previous AQR – this can be cut and pasted from previous report.

In the table below, indicate the academic and support units for which reviews **concluded** (i.e., the point at which the report associated with the review has been published) during the reporting period; the date of completion of review, the reason for conducting the review (if the review had not been planned) or the reason for non-completion (if the review had been planned for completion but was not conducted or concluded during the reporting period).

A link to the report or other relevant documentation arising out of the review should be provided in the third column.

Please delete guide text before submission.

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
Blended Learning Policy	25 th March 2021	

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels² involved in IQA

Guide:

As the external QA agency responsible for oversight of institutional IQA system, QQI collects and makes a range of data available, including diverse data relating to internal QA processes through the AQR. The criteria for the engagement of peer reviewers (both internal and external) are part of the internal institutional-led QA process. The information in this section provides data and transparency in relation to peer reviewers/evaluators and their involvement in institutional-led internal QA systems.

Please delete guide text before submission.

(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	2				1		1 Blended Learning Policy
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes							
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	2				1		1 Blended Learning Policy

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

Average panel size for each process type*							3

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

Guide

Details in respect of the composition of the panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below. Panel composition should be represented as whole numbers rather than as percentages.

'Similar institution' denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission - for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example.

Please delete guide text before submission.

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	2	2				1					
Secretary	1	1	1			1					
Academic/Discipline Specific	2	2	2			2					
Student Representative	2		2			2					
QA											
Teaching & Learning											

External Industry /Third Mission	1	1				1					
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2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance and management of quality

As noted above, the College response to the findings of the Reengagement Panel was approved by QQI in June 2020.

The resulting mandatory governance changes were implemented by the College, and have resulted in better separation between academic and commercial decision-making and clearer lines of accountability and responsibility particularly at College management levels.

The appointment of an external chair to Academic Council and the associated reporting requirements introduced a new line of communication, both formal after each AC meeting, and informal on an as-needs basis, between the external chair on the one hand, and the President and Board on the other. This communication is critical in ensuring that the Board is fully briefed on a continuing basis on academic issues as discussed at the Council, and related governance matters.

The restructuring of the academic subcommittees with revised membership composition has also been effective in creating a more focussed and manageable governance organisation that streamlines committee responsibilities and is more proportional to the scale of operation of the College.

In addition, the improvements in accessibility and transparency related to QA documentation has been welcomed by stakeholders, and has generated a higher level of engagement particularly on the part of learners.

In encouraging and facilitating learner involvement in committee participation, College academic management has worked to match proposed meeting dates to academic timetables, and this has resulted in more consistent learner representation at the relevant committee meetings.

Programmes of Education and Training

Newly validated NFQ Level 8 programmes were successfully implemented during the reporting period, reflecting a more coherent programme portfolio and a deeper level of subject functional specialisation in line with academic and market needs. This was a key factor in the College's BAAF programme being awarded full exemptions for Foundation level ACCA professional examinations, and substantial exemptions at certificate and diploma level for CIMA professional examinations.

Other new programme developments in the reporting period, particularly in the SPA category, provide an important basis for diversifying both the range and reach of the College higher education activity as recommended in advice by the Reengagement Panel.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Prior College development of, and familiarisation with, IT facilities such as Zoom, Moodle and Turnitin were instrumental in the successful pivot to online programme delivery as a result of the pandemic.

Blended learning is a key strategic imperative for the College. The experience and expertise gained by management, lecturing and support staff in these and other technologies is an important factor in the development of a blended learning policy for approval by QQI, which is currently in preparation for submission.

Information and Data Management

A key goal of Independent College Dublin is better integration of the data processing and information systems. In this context the College has undertaken a software development project (AMOS) involving an external technical provider to give better operational and management information, and enhance the level of integration among the various subsystems.

Significant benefits have already been obtained through this project in terms of the improvement in quality of the information on learner assessment processing, which has been of benefit to examiners in the submission of examination and continuous assessment marks, and has substantially improved the efficiency of the examination boards. This has been the subject of favourable comment by the external examiners.

A core learner management system in the College is Quercus, and direct interchange of data between Quercus and Moodle is presently under development in the ongoing project. Direct linkages of Quercus to other subsystems will also be scheduled.

Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

As indicated in Part A of this report, the weekly College Operations meeting is an important component of the monitoring of the operational processes in Independent College Dublin. The meetings are detailed, comprehensive and inclusive, spanning the whole range of functionality in the College, and are action-driven with follow-up on targets and actions set. As such they are essential to the operational and tactical management of the institution.

The Academic Council and its subcommittees have a specific academic focus which tends to be more tactical, and in the case of Academic Council, more strategic. The academic subcommittees provide an annual report to Academic Council on their proceedings in the previous year, and any significant items that need to be reviewed or actioned.

On reflection, the academic committees have discharged their functions more effectively as a result of the structural changes required by the Reengagement process. The combination of these changes and the appointment of a Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement has resulted in a more active role for the Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee, which now meets on a monthly basis, as opposed to its previous frequency of twice per semester.

An important enhancement to self-evaluation and monitoring in the reporting period was the format redesign, and implementation of, the lecturer end-of-semester module report. This provides excellent qualitative and quantitative feedback for management from the lecturer on the module, its content, delivery, perceived strengths and weaknesses, relevant statistics, and recommendations for improvement.

The Senior Management Committee deals with overall planning and control of the College, and areas of particular attention are risk management and strategic planning.

The committees and reports noted above, together with the Programme Board and Annual Programme Reports, and extensive feedback from learners, comprise an overall monitoring and reporting framework that shows a measure of improved effectiveness when compared to previous years.

However, in an environment such as the higher education provision sector which is subject to continuing change such as new programme/service structures, technology changes, public health considerations, among a number of other external factors, the College is fully aware that institutional planning and control systems need continuing review to ensure they are fit for purpose.

This need for continuing QA review and enhancement is high on the College management agenda, and is expected to be significantly aided as a result of the QQI AQR process.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The College is fully aware that the maintenance of academic integrity is particularly important in the online programme delivery environment.

The QA documentation on academic misconduct was comprehensively revised to ensure clarity of understanding by all stakeholders, particularly learners and lecturers. This revision, including specific process flow diagrams for various aspects of dealing with academic misconduct, was accessible through both the QA Manual and the relevant handbooks. Transparency, consistency and navigability were key objectives in the relevant QA and instructional materials.

The issues associated with this area have also been emphasised by QA and lecturing staff through detailed coverage of guidelines on academic integrity at learner induction at the start of each semester, and at extra in-term sessions, for learners and lecturers. A body of instructional and reference materials on the topic has been developed by the librarian, and made available to stakeholders through direct instruction and by access to video replay. Extensive application of Turnitin has been an important aspect of the maintenance of academic integrity in relation to learner assessment.

In addition, CPD sessions by specialist speakers have been regularly provided to ensure that lecturers have access to latest thinking on academic integrity, and best practice in using Turnitin for both educational purposes and for detecting breaches of academic integrity.

In ensuring the maintenance of academic integrity in learner assessment throughout the online delivery period, Independent College Dublin complied with the principles set out in QFI's publication, *Guiding Principles for Alternative Assessment*, (March 2020). This has been enhanced by consistent and transparent information to learners and staff on the nature of academic integrity and the productive use of Turnitin in the materials submission and assessment processes.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

1	Strategic Planning	Update of Strategic Plan for 2022-2026
2	Blended Learning Approval	Complete and submit proposed Blended Learning Policy to QQI for approval
3	Blended Learning Supports	Increase resources in line with requirements of blended learning QQI panel recommendations
4	New Programme Development Capability	Finalise validation of programmes currently submitted for same with QQI
5	Information and Data Management	Extend the AMOS software project to further integrate other College information systems with Quercus
6	Information and Data Management	Extend data retention policy to include all significant record types in organisational information systems
7	T&L staff training and continuous professional development for high flex delivery.	In progress. Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Head of Library and Information Services and Quality Enhancement & Innovation in Teaching and Training Officer

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

There are no QQI reviews scheduled in Independent College Dublin for academic year 2021/22.

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Programmatic reviews are determined by the dates of validation indicated on the QQI Certificates of Validation.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1: Online Teaching and Learning Enhancement

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency pivot to online delivery of teaching and learning in Higher Education, Independent College Dublin introduced a range of measures to support faculty, many of whom had never taught and assessed online. Through directed online teaching and learning professional development workshops led by the College's Quality Enhancement & Innovation in Teaching and Training Officer faculty were encouraged to re-think and adapt their teaching and assessment strategies. These workshops which were digitally badged on successful live completion and were held at regular intervals through the 2020/2021 academic year. Sessions were streamed live, recorded and are available for lecturing staff to revisit via the College's designated CPD Moodle page. The workshops focused learning approaches, modes of delivery, planning and learning activities in a high flex environment.

Overview of Teaching Enhancement CPD Repository on Moodle

During the College's pivot to online delivery of teaching and learning we built on the existing CPD repository on Moodle, developing and sharing a series of guides and walk throughs to assist faculty when selecting options for adapting their teaching, learning and assessment activities to an online environment. We also used it to share and highlight resources and practical guides emerging from national and international bodies as well as specialists in the field.

With the increased reliance on Moodle throughout the College, we provided good practice guidance on the use of Moodle as a core tool for teaching, learning and assessment supported by Zoom for synchronous delivery. This was underpinned by the development of a Moodle module course page template, an online assessment template customisable by lecturers, to incorporate universal design principles and to promote a consistent learner experience across programmes.

Online Teaching Community via Zoom

Zoom facilitated the creation of an online teaching and learning community, setting up a number of channels to support ongoing debate, discussion and consultation on key topics amongst faculty and it has become a vital medium of communication for the College. Zoom was also used to facilitate "virtual cuppas", townhalls, lunchtime seminars and a research symposium. Delivering sessions in this way has allowed the College to record and share the recordings post event as asynchronous learning resources via the College Moodle.

Reflections

Adaptations during the period has brought about greater flexibility by faculty in professional development and has resulted in higher levels of engagement and participation. Numbers attending teaching enhancement CPD events have increased and it is evident from feedback, that moving these sessions online has enabled our faculty to participate directly.

The capacity to record events has provided asynchronous participation to faculty and having access to workshop recordings post event is valued by the community within the College. A vibrant and supportive online community of practice for teaching and learning as well as well-being and mindfulness has also emerged through our use of Zoom. Faculty are appreciative of the effective space they have to share concerns, good practice and this has proved a very important medium for communicating Teaching Enhancement events and advice during an unprecedented and disruptive period of change.

Independent College Dublin is committed to building on the experiences and developments achieved prior to and throughout the COVID crisis. Whilst there is a strong desire from faculty, staff, and students to return to campus and resume the traditional on campus experiences of the College, there is also a growing appreciation that the experience of the pandemic has changed our teaching approaches and practice to be more flexible and adaptive. We have discovered new opportunities to use technology to support our teaching and to carry out assessments in a fully online environment. We have learned much this year and it is our intention as a college to continue our journey of teaching enhancement to provide a quality teaching learning experience for all our faculty and learners.

[End of Independent College Dublin AQR 2021]

Appendix 1

A Response to the Panel Report for Reengagement with QQI by Independent College Dublin.

This report reflects the College's response to the mandatory changes and specific advice made as a result of the panel's visit in December 2019 and the subsequent report for Independent College Dublin's Reengagement with QQI.

The structure of the response is as it appears in Part 6: Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice in the panel report.

The programme team welcomed the comments made by the panel during the panel visit and considerable reflection took place on receipt of the panel report.

The College would like to extend their gratitude to all members of the external review panel for their time and thorough exploration of the programmes with respect to areas such as governance structure, quality assurance/enhancement, and learner support.

The review process, and in particular the report of the external panel, has identified the many positive aspects of the programmes and highlighted areas and themes for enhancement within the Quality Assurance Manual and its associated documentation which the College has now addressed.

Note 1: hyperlinks have been included below to identify specific sections of the QAM relevant to the mandatory change and specific advice. Click on the hyperlink to download and view the relevant file. You may be asked to click OK before you can download the file.

Note 2: All of the files linked below are also located within version 5 of the QAM.

Best regards,

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MANDATORY CHANGES			
Mandatory Changes #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
6.1.1	The College must revise its current governance structure to ensure that a consistent and clear separation of academic and commercial decision-making is evident. This should include a review of membership of the Academic Council, and clearly distinct roles for the Management Committee and Academic Council in the various processes of the College.	The College has reviewed its current governance structure and has clarified the distinct roles and responsibilities of the decision-making committees and the members of each of these committees. To fully ensure the separation of commercial and academic functions of the College, the membership of the Academic Council has been revised. Commercial representation is no longer permitted on the Academic Council. In addition, the College will appoint an external chair of Academic Council in order to assist in the development and effective implementation of policies, procedures and practices in relation to academic affairs. Clarifying language has been included to strengthen the separation between academic and commercial.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Governance & Management of Quality > Appointment of External Chair to Academic Council Policy > Board of Directors TOR > Senior Management Committee TOR > Academic Council TOR > External Quality Assurance Audit Panel TOR
6.1.2	The College must revise its current governance structure, with a view to designing a more sustainable architecture. This should involve rationalising the academic committee structure	The College has reviewed the various governance structures and committees including the normalisation of the sub-committees to five standing sub-committees. Terms of reference (TOR) have been written for each of these sub-committees. Ad-hoc sub-committees, such as the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tracked changes to QA Manual > Governance & Management of Quality > College Facilities and Learner Support Services Committee TOR > Examinations Board TOR > Programme Board TOR

MANDATORY CHANGES			
Mandatory Changes #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
	to ensure that decision-making processes are clear and revising terms of reference for the remaining committees.	Appeals Committee, which meet on an “as needs” basis also have clear TOR (listed in <i>italics</i>). In addition, membership in all committees has been streamlined to reduce overlap insofar as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee TOR > Research & Ethics Committee TOR > Appeals Committee TOR > Complaints Committee TOR > Disciplinary Committee TOR
6.1.3	The College must comprehensively review its documentation to address inconsistencies in the naming of policy areas and ensure policy ownership is clear. One example of this pertains to the plagiarism/academic impropriety policy.	<p>All terminology has been cross-referenced to ensure clarity and consistency. Additionally, all policies now include the relevant ownership for each policy and links to associated policies, forms, appendices, and processes.</p> <p>A glossary of terms has also been written to ease understanding of key terms and maintain standardised terminology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tracked changes to QA Manual > Updated QA Manual (includes links to relevant supplemental documentation) > Example: Academic Misconduct Policy
6.1.4	The College must revise its policy documentation in relation to version control and information to learners. Full transparency requires that all students and staff have access	<p>A comprehensive review of all policies has been undertaken. New policies have been created to demonstrate transparency.</p> <p>All appendices, forms, policies and processes have been hyperlinked and will be accessible from the College website in addition to the relevant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tracked changes to QA Manual > Updated QA Manual (includes links to relevant supplemental documentation)

MANDATORY CHANGES			
Mandatory Changes #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
	to all relevant policies and procedures. These should be written in plain language inclusive of all stakeholders.	handbooks. Language has been reviewed to ensure clarity.	
6.1.5	The College must revise its documentation to improve its accessibility and navigability for staff and students, to ensure the QAM and associated handbooks/appendices can effectively support the everyday operations and functions of the College.	The proposed QA Manual has been reformatted to be an online, living document. All appendices, forms, policies and processes have been hyperlinked and will be easily accessible from the College website. Handbooks will contain hyperlinks to the documents available online to ensure consistency.	> Tracked changes to QA Manual > Updated QA Manual (includes links to relevant supplemental documentation)
6.1.6	The Terms of Reference for the Ethics & Research Committee should be revised to ensure the committee's role in approving research ethics applications is explicit. The processes relating to submission, review and approval of applications should	The TOR for the Research & Ethics Committee has been reviewed to include reference to their role in approving research ethics applications. In addition, an Ethical Research Policy has been developed, and supplemental forms and processes have been updated to reflect the inclusion of this policy.	> Research & Ethics Committee TOR > Ethical Research Policy (includes links to relevant supplemental documentation)

MANDATORY CHANGES			
Mandatory Changes #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
	be clearly set out and included within the QAM.		
6.1.7	A policy and procedure that sets out the process for applications and decision-making in relation to staff development, including the criteria for support/refusal of applications needs to be drafted and included in the QAM.	A number of policies have been created to detail staff development at the College: Advanced Scholarly Activity Policy, Faculty Review Policy, and Staff Recruitment and (Re)Induction Policy. This includes, but is not limited to, the criteria for support/refusal of support for advanced scholarly activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tracked changes to QA Manual > Advanced Scholarly Activity Policy > Faculty Review Policy > Staff Recruitment and (Re)Induction Policy
6.1.8	The information and processes pertaining to recheck, review and appeal must be presented clearly and unambiguously in the learner and staff handbooks as well as the QAM. These should align to the requirements in Assessment and Standards 2013.	The View, Review, Recheck, and Appeal Policy now provides a more comprehensive guide to the processes in place for learners who wish to avail of at least one of these services. Links to all associated documentation is included within the policy and included in other relevant policies. These all align to QQI's Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013 .	> View, Review, Recheck, and Appeal Policy (includes links to relevant supplementary documentation)

SPECIFIC ADVICE			
Advice #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
6.2.1	The College is strongly encouraged to further develop its strategy in relation to diversification of the learner cohort, to reduce the risks associated with over-dependence on particular markets.	<p>The College is committed to expanding and diversifying its learner cohort. The College has launched a scholarship programme to help attract a variety of potential learners. In addition, the College is communication with a number of local schools to promote the College and offer scholarships and access routes to its undergraduate programmes.</p> <p>The College is also seeking to run a series of summer part-time programmes in 2020 (non-framework) which is part of the College's strategy to develop other markets.</p>	> Strategy Document
6.2.2	The College is encouraged to continue focusing on resourcing and capacity issues, including staff profiles, as it implements its plans for expansion of postgraduate programme offerings and growth in student numbers.	The College is, and will continue to be, committed to staff and facilities resourcing which is appropriate to our number of current and prospective learners (up to and including maximum recruitment numbers). For example, the Head of School, with other senior academics, continually seeks appropriately qualified potential lecturers so as to have a readily available pool of potential lecturers to hand.	> Commitment to Provision of Resources & Support for Future Growth

SPECIFIC ADVICE			
Advice #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
		<p>The non-teaching resources have been enhanced with the recent appointment of an Assistant Exams Officer and qualified Librarian.</p> <p>The College has upgraded to the latest version of Moodle and moved to a cloud environment. The College also invested in Zoom as its primary streaming and recording solution and integrated this with Moodle.</p> <p>In addition, the College has, on three occasions thus far, made changes to the physical structure of the building by incorporating a number of smaller classrooms into single, larger lecture halls specifically for the delivery of QQI programmes (with enhanced audio-visual equipment).</p>	
6.2.3	In the development of new programmes, the College is advised to ensure it engages with relevant domestic and international stakeholders and data.	The updated Design & Approval of New Programmes Policy outlines how the College engages with relevant domestic and international stakeholders. The Industry Advisory Panel (IAP) is a joint panel of external industry and educational representatives, combined with	<p>> Industry Advisory Panel TOR</p> <p>> Design & Approval of New Programmes Policy</p>

SPECIFIC ADVICE			
Advice #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
		<p>senior College officers, that meet to exchange information and views on issues relevant to the design and delivery of higher education programmes with particular relevance to current and prospective programme offerings of the College. The Group Commercial Director in conjunction with the Learner Experience & Careers Officer also liaise with representatives from IAP in order to help learners to develop graduate attributes and/or gain valuable knowledge/skills that would make them more employable. The College believes that through this engagement with industry experts, we will be able to better develop potential programmes of study and offer additional support and opportunities to our future graduates.</p> <p>The College is a member of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce and seeks opportunities and input from its members.</p> <p>The Head of School, along with other members of the teaching team, lecture outside Ireland.</p>	

SPECIFIC ADVICE			
Advice #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
		This assists the College in maintaining and international viewpoint. Data from various government and sectoral sources will continue to be engaged with regard to the development of programmes.	
6.2.4	Review the presentation of some information relating to learner supports, for example in relation to plagiarism and disability/reasonable accommodations. This could usefully be presented with a greater emphasis on the development and positive supports that the College offers its learners.	The College has reviewed the language and its positioning around the provision of learner support and developed the Learners with Additional Needs Policy which includes links to associated documents. The College will review the presentation and promotion regarding the supports available in terms of guest lecturers, workshops, academic support resources & tutorials, mindfulness & mental health workshops, conflict resolution workshops, non-academic activities etc.	> Learners with Additional Needs Policy > Additional Needs Support Application Form
6.2.5	Consider establishing an academic writing support service to more systematically support the needs of the College's international cohort.	The College has created a dedicated academic writing workshop, in addition to guides and video tutorials on academic writing conventions. This will be available to all learners regardless of programme or stage.	> Learner Handbook > Induction of Learners Policy > Pastoral Care Policy

SPECIFIC ADVICE			
Advice #	Comment	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate
6.2.6	The College is encouraged to outsource its training of learner representatives to an appropriate body.	The Learner Experience & Careers Officer (LECO) and the Head of Schools has organised training sessions facilitated by NStEP for its senators. The College is committed to ensuring that this is an ongoing service. In addition, the LECO has developed guides for new senators. A senator handbook is being developed and will be ready before the next semester begins.	

Response to Panel – BA (Honours) in Marketing

BA (Honours) Marketing Independent College Dublin					
Recommendations of Panel					
Condition / Recommendation / Supplementary	Criterion	Special Condition	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate	AQR 2021 Reporting Period Update
R2	5	The combining of some 5 credit modules to 10 credits at stages 2 and 3 is considered.	The programme team has considered this recommendation. Having revisited the rationale for moving to 5 credit modules and reviewed the positive feedback for this strategic adjustment from learners, the lecturing team, senior management and external representatives, the programme team are content to move to 5 credit modules.	N/A	Status: Ongoing Programme Team are continually reviewing the provision of 5 ECTS modules which are progressional, student engagement is an important element of this process. Decision to go move to 5 ECTS is student friendly learning, no adverse feedback that would warrant a review or return. Students positively disposed to this credit weighting.
R5	6	The College considers appointment of further full-time academic staff to support the ongoing delivery and management of the programme as it progresses through its lifecycle.	As numbers grow, we expect over the lifetime of the programme to increase the number of salaried lecturing staff to include the appointment of a salaried Programme Leader. The college is actively seeking to appoint a full-time academic staff member in the role of Programme Leader. The Programme Leader will also teach on the programme.	N/A	Status: Ongoing Restructuring and reorganization planned for 2021/22. Acquisition and fractional appointments have been made to date.

Response to Panel – BA (Honours) in Accounting & Finance

BA (Honours) Accounting & Finance Independent College Dublin					
Recommendations of Panel					
Condition / Recommendation / Supplementary	Criterion	Special Condition	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate	AQR 2021 Reporting Period Update
R3	5	The combining of some 5 credit modules to 10 credits at stages 2 and 3 is considered.	<p>The programme team has considered this recommendation.</p> <p>Having revisited the rationale for moving to 5 credit modules and reviewed the positive feedback for this strategic adjustment from learners, the lecturing team, senior management and external representatives, the programme team are content to move to 5 credit modules.</p>	N/A	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Programme Team are continually reviewing the provision of 5 ECTS modules which are progressional, student engagement is an important element of this process. Decision to go move to 5 ECTS is student friendly learning, no adverse feedback that would warden a review or return. Students positively disposed to this credit weighting.</p>
R5	6	The College considers appointment of further full-time academic staff to support the ongoing delivery and management of the programme as it progresses through its lifecycle.	<p>As numbers grow, we expect over the lifetime of the programme to increase the number of salaried lecturing staff to include the appointment of a salaried Programme Leader.</p> <p>The college is actively seeking to appoint a full-time academic staff member in the role of Programme Leader. The Programme Leader will also teach on the programme.</p>	N/A	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Restructuring and reorganization planned for 2021/22. Acquisition and fractional appointments have been made to date.</p>

Response to Panel – MA (Honours) in Dispute Resolution



MA (Honours) Dispute Resolution Independent College Dublin					
Recommendations of Panel					
Condition / Recommendation / Supplementary	Criterion	Special Condition	Response	Reference within revised documents as appropriate	AQR 2021 Reporting Period Update
R3	4	The College should implement a marketing strategy that would increase the profile of the MADR programme, including through the utilisation of social media.	<p>The College welcomes this suggestion.</p> <p>The College is currently revising its marketing strategy (to include social media) and this will be included as an objective.</p>		New website is pending launch, also engagement with external strategic partner Adaptive agency to promote courses and increase awareness of provision.
R6	5	The College's Ethics Committee should reflect on the possibility of learners conducting research that includes the participation of vulnerable people and should pro- actively construct a process that enables and safeguards this research in the future.	The Research and Ethics Committee, chaired by Dr Bill Seery, will be tasked with reviewing and developing the College's approach and process should a learner wish to research a topic that includes the participation of vulnerable people.		<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Committee has been refocused and forms A&B have been revised and updated to include safeguards around the participation of vulnerable people in research activities</p>

R7	6	The College should take every opportunity to raise the research profile of its staff and learners, in order to promote the interesting and diverse research and practice that the MADR is generating.	<p>The College welcomes this comment from the panel.</p> <p>The College will continue to actively encourage staff and learners to seek opportunities to promote their research both individually and collaboratively.</p>		<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>College organized and hosted a Research Symposium on 30th August 2021.</p> <p>Encourage and facility faculty scholarly activity College is supporting member of staff through doctorate.</p> <p>Number of faculty actively engaged and participated in conference proceedings during reporting period.</p>
R8	7	The College should continue to build on the improvements made to its library services and place emphasis on addressing the remaining recommendations arising from its commissioned review.	<p>The College thanks the panel for recognising the improvements made in the library service. The recommendations related to the last library report continue to be revised and updated via an action plan.</p> <p>The College has commissioned a further review of the library for July 2020 by Maria Rogers, Research Librarian, House of the Oireachtas, the author of the original report.</p>		<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Library strategy review taking place with support from Mary Buckley, National College of Ireland</p>

