

Institute of Technology, Sligo

2022

Annual Quality Report Institute of Technology Sligo
Reporting Period 2020 – 2021

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2020 – 2021

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Introduction and Overview of Institution

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

The AQR has been compiled collaboratively and is submitted by Dr Michele Glacken, VP Academic Affairs and Registrar in conjunction with academic and non academic departments across the institute.

In 2020 the Institute of Technology, Sligo (ITSligo) reached a landmark anniversary of 50 years contribution to the education and development landscape in the North West of Ireland. The Institute offers a wide range of flexible contemporary programmes from apprenticeship, through higher certificate and degree level courses to taught postgraduate and research awards.

The mission statement of ITSligo as set out in the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022 is: -

“Advancing economic, social and environmental sustainability through education, innovation and engagement, producing graduates who are innovative, confident and a capable of leading the development of the region and beyond”.

The current strategic plan can be found on the website [here](#). The plan, contains six strategic objectives in the following areas:

1. Students
2. Learning and Teaching
3. Research, Development and Innovation
4. Partnerships and External Engagement
5. Shaping and Influencing Economic, Social and Cultural development
6. Organisation and Governance

The Strategic Pillars are underpinned by the organisation, its governance, quality assurance, staff, financial management, infrastructure and communication.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

The overall responsibility ensuring that the Institute meets its Quality Assurance and Regulatory Commitments rests with the Governing body. Governing Body members are appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills in accordance with the Institute of Technology Acts 1992 - 2006. A new Governing Body was established in March 2020, the current members of the governing body are listed on the website [here](#). IT Sligo has adopted a corporate governance regime in accordance with best practice through adoption on 13th June 2018, of the THEA Code of Governance January 2018 which aligns directly to the Code of Practice for State Bodies issued in August 2016. An updated Code of Governance was adopted by Governing Body at their meeting on 9th October 2019. These Standing Orders are made in accordance with the Second Schedule, paragraph 13 of the IOT Acts, 1992-2006 which provides: "Subject to the provisions of this Act a Governing Body shall regulate, by standing orders or otherwise, its procedure and business." These Standing Orders are made subject, to the relevant Legislation. These standing orders were approved by the Governing Body on 13th May. Where any conflict exists between these Standing Orders and any section of the Acts, the provisions of the Acts will take precedence.

The Institute confirms that all appropriate procedures for internal audit are being carried out with an Audit & Risk Committee, an Executive Risk committee and an Internal Controls Framework reviewed by Management. The Institute operates under a national procurement agreement for Internal Audit services for the sector. The function reports directly to the Audit & Risk Committee. The annual audit plan is informed by discussion with management and the Committee together with an analysis of risk to which the Institute is exposed. The plan is approved by the Audit & Risk Committee and all findings of audits carried out are presented to the Committee.

- (i) Total number of internal audit reviews undertaken in the period – 1 Internal Audit report was approved on 29.09.2020, 1 report was approved on 9th February 2021, 2 reports were approved on 28th September 2021 and 1 report was approved on 23 November 2021. The Institute confirms that the Audit Committee considers the number and scope of the audits to be appropriate as part of the process to monitor the internal control environment.
- (ii) Report titles of completed reviews – 29.09.2020 Internal Financial Controls review 2019/20, 09.02.2021 Follow up review 2020, 28.09.2021 Procurement review and Internal Financial Controls review 2020/21, 23.11.2021 Student Retention review.

The Internal Control Framework is completed annually by the Institute.

The Academic Council, as a statutory body responsible for academic matters within the Institute, has the major task of formulating and implementing the Institute's academic policies. Academic council is appointed by the Governing Body to assist it in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the college and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the courses and the activities of the college. The Academic Council is responsible for the quality of all academic activities within the Institute. The President is the Chairperson of the Council and entitled to be a member of every Committee of the Council as per the Third Schedule to the 1992 Act. 4. The operation of Academic Council is governed by Standing orders which were reviewed in the academic year 2020/21. The Academic council have a pivotal role in ensuring that the quality assurance systems are in place, are robust and adapt in line with innovations and best practice in the sector. To do this the Academic Council has established a number of committees that carry out specific duties and tasks which are then approved or ratified by Academic Council. The participation of a wide spectrum of academic, non-academic and management on these working committees ensure that robust discussions take place and that a consensus approach to changes is achieved. The current committees are listed below but are subject to continuous review as the need arises

- Planning and Coordination committee
- Academic Processes committee
- Research and Innovation committee
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment committee
- Technical University (TU) Transition Committee
- Collaborative Provision
- Designated Awarding Body committee (dissolved June 2021)

While changes are discussed and proposed by any committees, the Academic Processes Committee has a special role in overseeing policies and procedures of the institute to ensure they meet external regulatory requirements, are consistent and that fairness and consistency is enshrined throughout the student life cycle starting with admissions and finishing with graduation.

The Governance and Management of Quality is outlined in the following documents.

[Chapter 1 – Governance and Academic Management](#)

The institution has a quality manual, policies, procedures, guidelines and other documents in place to ensure its programmes are developed, validated, delivered and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012, the amended Act in 2019 and the determinations of QQI. On January 1st 2020, the Institute became a Designated Awarding Body as a consequence of the legislative changes contained in the Qualifications and quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019.

While the quality assurance requirements are translated into Policy, Procedural and other Documents under the direction of the Academic Council and its committees, the implementation of these quality assurance requirements is overseen by the administrative functions of the Executive, the Senior Management team, Faculty Management and all the academic and all PMDS staff of the institute. There is a responsibility on every member of staff to ensure the highest possible standards of academic provision are maintained for its students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Ensuring that this quality assurance culture permeates and informs all the activities of the Institute is a delicate balance. On one hand there is the need for the Institute to meet the explicit QA requirements set out nationally and internationally to maintain and protect the institutional award standards and on the other hand to continue to maintain the reputation and the ability of the Institute to be responsive to rapidly changing learner and stakeholder requirements.

An IT Governance Group meets once per quarter or more often if required. All Information Technology related projects are required to produce a project proposal form and undergo a scrutiny and approvals process via this group. The Projects also submit a closure and "lessons learned" process on completion. The minutes of this group are reviewed by the Executive Committee.

The Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) is a strategic partnership between GMIT, LYIT and IT Sligo aimed at achieving Technological University (TU) status. The alliance will align developments in governance, mission, academic strategy, planning, research and corporate services in preparation for TU Designation. The Technological University (TU) for the West and North-West of Ireland will be one of the largest multi-campus universities on the island, spanning a unique geographical region in transition on the periphery of Europe which has a predominantly dispersed rural population. The work of the CUA is undertaken by a Steering Group, four Working Groups and nineteen sub-groups directly involving over 150 staff and students from across the CUA. The [CUA submitted their application for TU designation](#) to Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on May 21st, 2021. An [International Panel visit was held in July 2021](#) and interrogated the content of the application through a desk top documentary review and a series of virtual interviews with the HEA, QQI and staff and students of the CUA.

<https://cualliance.ie/>

A 'Shadow' Governing Body was established as part of the Connaught Ulster Alliance (CUA)/TU process. This group comprises seven representatives from each of the Governing Bodies of IT Sligo, GMIT and LYIT and each member report back to their home Governing Body who are the ultimate decision makers.

The Institute is committed to listening to the students and other external stakeholders' voices. The Students Union President is a member of Academic Council and Governing Body. Student representatives are selected by each cohort of students and are a member of academic programme committees. Students' complete anonymous evaluations of modules, stage, and programmes at the end of each semester/ stage. These evaluations are considered by programme teams and Heads of Departments. Students are represented on

School review and programmatic review panels. The Registrar holds monthly meetings with the Student Union President and elected officers where issues pertinent to students are discussed.

All programme validation panels, school review panels and programmatic revalidation panel are comprised of external persons from both academia and community/ employers. External persons with particular expertise or perspective are invited to serve on working groups in the Institute to ensure that informed decisions can be made that represent all perspectives on the issues under review.

The Institute has a number of programmes which are accredited by external regulatory Professional Bodies (e.g., C.O.R.U., Engineers Ireland, RIBA etc.). These bodies conduct regular reviews of programmes to ensure they are current and meet the regulatory/ professional body standards. Programme teams constantly engage with these bodies in relation to modifications to programme, programme outcomes etc.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The Institute defines collaborative provision as any programme directly leading to a Higher Education (HE) award (QQI or professional body) which is delivered in part or in whole through an arrangement with a partner organisation. A partner organisation may be another education provider, professional body, business or community organisation. There is a range of different forms of collaborative provision. There may be collaboration in the development and validation of the programme, in the academic monitoring of the programme, in the teaching, in the assessment, and in the awarding etc, or a combination of any of these. Anyone one of the partners may or may not be a lead partner.

In order to ensure the academic quality of these emerging multiple-provider, customer led, programmes it is essential robust procedures are in place to adequately protect the learner and to ensure that each programme, as delivered, is of a recognised national standard. Where two or more providers are collaborating in the development, validation and/or international delivery of a programme, and maybe in joint awarding, then procedures must be in place to not only protect the learner but also the providers. In the case of the later the rules and regulations of both higher education institutes need to be aligned for those particular programmes and documented in Joint Marks and Standards.

The procedures in relation to Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision are outlined in the following documents.

[Quality Manual Chapter 14](#) Policy and Procedures for Collaborative and Trans-National Provision

[UU and IT Sligo Composite Marks and Standards 2016a](#)

[Composite NUIG and IT Sligo Marks and Standards 2015a](#)

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Approval of a programme refers to the process by which the Governing Body of the Institute, with a recommendation from the Executive Committee and Academic Council formally agrees to provide the resources to deliver the validated programme of learning. [Chapter 2](#) of the [Quality Manual](#) and its associated procedures set out the procedures to be followed to develop and validate any new programme or indeed modifications to existing programmes.

All proposed new programmes are designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the Institute Strategic Plans, which focus on the needs of industry and of the region as well as ensuring that programmes are student centred. In designing new programmes, the institute engages with external stakeholders, external expertise, students and alumni. The programmes are designed to allow students routes to progress from Level 6 up to level 8 with further opportunities to progress to study at level 9 and 10.

The Registrars area oversee programme development. Each programme must be validated, a process by which the Academic Council of the Institute, following a recommendation from an External or Internal Peer Review Panel formally recognises a module or a programme as constituting a body of learning leading to a specified award in a designated discipline area. New programmes are generally validated for a period of five years. Validation panels conditions/ recommendations are audited after a designated period of time to ensure that all issues have been addressed and to close the quality look as recommended by CINNTE - recommendation 18. The institute provides training for staff in devising programme and module learning outcomes for the purposes of programme design and development. The system of documents is supported by Module Manager, a database system to maintain the modules and programmes throughout their life cycle.

To augment the communication process around pertinent QA issues in relation to programme development, validation, academic council committee dates etc. An annual quality calendar is available to all staff to support them in their planning

[Chapter 2 Quality Manual New Programmes and Modification to Programmes of Learning](#)

Forms EAP1 to EAP6 supporting the various stages of programme development

[QA003](#) Module Writing procedure

[CDEV005](#) Flexible and new models of Prog Design and Delivery.

Recent Programme Validation Reports are available of the website [here](#)

Recent Audit of Programmes are available [here](#)

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

[Ref: QQI Core QAG Section 2.3.2 – *Learner admission, progression and recognition*; ESG 1.4; QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression (2015)].

Entry to year 1 of full time programmes is by application through the CAO including mature students. The only exception is international students. The institute uses the NFQ as the basis for entry for all programmes. There are a variety of Level 6 to Level 10 programmes available. Information for applicants applying for 1st year or advanced entry is located [here](#). IT Sligo is part of the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and DARE Scheme. In the reporting period, 74 students were part of the HEAR scheme and 97 the DARE Scheme. It is important to note that many more students in the target group of students with a disability and from a disadvantaged socio economic backgrounds enter IT Sligo without deploying either of the access routes above and are being supported by the access office.

There is a separate system for direct entry and advanced entry to the on-line / part time programmes. In this case applications are reviewed and approved by a designated person within each programme. EXAM012 Recognition of Prior Learning procedure provides the details and guides the student through the application process for recognition of prior learning (RPL), which includes non-formal and formal learning as well as prior certified learning. The '[myexperience.ie](#)' platform which is shared with GMIT facilitates these applications. The toolkit includes an information website and an online RPL application tool for candidates looking for access or advanced entry to a higher education programme.

The Institute as part of the West/North West Cluster of NUI Galway, LyIT and GMIT is a recipient of Path 2 and Path 3 funding which are aimed at widening access/ participation in Higher Education. PATH 2 - The 1916 Bursary Fund is a targeted funding scheme established by the Department of Education and Skills to support the implementation of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education. The Bursaries are targeted at students who are socio-economically disadvantaged and who are from target groups that have low participation rates in higher education; mature students, lone parents, students with disabilities, FE students, students from ethnic minority groups and the travelling community. IT Sligo is currently supporting 17 students under this PATH. PATH 3 - IT Sligo are working with the Cranmore Regeneration Project to support local people from a socio-economic disadvantaged area to progress in their education. Formal mentoring is provided by an education mentor to people in the community and school settings. With 60 mentees both youth and adult having engaged in this programme so far. The education mentor is currently engaged with 16 agencies and 6 schools to ensure a collaborative approach to widening participation in higher education for this community. Various workshops have been organised both in the community and IT Sligo campus with 38 second level students attending. The education mentor is also delivering a Mentoring

module to 12 adults completing a QQI level 5 award in Community Mentoring & Advocacy training programme with the MSLETB.

Links to Website:

[Link to All Courses](#)

[Information on Fees and funding](#)

[Website link to Recognition of Prior learning](#)

EXAM012	Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
ADM033	Withdrawal from a Full time Programme Procedure
ADM034	Withdrawal from Part-time/Online Programme Procedure
ADM035	Deferral of Places on Full Time Programmes Procedure
ADM038	Refund of Student Fees Procedure
ADM039	Determination of Online Fees Procedure
ADM040	Waiting List Management procedure

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

As a result of the legal changes brought about by the passing of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance ([Education and Training\) Amendment Act 2019](#) in July 2019 the Academic Council of the institute formed of new *specific purpose* committee of Academic Council to oversee the transition to Designated Awarding Body status (DAB committee). The DAB committee remained in operation until the end of 2020-21 academic year. The three main areas that will be impacted are

- Cultural shift from Compliance to Ownership
- **Academic Governance - Section 36(b)** These provisions seem to strengthen the authority (and responsibility) of academic council, though its fundamental relationship to Governing Body is unaltered by the legislation.
- Define Standards and areas of awarding.

The DAB committee carried out review of several areas that may impact on the legislative impact of becoming a Designated Awarding Body in IT Sligo. The group invited Professor Bowe TUD to speak to the committee on the reshaping of the QE processes in TUD for information and to inform discussion at IT Sligo. The committee reviewed the IT Sligo Graduate Attributes and the CUA Employability Statement, in order to inform future CUA strategy. Several changes were proposed for to QA policies and procedures. As a result changes were approved to Marks and Standards, Recognition of Prior learning procedure, Academic Documents procedure, Document Change Control procedure and changes are also drafted to QA Manual Chapter 1 Governance and Academic Management, Chapter 2 New Programmes and Modification to

Programmes for approval in the following academic year. There was a significant discussion of award titles and a review of potential new titles, these have not yet been implemented but will continue to be reviewed in the context of the CUA, St Angelas Integration and programme development. A new award standard for Early Childhood Education was approved.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

A commitment to teaching, learning and assessment is integral to the purpose, mission, and strategy of the Institute and as we prepare for TU Designation. IT Sligo LTA Strategy expired in 2018. Working in partnership with LyIT and GMIT the CUA Teaching & Learning subgroup the LTA Principles Framework was successfully approved by all three Institute Academic Councils. More detail provided on the development of the principles document is provided in Part B.

Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching, Learning & Assessment (Level 9)



The Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching (CELT) in collaboration with the Department of Social Sciences provides staff with a free 30 credit programme on Teaching, Learning & Assessment. This programme commenced in 2019 and is available not only to academics but anyone with a role in teaching and learning (e.g. library staff, support tutors, instructional designers etc). In 2020- 2021 14 staff registered on the programme. On successful completion of this 30 credit programme, students are also awarded with the National Forum in Teaching & Learning Digital Badge in Universal Design for Learning,

Chapter 3 Assessment of Learners of the Quality manual and the Institute’s Marks and Standards V29 provide a framework for the proper assessment of candidates learning and to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and in a consistent manner. These documents cover the assessment of the learning as specified in the Approved Programme Schedules, and to the decisions regarding the overall award grade of a candidate. Mark and Standards V29 and the Exam regulations are key documents that set out the operation of examination, continuous assessment, selection of external examiners, role of external examiners and conduct of candidates during examinations. Student results are reviewed by an exam board after each examination sitting in consultation with external examiners and are ratified by Academic Council. These documents are supported by a range of additional procedures which provide further details and application forms for a range of academic processes which the student may need on their academic journey.

The development of GURU to manage the examination process has continued in 2020-2021. All external examiners are now able to access and review examination papers and provide feedback to internal examiners in a secure and efficient way through the software. They can now review planned continuous assessment through the software and Nomination of External Examiners and Acceptance of contracts is managed through GURU.

Representatives from IT Sligo attended the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) group meetings hosted by QQI and Dr Perry Share and Dr Niamh Plunkett are representing the institute on the network. Dr Share is a member of NAIN Working Group 1 that is concerned with the **Identification of Common Definitions and National Good Practice Guidelines** . An update in regard to Research integrity is available in section 4.0.

[Chapter 3](#) – Assessment of learners

[IT Sligo Marks and Standards V29](#).

Examination Procedures on web [here](#) and IT Sligo Staff Document Store link [HERE](#)

EXAM009	Reasonable accommodation in examinations for students Procedure
EXAM 007	Request for Special Consideration procedure
EXAM013	Consideration of External Examiners Report
EXAM019	Request for deferral of examination(s) Procedure
EXAM024	Disciplinary Procedure for Student (Examinations) Procedure
EXAM027	Examination Feedback and Appeal Procedure
EXAM030	Application of Extension of CA Deadlines Procedure
EXAM031	Application to Exit with an Embedded Award Procedure
EXAM035	Exam regulations procedure
EXAM036	Repeat Examination Procedure
EXAM035	Exam Regulations Procedure
EXAM039	Examination Papers Security Procedure

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

IT infrastructure continues to expand and update. During the COVID_19 pandemic a fund was provided by the Department of Education to fund a loan scheme for student to access laptops, many of our students availed of this scheme.

Microsoft Office 365 services are provided to all students of the Institute giving them access to the full suite of Office applications as well as online services such as email, etc. IT Services run a student helpdesk during term time for any technical issues that may arise. This is currently working as a virtual helpdesk using an online ticketing system.

Moodle is the online learning management system and Adobe Connect and Microsoft Teams is used for live online lectures with Panopto used for the recording of lectures. Through HEAnet brokerage service, students can avail of discounts on laptops and mobile broadband services.

Student Support Services aim to provide a comprehensive and caring service to help our students achieve their full academic and personal potential. Our motto is “Caring for our Students”. The Student Support Services Officer is available to see students about any personal, general or welfare issues. Support services include:

- ❖ The Admissions Office provides on-going support in such areas as admissions, registration, grants, fees and examinations.
- ❖ Our Access Office support students who have special learning needs, a disability or any circumstance which might need individual consideration. A learning support tutor who works with the Access Officer is available to assist students with special needs such as dyslexia or other specific learning challenges. The Access Office also administers the Student Assistance Fund and the 1916 Bursary.
- ❖ Our Careers Office provides career guidance for all students.
- ❖ Our counselling services will help students to embrace positive living and work through any concerns they have.
- ❖ Disability Support Services Officer: Working with the Access Office, the Disability Support Services Officer will work with staff and students to identify assistive technologies appropriate to the needs of students and help them to obtain optimal use from supports available.
- ❖ Our Pastoral Care Service offers personal support and advice to students of all faiths and none who contact them and are always ready to help.
- ❖ Our student health services, which are free of charge, are available five days a week to help keep students fit and healthy.

IT SLIGO Students’ Union (ITSSU) has three officers and a number of part-time staff to provide ongoing support, guidance and representation. ITSSU works closely with Institute management to ensure that student welfare and facilities are first class. See www.itssu.ie for more details.

For more information please see our website: <https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/student-support-services/>

Peer to Peer mentoring:

In 2019-20 the mentoring programme operated completely online as a consequence of public health guidelines. It was relatively successful, but participation rates were not as high as in previous years.

In 2020 two events occurred that changed the context of the mentoring programme: the Retention Officer moved to a new position within the Institute and was replaced by a new position of Student Success Officer, with a broader remit; in addition, the external consultant, who had run the peer mentoring programme for a number of years, indicated that they did not wish to renew their contract.

After a period of consultation, and in consideration of evaluations of the programme, it was decided to adopt the internationally recognised PASS Peer Assisted Learning programme that has operated very successfully at GMIT and a number of other Irish HEIs. An agreement was reached with GMIT to collaborate on PASS within the context of the CUA, and the new programme is being piloted in three programmes across the faculties at IT Sligo in AY 2021-22. The pilot will be evaluated and, if successful, PASS will gradually be extended across all first-year programmes. The Student Success Officer, who is the IT Sligo PASS Coordinator, was trained in PASS management through Lund University and is now a certified PASS Supervisor.

Academic Student Supports:

Under the remit of the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching (CELT) a number of Academic Support Centres provide a wide range of valuable support and resources for students (and staff). The Centres comprise:

- Academic Writing Centre (AWC)
- Maths Support Centre (MSC)
- Engineering Support Centre (ESC)

Overview of AWC Activity 2020-2021:**Academic Writing Centre (AWC)**

Managed by two tutors, the AWC provides individual support to students through bookable online appointments. Students can choose whether to meet the tutor face to face or online. AW workshops are delivered throughout the year and are generally requested by lecturers for specific modules/programmes so these are timetabled for student groups to attend. In 2020-2021 appointments were extended to 5 days per week with early morning appointments (from 7am-9am) to accommodate international, part-time and working students.

Support	Semester	UG	PG	Staff	Total
	Semester 1	86	62	0	148

Individual 40 min appointments	Semester 2	110	56	2	166
Total		196	118	2	314
Support	Semester	UG	PG	Staff	Total
Academic Writing Workshops	Semester 1	13	re	0	16
	2	4	3	3	8
Total		17	6	3	26

Maths Support Centre (MSC)

The MSC established in 2018 continues to expand in line with student and staff demand. In 2020-2021 individual evening appointments were available for students. Due to restrictions, it was not possible to operate the “drop-in clinic” however, every effort was made to encourage students to attend both individual and group tutorials. The Centre staff (comprising one MS Tutor and 4 PhD students) continued to expand on the development of tailored online video tutorials hosted on MSC Moodle page. Developments included:

- Class specific content across all Maths modules on individual tiles on Moodle (easy accessibility for students)
- WIRIS based Moodle Quizzes developed to complement students’ lectures

To support learning due to restrictions the majority of Maths Support services were automated e.g.

- Online booking system
- Online chat box
- Online upload maths problem facility
- Video tutorials developed continually to further automate tutoring

New Services developed January - May 2021

- Preparatory course for Quality Assurance Students
- Maths Support Centre access point created on Open Courses portal of IT Sligo
- Series of videos for Alternative Maths Exam created for prospective students

Total Contact Hours with MSC	Semester 1	204 hours	total
	Semester 2	240 hours	444 hours
Total Online Tutorials	Semester 1	169	
	Semester 2	183	352 hours
Total Problem Corrections & Video Uploads by Tutors	Semester 1	48	
	Semester 2	19	67 hours

Total MSC Video Views by students	Semester 1	661	
	Semester 2	390	1, 051 hours

Engineering Support Centre (ESC)

Engineering Support is predominantly advertised for 1st year students, but all students are welcome to attend and avail of supports. Total Videos Created by ESC tutor: **21**

Total contact hours with ESC	Semester 1	109	Total 180 hours
	Semester 2	71	

Library Facilities

Yeats Library traverses 3 floors, C600+ study spaces, 13 seminar rooms, an Archive Room, shelving and a special collections room. Students have access to a wide range of databases, journals, books and other resources such as Research@THEA. The library staff engage with students both in person and online and support the development of library literacy skills through the provision of tutorials and webinars. A series of library guides serves to address many student/ staff queries. <https://library.itsligo.ie>. Preparation for a periodic review of the services provided by the Library has commenced.

International Students

The International office supports the international student body in tandem with the mainstream services. International student ambassadors serve as a conduit from the International office to present and future students. The International office aim to provide the international student body with both a cultural and academic experience and organise a series of events to support this intention throughout the academic year.

Internationalisation

The internationalisation of teaching and learning is critical to the mission of a Technological University (TU). The eligibility criteria detailed in the Technological Universities Act 2018 references that there should be opportunities for staff and students to teach and learn outside the State, opportunities for staff and students from outside the State to spend time at the applicant institute and collaborative projects with higher education institutes from outside the state involving joint research projects and joint provision of programmes.

The success of this strategy will be underpinned by being an internationally oriented and globally competitive HEI. By implication, the CUA TU will act as the primary driver of internationalisation and will

(a) work in partnership at a sectoral level to enhance the prospects of success in key overseas markets (e.g., cooperation between the CUA TU and other Technological Universities);

- (b) embrace the opportunities presented by transnational education (e.g., Joint Programmes) and disruptive forms of delivery (e.g., on-line education); and
- (c) strive to enhance the internationalisation of curriculum.

The three Institutes within the CUA have a long-established relationship with Erasmus+ which paved the way for integrating International students onto our campuses. All campuses have diversified their International student mix welcoming both European and Non-EU annually. The CUA will seek to promote and support the comprehensive internationalisation of the technological university within three main pillars of activity:

- Internationalisation at Home
- Internationalisation Abroad
- Internationalisation of Research

1st Pillar: Internationalisation at Home

Our plan is to transition to a more holistic encompassing version of Internationalisation, also known as comprehensive internationalisation. Internationalisation is a pan institutional activity involving all students and staff members.

Critical to Internationalisation at Home is ensuring that students who come to our campuses from overseas have the best possible experience. This includes organising events to celebrate the diversity of cultures and to introduce international students to other students, through supporting their engagement in clubs and societies and through the Student Ambassador Programme and the International Ambassador Digital Badge (see Appendices for more details on this).

It is important to note that the diversity of our student population at IT Sligo may impact the ability of students to avail of Erasmus and attain that international/overseas experience at a partner Institute. Over 65% of students are in receipt of SUSI grant and may not have the finances needed to study overseas, there is also have a high percentage of mature students and a large cohort of our students work outside of college. In 2021, the International Office and the Centre for Enhancement of Learning & Teaching (CELT) worked jointly on the development and delivery of a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project. Between January and May 2021, two lecturers in the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences worked closely with a Professor in Georgian College, Canada to roll-out a pilot COIL project with 1st year students across the two Institutes. This project was funded through the Innovative Opportunities Transforming Higher Education (iNOTE) project. The success of the pilot led to the provision of a more substantial COIL project in semester 1 2021. A case study of the COIL pilot project (Jan – May 2021) is provided in Section 4.0.

2nd Pillar: Internationalisation Abroad

Covid-19 has emphasised the vulnerability of physical mobility. Physical Mobility privileges the already privileged. CUA students typically do not possess a second language as a second language is not a matriculation entry requirement at most Irish Institutes of Technology. Many are mature or part-time students, whilst a significant cross-section of our full-time students commit to their studies with a short-term view (e.g., NFQ Level 6 or 7) with the possible option of further progression to an Honours Bachelor (NFQ Level 8) or Master's (NFQ Level 9) Degree at some indeterminable date in the future.

In general applied science institutions around Europe tend to lag the older universities when it comes to international mobility of students. This is in part, because their student bodies are in general, less affluent than their university counterparts and find it more difficult to commit to a full semester in another country. Therefore, we will take advantage of the new ERASMUS programme's broader range of options, including shorter visits and blended international experience, taking advantage of online communication and collaboration.

3rd Pillar: Research and Innovation

Connecting our region to the world includes connecting to networks of discovery, knowledge and practice as well as teaching. It involves building alliances with other academic and research institutions, with industry, public services and communities also interested in developing and trialling new knowledge. It further means opening opportunities for people and organisations in the region to deepen their international contacts and experience as well as helping to attract international organisations to become involved in the development of the region.

The CUA partners last year drew down €5.5m in EU funding for research and research-related projects. International research partnerships enable us to secure funding for larger research projects and both share our expertise with and learn from international networks. They also enable local partners such as companies and public bodies to also make further overseas linkages, helping to deliver on the part of the institutions' mission that is there to provide a bridge between the region and the world.

An example of being stronger acting together has been a recent €5.4m bid for European Digital Innovation Hub funding, where the partnership led by the CUA has been shortlisted as one of four for the next round in the autumn (two will be funded in the next round, with a possibility for the others in the following phase), the only HE-led partnership to get that far.

Internationalisation Partnerships

It is widely recognised that partnerships are key to any higher education Institute wishing to evolve and embed internationalisation throughout an organisation.

It is part of our strategy to participate in the European Universities programme, with the objective of building stable, strong and integrated partnerships at European level in teaching and research. In addition to other partnerships, the TU will be part of a recently formed strategic alliance called RISEN, with members in Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Belgium. This alliance will be the focus for a range of collaborative initiatives under the new ERASMUS programme including staff and student mobility, staff development weeks, joint and blended programmes and the European Universities Initiative itself.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Developing and systematising the quality assurance approaches in relation to research was a CINNTE recommendation (13) and below indicates the current status.

Quality assurance of research is embedded within the Institute's overall quality assurance manual/processes. It is the responsibility of the Academic Council, delegated to its Research and Innovation Committee. Operational management is through the Research Office.

The research chapter of the QA manual also exists as a stand-alone document – the *Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Postgraduate Research at IT Sligo*. As such, it is the primary research QA resource for staff, students and other stakeholders. It sets out the context of research in the Institute and then details every part of the process flow, from student selection and registration, through monitoring to examination. It details the standards of research degrees, ethics standards, the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, students and examiners, project management processes and requirements for the preparation of a thesis. A copy of the Code of Practice can be found [here](#).

The Code of Practice is fully aligned with national and European research programme quality assurance codes, including: QQI Topic-specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes; Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (QQI); HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education, the 'Salzburg' Principles, the 'Salzburg II' Recommendations; National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland.

The Code of Practice is reviewed by the Research Office and the Research and Innovation Committee. A 2021 version is currently being prepared that will incorporate a new process of Career Development, Training and Networking Planning (including Training Needs Analysis) for postgraduate students (see Case Study 6 Research), a new Workplace Research Collaboration Agreement process (see Research Case Study 1(c)), and new Research Integrity provisions.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

To champion positive equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment and selection processes, all IT Sligo recruitment advertisements include the following statement:

‘IT Sligo offers a modern, dynamic and inclusive working environment, in which equality and diversity is embraced, and applications are welcome from all. A range of flexible working options support staff in balancing their work and home life. In response to the pandemic, the Institute developed a remote working guide supported by a range of workshops for all the staff of the Institute. [IT Sligo Remote Working Software and Policy Guide](#)

In 2019, the Governing Body established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to assist the Institute in its duties of promoting equality. The Institute is a signatory to the Athena SWAN Charter. IT Sligo has set up an Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT) in 2019 to undertake an analysis of the position of IT Sligo with respect to gender equality and to develop an Action Plan to address any identified issues. The Action Plan was approved by Governing Body in November 2020 with the Institute awarded a Bronze Award in March 2021. In June 2021, the Institute’s Governing Body approved a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, reaffirming the Institute’s commitment to the principles and promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of Institutional activity. <https://www.itsligo.ie/edi/edi-committee/>

Aurora is leadership development initiative for women and those who identify as a woman. It brings together leadership experts and higher education institutions to take positive action to seek to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector. Participants explore four key areas associated with leadership success: Identity, Impact and Voice; Power and Politics; Core Leadership Skills; Adaptive Leadership Skills. Aurora seeks to support women and their institutions to fulfil their leadership potential through thought provoking activities, collaborative problem-solving activities, and motivating stories supported by inspirational women role models. Participation embeds strong networks of early career women across the sector to share best practice, insights, and experiences. IT Sligo facilitate those who identify as women to participate in the Aurora programme on an annual basis.

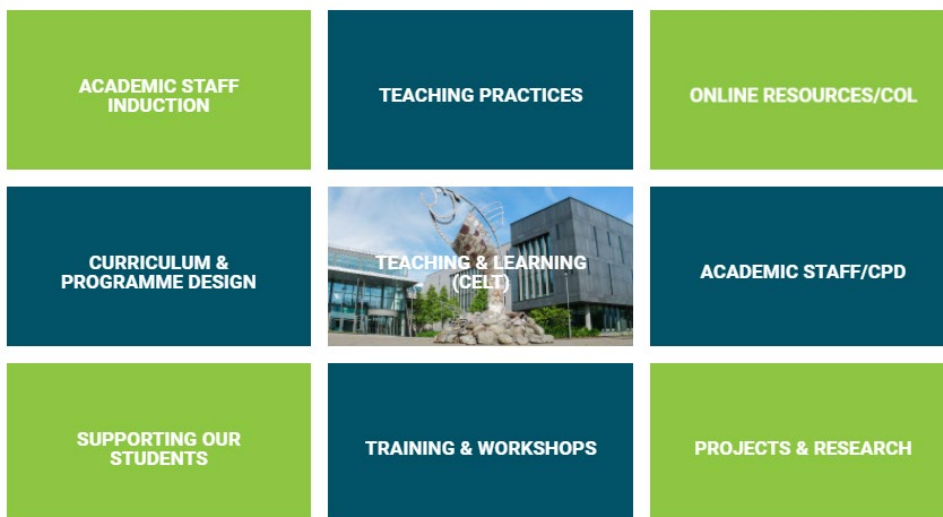
In response to the Department of education and Skills report - Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institution publication and associated Framework, an action plan has been developed by the Institute.

On commencement the institute recognises the importance of supporting new staff members as they commence their employment in IT Sligo by ensuring an appropriate induction occurs. The HR team organise a formal induction to provide staff with information, promote the culture and values consistently and provide opportunities to meet other staff. IT Sligo is committed to supporting staff to develop their skills and competence through the acquisition of academic qualifications, in line with the needs and objectives of the Institute. These objectives include: - Acquisition of a Level 10 qualification or equivalent - Acquisition of

qualifications relating to strategic objectives - The development of online learning. The available supports are set out in HR041 IT Sligo Policy on support for further study leading to academic qualification. The process of identifying development needs is the Performance Management and Development Scheme (PMDS) where objectives are agreed, and development needs discussed. Resources are made available and approvals prioritised to those applications which most closely match the Institute’s strategic objectives. Since 2019-2020 IT Sligo now offers all permanent staff of IT Sligo a semester free allocation for the purposes of completion of their PhD or other Doctoral level qualification. All HR related procedure can be found on the internal staff portal.

The Institute has entered a partnership with LinkedIn Learning to provide over 16,000 courses over a range of subjects to suit the training needs of all staff. With this resource staff can access on demand training on any device and can personalise and tailor training to their specific skills needs.

Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching (CELT)



CELT department provides a wide range of services to support academic staff develop their teaching, methodologies, learning approaches and assessment strategies. A range of short video tutorials have been developed by IT Sligo academic staff who know exactly what it is like to teach in the Institute and how to support students. Staff can work through videos in their own time and at their own pace. The Centre supports academics in developing innovative teaching practices and engaging student learning experiences through delivery of bespoke seminars, guest speakers, workshops and training events.

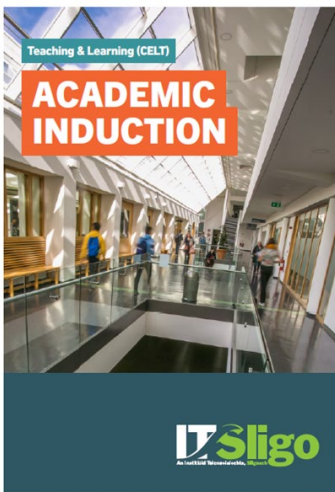
CELT is also committed to the scholarship of Teaching and Learning and over the period 2020-2021 coordinated a range of innovative teaching and learning projects (SATLE) and managing strategic higher education partnerships with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland and the HEA, Ireland. Further information is available on the Teaching & Learning (CELT) Website:

<https://www.itsligo.ie/administration/registrar/celt/>

CELT has developed a number of bespoke resources to support academics new to IT Sligo and/or new to teaching:

Academic Induction Handbook

The Academic Induction handbook has been developed to support new academics in IT Sligo. It provides a wide range of practical information on all resources, supports and activities required when starting in the Institute. Links embedded within the handbook navigate staff to various portals and resources for ease of access to information.



This the link to the Academic Induction booklet - [Issuu reader embeds](#)

In addition, an Academic Induction programme is facilitated once per semester commencing in September and January. Academic staff who commence after the start date can still register and have access to the recordings on the Academic Induction Moodle page.

List of Policies and Procedures related to Staff Development and Support revised during the review period.

COMM005	Anti Fraud Policy
COMM006	Risk Management Policy
COMM011	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
COMM012	Crisis Communication Policy
HR005	Parental Leave Procedure
HR007	Career Break and Leave of Absence Procedure
HR008	Compassionate Leave Procedure
HR048	Application for Marriage /Civil Partnership leave
HR052	PhD Final Write Up Semester Free Allocation Procedure
HR054	Parents Leave Procedure
HR055	Shorter Working Year Procedure
HR056	Recruitment and Selection Appeals Procedure

6.0 Information and Data Management

The Institute is committed to managing data in a manner that is compliant with relevant legislation (e.g. GDPR and Freedom of Information). The Freedom of Information Act 2014 as applies to IT Sligo provides that every person has the following legal rights:

- access official records held by the Institute
- have personal information held on them corrected or updated where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
- be given reasons for decisions taken by public bodies that affect them

These rights mean that people can seek access to personal information held on them no matter when the information was created and to other records created after 21st April 1998. This applies to Institute staff as well as the general public. The Institute will accommodate any requests for information received in writing. Access will be provided, by allowing inspection of the original record or by arrangement and consistent with the need to protect privacy and the public interest. The institute is committed fully to providing records in whatever format data is held in accordance with the act (excluding any exempted material or records as allowed under the Act). Records may also be refused on administrative grounds where the record doesn't exist, where they have already been released or where disruption of work of a function or the college would be caused.

Policies updated during the period of the review

COMM005	Anti Fraud Policy
COMM006	Risk Management Policy
COMM012	Crises Communication Policy

7.0 Public Information and Communication

IT Sligo publishes information on the Institute’s strategic objectives, and on its extensive range of fulltime and online programmes, through publications, media and public enquiries, news releases and across IT Sligo



online platforms. The releases are published on the news section of itsligo.ie and are also distributed to regional and national media outlets.

The production, approval and distribution of Institute news releases is co-ordinated by the Communication Office.

Press releases are distributed on a weekly basis to regional and national media and periodicals. These press releases have led to numerous print, radio and television coverage throughout the year. We use Kantar Media software to monitor media coverage and report to the President’s office on a regular basis.



The Communications office creates a printed newspaper every quarter which is distributed on campus and to 6,000 homes and businesses across the Northwest region from North Mayo to Southwest Donegal. The newspaper highlights all the main news of the institute and helps promote courses and events throughout the year. Since the pandemic we have had to move from a quarterly printed newspaper to a weekly email newsletter.



A report is issued to the Governing Body from the Communications Office every six weeks. The ‘President’s Report’ gives a round-up of news, events, updates and achievements of the Institute. The report is also shared with staff via the internal portal.

Each year the Communications office produces the Institute's Annual Report which is shared via our website.

On a daily basis the office update students, staff and wider community via our very active social media channels including; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. This includes the production of videos, photography and other branded content. All publications are accessible at the following link.

[Publications - Institute of Technology Sligo \(itsligo.ie\)](https://www.itsligo.ie/publications)

The Communications Office works very closely with colleagues in promoting and coordinating events throughout the year including; Science Week, Engineering Week, International Women’s Day, Conferring

and regular conferences. This includes booking venues, speakers, photographers and promoting externally through media and social channels. The pandemic moved all of these events online in the reporting period. The marketing function within the Institute is responsible for promoting both the CAO based programmes and the online programme offering to recruit full time and part time students to the institute.

The Institute communicates with CAO applicants and stakeholders through the school's liaison function and digital marketing channels. That involves school visits and presentations, open day events on campus and attendance at recruitment and careers fairs of campus. Information evenings for parents both on campus and off campus were organised to help educate them on the CAO process. The online team communicated with stakeholders such as employers and regional partners and directly to applicants mainly through digital communication channels working within the GDPR data policies within the institute & CAO. Prospectus for both CAO applicants and online applicants are available digitally.

[ITSLIGO-PROSPECTUS-2022-WEB.pdf](#)

[ONLINE-PROSPECTUS-2021-FINAL.pdf \(itsligo.ie\)](#)



In order to ensure all staff and students of the three Institutes of the CUA were kept informed and felt included in the application towards a Technological University a monthly CUA electronic newsletter was commenced during the reporting period. The link to same was e-mailed to all staff and students. <https://cualliance.ie/news/>

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Once a programme of learning has been validated and delivery commenced, the process of monitoring and on-going management of the programme commences. There is a formal mechanism for QA that facilitates two-way communication between staff and students that included a channel for feedback to inform programme design, development and delivery.

Academic quality assurance relating monitoring of programmes is managed through:

- Programme Committees
- School Policy Committees
- Periodic School Reviews
- Periodic Programme Reviews

The Programme Committee facilitates the routine monitoring of a programme to ensure that it is being delivered according to the approved programme schedule, identify impediments to student learning (through for example, monitoring student performance, analysing students results), collecting feedback from students regarding the delivery and assessment strategies and engaging with External Examiners. Key to this is a Programme Monitoring Report (EAP7), prepared for each year during semester 1. The Programme Committee is required to analyse multiple sources of data including student retention and recommend actions to be taken. The Head of Faculty, together with the Heads of Department review Programme Monitoring Reports and prepare a summary of actions for the Faculty.

The Faculty Policy Committee facilitates the overseeing and implementation of the Faculty Plan. Its primary focus is the implementation of strategic initiatives rather than operational issues such as Interpretation of the Institute Strategic Plan in respect of Faculty activities, academic developments, advising the Faculty on physical resource implications or staff recruitment in specialist discipline areas.

The periodic review of faculties and programmes is completed through the Programmatic Review (PR) process every five years. This is separated into two stages Faculty Planning (completed first) and then Review and Revalidation of programmes. Typically, the Faculty Planning process encompasses the entire activities of the Faculty, within the wider sphere of education, business and the community. The revision of programmes may comprise the review of a single programme or of a suite of programmes. Extensive documentation of the proposed changes to programmes is then reviewed by a internal and external panels comprised of members selected internally, other higher education institution nationally and internationally, professional bodies and members of the business community.

In addition to the monitoring of academic activities the QA also encompasses the periodic review of professional support units.

A process for the review of services under has been formalised and is captured in a newly developed procedure ([QA005 Periodic Quality Review of Services Procedure.pdf](#)) which is detailed. The Institutes goal for developing higher quality is centred on its staff and their ability to assess and to continuously improve quality and performance. One such mechanism is through Periodic Quality Reviews which involve two interrelated processes: (i) internal self-assessment by staff; and (ii) external peer review by independent experts. Self-assessment involves staff assessing quality and performance of their unit and comparing or benchmarking it against national/ international best practice. It also involves generating and implementing ideas that can increase quality and performance as part of the operational planning process. Peer Review involves inviting independent peers from other organisations to evaluate the self-assessment process, provide insight and ideas and then issue recommendations on how to improve quality and performance within the unit. Preparation for the first review (Library services) began in q 3 of 2021

The proposed Quality Review process has a number of key stages:

1. Approval of Review List
2. Self-assessment including Benchmarking
3. Selection of Review Team
4. Review Visit and completion of Review Report
5. Agreement of Action Plans
6. Reporting of Review Results
7. Annual Progress Reports

[Chapter 4 On going Management and Monitoring of Programmes](#) covers the activities of both the Programme committee and the Faculty Policy Committee.

[Chapter 5 School planning and Programme Revalidation Process](#)

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

See section 1.2 above

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	24
Awarding bodies	3
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Hons Forensic Investigation and Analysis (Level 8) Date of next review Scheduled Surveillance Visit in Q4 2021
Date of accreditation or last review	10/02/2021
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Biomedical Sciences
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Hons Biomedical Science (Life Sciences) (Ulster University award but co-delivered by IT Sligo)
Date of accreditation or last review	14/02/2018
Date of next review	14/02/2023

3. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	Ulster University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Hons Biomedical Science (Life Sciences)
Date of accreditation or last review	14/11/2019
Date of next review	22/04/2024

4. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	IT Sligo and NUI Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	Level 9 Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs

Date of accreditation or last review	16/09/2019
Date of next review	17/09/2024

5. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	NUI Galway and IT Sligo Joint Award
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs and Operations Level 8 Certificate in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs and Quality Level 8 Higher Diploma in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs and Quality Level 8 MSc Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs Level 9
Date of accreditation or last review	15/04/2019
Date of next review	14/04/2024

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CIWEM- Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management
Programme titles and links to publications	Environmental Science with Ecology (Levels 6, Level 7 and Level 8), BSc in Environmental Protection (Level 7), BSc in Environmental Science (Level 8), Cert in Water and Wastewater Operations (Level 6), Cert in Drinking Water Treatment Operations (Level 6) , Cert in Wastewater Treatment Operations (Level 6) , Higher Cert in water and wastewater operations (Level 6), MSc in Environmental Health and Safety Management (Level 9) , Cert, PG Diploma and MSc in Water Services Management, PG Diploma and MSc in Environmental Protection.
Date of accreditation or last review	11/05/2020
Date of next review	19/05/2025

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	IOSH - Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
Programme titles and links to publications	Occupational Safety and Health (Level 7 and Level 8 - fulltime), Occupational Safety and Health Management (Level 6, Level 7 and Level 8 - online), MSc in Environmental Health and Safety (online) Accreditation approved Jan 2022. Currently at sign off stage

Date of accreditation or last review	14/01/2022
Date of next review	

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CIWEM- Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management
Programme titles and links to publications	Environmental Science with Ecology (Levels 6, Level 7 and Level 8), BSc in Environmental Protection (Level 7), BSc in Environmental Science (Level 8), Cert in Water and Wastewater Operations (Level 6), Cert in Drinking Water Treatment Operations (Level 6) , Cert in Wastewater Treatment Operations (Level 6) , Higher Cert in water and wastewater operations (Level 6), MSc in Environmental Health and Safety Management (Level 9) , Cert, PG Diploma and MSc in Water Services Management, PG Diploma and MSc in Environmental Protection.
Date of accreditation or last review	05/04/2020
Date of next review	06/04/2025

9. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) in Architecture
Date of accreditation or last review	23/09/2018
Date of next review	07/04/2022

10. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) in Accounting
Date of accreditation or last review	24/05/2016
Date of next review	

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

Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering HC in Electronic and Computer Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	17/03/2021
Date of next review	17/03/2023

12. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Civil Engineering HC in Civil Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	15/01/2022
Date of next review	16/01/2023

13. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	Master in Social Work
Date of accreditation or last review	01/11/2019
Date of next review	01/11/2024

14. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Honours Social Care Practice
Date of accreditation or last review	05/02/2020
Date of next review	05/02/2025

15. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Register of Exercise Professionals of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc. [Hons] Public Health and Health Promotion, Level 8; BSc. [Ord.] Health Science and Physiology, Level 7; BSc. [Hons] Health Science & Physical Activity, Level 8;
Date of accreditation or last review	17/03/2021
Date of next review	16/05/2022

16. Type of arrangement	PRSB
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Name of body:	Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Architectural Design
Date of accreditation or last review	07/06/2020
Date of next review	07/06/2022

17. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Data Centre Facilities Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	14/01/2021
Date of next review	13/01/2023

18. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Mechatronics Engineering HC in Mechatronics Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	14/01/2021
Date of next review	13/01/2023

19. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Polymer Processing
Date of accreditation or last review	14/01/2021
Date of next review	13/01/2023

20. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in (Hons) in Civil Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	15/01/2021
Date of next review	13/01/2023

21. Type of arrangement	PRSB
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Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Masters of Engineering in Road and Transport Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	15/01/2021
Date of next review	15/01/2025

22. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Mechanical Engineering HC in Mechanical Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	17/03/2021
Date of next review	17/03/2023

23. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Water and Wastewater Treatment Operations. Certificate in Drinking Water Treatment Operations. Certificate in Wastewater Treatment Operations
Date of accreditation or last review	21/03/2019
Date of next review	21/03/2024

24. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying (Ab-initio) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying (Add-on) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying (Add-on) BSc (hons) Construction project management and Applied tech
Date of accreditation or last review	04/05/2017
Date of next review	03/05/2022

25. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Building
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Project Management (Add-on) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Project Management (Add-on) online Bachelor

	of Science in Construction Management (Add-on) Bachelor of Science in Advanced Wood & Sustainable Building Technology (Ab-initio)
Date of accreditation or last review	11/09/2017
Date of next review	11/09/2022

26. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Property Regulatory Services Authority License A,B,C,D
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Cert in Property Services and Facilities Management
Date of accreditation or last review	04/04/2017
Date of next review	

27. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Building
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying (Ab-initio) Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying
Date of accreditation or last review	05/04/2017
Date of next review	20/04/2022

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	3
Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	2

1. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Ulster
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science (Life Sciences) programme online BSc Hons Applied Medical Sciences (Joint Ulster / IT Sligo award)(Online)
Date of last review	01/11/2019

Date of next review	01/11/2022
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2. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Institute of Technology Sligo and Tianjin University of Technology & Education
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Electronic & Computer Engineering BEng (Hon) in Electronic & Computer Engineering (Add-On)
Date of last review	11/09/2017
Date of next review	08/09/2021

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	National University of Ireland Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs (Online) Higher Diploma in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs and Quality (Online)
Date of last review	11/09/2019
Date of next review	11/09/2024

4. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Insurance Institute of Ireland (III)
Programme titles and links to publications	SG_BINSU_S07 Certificate in Insurance Product Advice - APA SG_BININ_S07 Certificate in Insurance Practice-CIP Higher Diploma Level 8 60 credits- due to commence July 2021? Not sure what this is SG_BINSU_S08 Higher Diploma (in Business) in insurance Management- MDI BA Honours in Insurance Practice (Apprenticeship)
Date of last review	31/08/2018
Date of next review	31/08/2021

5. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Life Insurance Association (LIA)
Programme titles and links to publications	SG_BPROF_S07 – Certificate in Professional Financial Advice SG_BRETI_S07 – Certificate in Retirement Planning SG_BCRED_S07 – Certificate in Credit Union Operations SG_BDCPE_S07 – Certificate in DC Pension Scheme

	Trusteeship Single Subject Certificate Sales & Customer Service for Insurance and Financial Products SG_BFINA_009 Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Financial Planning – approval stage.
Date of last review	31/08/2021
Date of next review	

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	3
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1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Moate Business College
Programme titles and links to publications	L7 BA in Fine Art L8 BA (Hons) in Fine Art
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	19/02/2020
Date of next review	19/02/2024
Detail of the agreement	Advanced entry to IT Sligo's Fine Art programmes at Level 7 and Level 8 Stage 2 from Art Craft and Design QQI Level 5 Moate Business College

2. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Cavan Institute of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (General) Level 7 180 ECTS
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	02/06/2019
Date of next review	12/03/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students undertake year 1 of the BSc at Cavan Institute and on successful completion of year 1 gain entry into year 2 of the BSc at IT Sligo. Differential validation panel held in November 2018. Approved by academic council June 2019.

3. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Counselling Courses & Psychotherapy Training - IICP College
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Introductory Counselling Skills (Online) (60ECTS)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	28/03/2022
Date of next review	07/04/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students can apply for advanced entry to the year two of the BSc (Hons) in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy. They must have successful complete IT Sligo award and then apply for admission and consideration.

[Institute of Technology Sligo

2022

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

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The Institutes strategic plan which as 6 overarching objectives related to

1. Students
2. Learning and Teaching
3. Research, Development and Innovation
4. Partnerships and External Engagement
5. Shaping and Influencing Economic, Social and Cultural development
6. Organisation and Governance

It is reviewed by the Executive committee on a quarterly basis and is reported to the HEA via the Compact document. The original Compact shows the alignment between the Institute's and national objectives/actions and the achievement of these are planned using existing available resources. The objectives selected for the Compact focus on key aspects of higher education (student supports, flexible learning, internationalisation) and on corporate aims (such as good governance and technological university ambitions). These are key to the success of the Institute as a regional provider of HE and a leader in online delivery; and to achieving its KPIs of (i) growing to 10,000 students (base of 5,800), (ii) doubling the number of graduates (base of 1,500) and (iii) becoming a technological university. The following graphic shows a synopsis of achievements reported into the HEA in March 2021

Strategic Plan 2017-22: KPIs	Key metric	Achievement (base: March 2017)
	4,000 full time/on-campus enrolments (inlc. Online fulltime)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-campus: 3,684; 1st year: 4% increase over 2020 Apprenticeships 342; 50% over base 54% of all students based in the workforce
	6,000 'online' enrolments	4,818: 2.5 fold increase over base
	Work-based training/CPD	3,807 in March 2021 taking 15 credits
	10,000 overall enrolments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≈8,502 : 45% rise over base;
	200 researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Researcher: 106 TU-Masters: 151
	82% Retention	Progression (2019-20): Yr 1-2: 82%; Yr 2-3 84%; Yr 3-4: 89%
	TU designation (CUA data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research enrolments: 4.17% LLL students: 21% flexible + 51% joint Industry Master's or PhD degree: 93% PhD: 45% (actual 39% + equivalent)
	120 Company Engagements/Start-ups	45 – from base of 40
	Engagement with established regional SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing Cluster project Digital Manufacturing Centre PEM Technology Gateway A Library/Creative facility jointly with SCC European University Network
	3% of budget put into reserves	Achieved or exceeded YoY

With reference to the first objective which is centred on our students, the Institute has through various initiatives (HEAR, DARE, PATH 2 & PATH 3, articulation agreements, Joint degrees, apprenticeships, new programme types, modes of delivery etc) have created an educational environment which supports a diversity of learners. In the reporting period, Path 2 and Path 3 initiatives were reviewed as part of the work of the Cluster (GMIT, LYIT, NUI Galway and IT Sligo) group. In addition, the modifications to both Path 2 & Path 3 in terms of funding and administration (DFHERIS and HEA led) were considered. In the reporting period, the cluster group drafted a new collaborative proposal for Access to Higher Education (PATH 3) for the period 2021-2024. The Access Office participated in the ATS symposium hosted by our cluster partner LYIT in the reporting period. The CRM system for online student application was successfully implemented. Following implementation, a comprehensive process improvement end to end review of all stages of the system was undertaken and updates are being introduced in the next reporting period and are detailed later in the report. A number of quality initiatives have been put in place through the Centre for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Centre of Online Learning in the reporting period to support the continuous professional development of staff and the teaching and learning environment which is the focus of the second objective related to Learning & Teaching.

The Institute, Research Centres continue to address the 3rd strategic objective. Below is a synopsis of the focus and outcomes of one of the research centres in the reporting period. The PEM Research Centre builds on the Institute's research strengths in material science, laser processing, micro- machining, polymer processing, 3D Printing/Additive Manufacturing, manufacturing process control and statistical process analysis. The PEM SRC structure provides our Principal Investigators, who have all individually demonstrated notable research achievements through engagement with industry, a platform to consolidate our experience, expertise and resources. The PEM RDI themes provide unique industry R&D support offering in precision engineering and, material science and manufacturing. In addition, they complement and leverage of a number of SFI and Enterprise Ireland funded research centres that we have formed strategic collaborations with such as I-Form and NWCAM. Through coupling these areas of expertise together and exploiting common competencies, the PEM Research Centre is positioning itself to provide comprehensive RDI provisions to the wider Irish manufacturing industry located in the region and beyond. One of the more significant highlights of this reporting period is the PEM TG securing its own dedicated factory premises in the Finisklin IDA park to grow and scale its support activities for manufacturing industries, also providing significant opportunities for PEM to engage in applied research collaboration.

Summary KPIs

KPI Achieved (combined 2020 & 2021)

Peer Review Publications (Including Conferences)	119 (<i>inc 14 conferences papers and 3 book chapters</i>)
External Research Income secured	€10,999,146
Internal Research income secured (Bursaries, capacity fund) <i>9 CUA/Presidents Bursaries, 5 Capacity funds</i>	€ 767, 576
No of companies supported (<i>See PEM Innovation Voucher Table, PEM PIs have also engaged frequently with companies outside innovation voucher projects including several co-innovate project</i>)	75+
External Research Innovation Funding Applications Submitted (<i>excluding innovation vouchers</i>)	97 (<i>79 successful, 11 unsuccessful, 7 under review</i>)
No. of current PEM Research staff (funded)	10
No. of current Postgraduate Registrations	28 (<i>net increase of 13 since 2019</i>)
Postgraduate Graduations	5

A number of regional and international partnerships were developed during the reporting period addressing the focus of two strategic objectives - Partnerships and External Engagement & Shaping and Influencing Economic, Social and Cultural development.

The Institute signed a formal strategic agreement with five HEIs in other EU member states called the RISEN Alliance, committing to strengthening collaboration in curriculum, student and staff mobility, and in research. The other partners are the Universities of Applied Science in Jyväskylä (Finland), Karel de Grote (Antwerp, Belgium), Esslingen (Germany), Sannio (Italy) and Obuda (Budapest, Hungary). The purpose of this collaboration is both to strengthen the network of expertise available to the partners for teaching and research, and to provide our students with the opportunity to gain a stronger international experience with us. IT Sligo is leading a project, within the RISEN Alliance, to implement a European Master's programme, involving 140 managers of SMEs participating in a series of peer mentor meetings, expert workshops and mentoring in the development of a strategic plan to help them scale up their companies. This model of multi-disciplinary, practice-based programme can be used as a basis for other such collaborative curriculum provision in other fields.

Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) [Alliance \(cualliance.ie\)](http://cualliance.ie)

The Connacht Ulster Alliance of GMIT, LYIT and IT Sligo made significant progress towards meeting the Technological University (TU) criteria during the reporting period as previously alluded to with the formal application to becoming a Technological University made in May 2021. Link to submission document is available at [Alliance \(cualliance.ie\)](http://cualliance.ie) and [promotional video](#)

[A new university for the West and North-West, a step closer – Alliance \(cualliance.ie\)](#)

- Various documents were developed by the CUA during the reporting period and were part of the submission document. Exemplars of same
 - Examination Regulations for the new TU
- CUA Blended and Online learning Policy Framework
- CUA EDI Values and Principles Framework
- CUA Student Success Strategy Framework
- CUA Employability Statement

The new Technological University (TU) will be one of the largest multi-campus universities on the island, bringing together students, enterprise and communities spanning a unique geographical region in transition. The region offers a high level of cultural, artistic and outdoor activities providing an excellent quality of life for its inhabitants. As a TU, collaborative partnerships with Further and Higher Education institutions and organisations in the public and private sectors will be enhanced. As one entity, the new distinctive TU will act in a coherent manner supporting the needs of enterprises,

especially SMEs, across the region through collaborative research and enabling technology transfer to support economic and social prosperity. It will provide research-informed teaching and access to emerging technologies for all learners.

Integration of St Angela’s College, a college of NUI Galway into Institute of Technology, Sligo.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with St Angela’s College, the Ursuline Order and IT Sligo on May 6th, 2021, to progress the integration of St Angela’s College into the Institute prior to the establishment of the Technological University. St Angela’s college has been a college of NUI Galway since 2006. The integration is seen as strategic for the region and nationally. It will be the first College of Education in the State integrating into the Institute of Technology sector. The integration will expand the programme portfolio of both Institutions. A steering group was established to oversee the processes required to support the integration. A due diligence exercise was instigated on establishment of the steering group. The Registrars of both colleges are members of the steering group to ensure that all QA processes are considered. Discussions are ongoing with NUI Galway around the development of a set of transition principles to ensure that the change of awarding body status is exercised effectively.

[St Angela's College - NUI Galway](#)

Policy and Procedure development: ITSligo continued the programme of updating and development of Policies and Procedure that was started in the academic year 2019-2020, a total of 90 change requests were processed in the period. Individual documents that were updated are highlighted in Section A where relevant to the AIQR and a summary is provided below. It is expected that the rate of change of documents in 2020-2021 will not be as high as the focus will start to turn to amalgamation of procedures towards the ATU.

Total new /revised Policies	9
Total new / revised Procedures	49
Total new / revised Forms	27
Total new /Other	5
Academic Total	42

Non -Academic (e.g. HR, Finance Health and Safety etc) 48

Programme development:

A number of new programmes were developed and validated during the reporting period.

Level 6 Certificate in Digital marketing Practice

Level 6 Certificate in Social media Marketing

Level 6 Single subject Certificate in Sales and Customer Service

Level 6 Certificate in Wastewater Treatment Operations

Level 6 Certificate in Drinking Water Treatment Operations

Level 6 Certificate in Regulation of Waste Activities

Level 6 Certificate in Social Prescribing

Level 6 Higher Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science

Level 6 Higher Certificate in Biomedical Science

Level 6 Higher Certificate in Water and Wastewater operations

Level 7 Certificate in Science in Digital Construction Technology

Level 7 Certificate in Science in Construction Site Management

Level 7 Bachelor of Business in Marketing

Level 7 Bachelor of Business in International Tourism with Event Management

Level 7 Certificate in Mechatronic Engineering

Level 8 Bachelor of Business Honours in Marketing

Level 8 Bachelor of Business Honours in Tourism with Event Management

Level 8 Higher Diploma in Business in Insurance Management

Level 8 Bachelor of Arts Honours in Architectural Design

Level 8 Bachelor of Arts Honours in Computing in Application Design and User Experience.

Level 9 Certificate in Health Project Management

Level 9 Certificate in Sustainable Food Systems

Level 9 Certificate in Professional Leadership

Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma in Health Promotion and Project management

Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning

Level 9 Master of Science in Health Promotion and Project management

Level 9 MEng in Geotechnical Engineering with structural Engineering

Level 9 MEng in Structural Engineering with Geotechnical Engineering

Level 9 Professional Masters of Education

Link to all programmes on the website is [here](#)

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

QQI QAG core subsection	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
2.6 Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Further use of GURU to review planned continuous assessment and the use of GURU for nomination of external examiners. This will provide a single system for the management of all the communication and activities between the internal examiners and external examiners. II. Further expansion of UDL across the Institute. III. Complete responses to Examination processes Audit IV. Continue to support staff engage in remote delivery/ assessment through the provision of targeted CPD based on expressed needs. V. Evaluate supports for online learners <p>CINNTE recommendation 4/24/18.</p> <p>Strategic plan objectives, 1,2 & 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. GURU is now used for submission of planned CA and for management of external examiner nomination and contracts. Complete II. UDL has been progressed Rollout of the UDL Digital Badge – 21 from IT Sligo and 10 from St. Angela’s College all facilitated by 5 IT Sligo Facilitators. Development of Online UDL & Programmatic Review guidelines and resources. Re-development of Curriculum management system (Module Manager) to include principles of UDL. Inclusion of Blackboard Ally as a plug-in with Moodle to aid accessibility of Moodle content for students. Complete III. Responses have been submitted and completed for the Examination Process Audit. Complete IV. COL have continued to support staff through remote delivery with scheduled training, surveys and engagement in 1:1 support. Complete V. The supports have been evaluated in the reporting period.
Support for Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Initiation of Student Success Action plan with agreed KPIs. <p>Strategic plan objective 1</p>	In progress
Staff recruitment, management and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Launch of a designated teaching & Learning pathway II. Embed academic Induction & promote COD opportunities through CELT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Development and launch of bespoke Teaching & Learning (CELT) Moodle page and Webpage to facilitate teaching and learning pathway for new and experienced academic staff. Complete II. 6 week Online Academic Induction programme developed and delivered

		<p>through CELT once per semester with follow-up face-to-face workshop. Complete</p> <p>III. CPD opportunities for new and experienced academic staff promoted regularly through CELT with new Training & Workshop Calendar developed for ease of CPD bookings. Complete</p>
Programmes of education and Training	<p>I. Gain Professional Body (Engineers Ireland) re-accreditation for the following programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BEng in Electronic Engineering - HC in Electronic Engineering - BEng in Mechanical Engineering - HC in Mechanical Engineering - BEng(Hons) Civil Engineering [ab initio] - BEng(Hons) Civil Engineering [two-year add-on] - BEng in Civil Engineering - HC in Civil Engineering <p>Strategic plan objective 2, 4</p>	<p>I. All programmes received accreditation. Please note details on Engineers Ireland website.</p> <p>Find accredited programme (engineersireland.ie)</p>
Public information and Communication	<p>I. Development of a Crisis communication policy</p> <p>II. Ratification of a Communication Policy</p> <p>III. Completion of Website update</p> <p>Unit responsible: Executive committee</p> <p>Strategic plan objective 6 / CINNTE recommendation 8</p>	<p>I. Developed, approved and issued 15 / 03/2021. Complete</p> <p>II. Complete, as above</p> <p>III. Website has been updated across all pages and continues to be improved on an ongoing process. Staff & Student portals have also been updated. Complete</p>
Document approaches to Quality	<p>I. Revisions to QA manual – Chapters 2, 3 & 4</p> <p>II. Review policy in respect of all aspects of awards / academic documents/exemptions for awards to</p>	<p>I. Revision to QA Manual Chapters 03, 04 and 07 completed. Chapter 02 drafted for approval in 2020-21.</p> <p>II. Policies reviewed in line with DAB committee of Academic Council. EXAM037</p>

	<p>ensure they meet needs for on-line and current awards.</p> <p>CINNTE recommendation 4/5 /24</p>	<p>Academic documents procedure revised. Complete</p>
<p>Governance and Management of Quality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Develop a Linked Provider Procedure II. Review Collaborative provision Chapter of QA manual III. Reflect on current collaborations and leanings that can be applied/ introduced to IT Sligo. IV. Continue to progress D.A.B. Action plan <p>Strategic plan objective 2 . CINNTE recommendation 15</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Remains under development II. Remains under review. Will be progressed further as part of the impending Technological University unitary QAE framework III. Further work to be completed in anticipation of the CUA implementation. IV. DAB short term actions achieved during the reporting period.
<p>Information and Data management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Extension of CRM to wider student body. II. Facilitate access to historical transcripts and broadsheet through scanning and digitisation of records. III. Enhance access to electronic records through increased use of Digitary CORE for issuing of parchments. <p>Strategic plan objective 6</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. The CRM was developed further to include international student applications, and engagement with external bodies. The potential of the CRM for the new TU is under consideration. Complete II. Broad Sheet scanning project complete. 50 years of historical records are now accessible through scanned records. Complete III. Digitary CORE now includes Certificates for special purpose awards and single certificates. Paper copies are no longer issued. Almost 2200 non major parchments have been issued Complete

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates 2020 to 2021
Governing Body	16.09.2020; 14.10.2020; 11.11.2020; 9.12.2020; 21.12.2020; 27.01.21; 24.03.2021; 21.04.2021; 16.06.2021; 18.08.2021; 15.09.2021; 13.10.2021; 15.10.2021; 10.11.2021; 12.11.2021, 8.12.2021; 22.12.2021
Academic Council	4.9.2020; 23.9.2020; 25.9.2020; 16.10.2020; 23.10.2020; 27.11.2020;14.12.2020; 18.12.2020; 15.1.2021; 9.2.2021; 19.2.2021; 19.3.2021; 26.3.2021; 7.5, 2021; 4.6.2021; 15.6.2021
Academic Processes	29.09.2020; 03.11.2020; 10.11.2020; 01.12.2020; 19.01.2021; 23.02.2021; 23.03.2021; 03.06.2021
Planning and Coordination committee	02.10.2020; 06.11.2020; 04.12.2020; 22.01.2021; 26.02.2021; 26.03.2021; 14.05.2021
Research and Innovation committee	01.10.2020; 05.11.2020; 03.12.2020; 21.01.2021; 25.02.2021; 25.03.2021;13.05.2021
Learning, Teaching and Assessment committee	29.09.2020; 03.11.2020; 01.12.2020; 23.02.2021; 15.04.2021; 11.05.2021
Technical University (TU) Transition Committee	15.10.2020; 05.11.2020; 10.12.2020; 28.01.2021 25.02.2021; 25.03.2021; 27.05.2021
Collaborative Provision	05.11.2020; 03.12.2020; 25.02.2021; 25.03.2021; 13.05.2021
Designated Awarding Body committee	05.10.2020; 02.11.2020; 30.11.2020; 22.03.2021; 10.05.2021

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

A new Department was approved and developed under the School of Engineering and Design, titled Department of Engineering & Technology. The focus of this Department is apprenticeships allied to the School of Engineering. Currently the majority are craft apprenticeships with one consortium led apprenticeship. Discussions are ongoing about the future development of further consortium led

apprenticeships in the area of civil engineering. This will be progressed in the next reporting period.

New roles across Institute:

Head of Department of Engineering Technology.

Capital Development Manager

Secretarial, Governance & Compliance Manager

Industry Outreach Manager Director of the AIM Centre (jointly managed with Sligo County Council)

Graduate Education & Research Integrity Officer

Post aligned to HCI funded projects

Advance Centre manager

Advance Centre marketing manager (CSM grade)

Project Director

Innovation Manager

Career and Learning Pathways Manager

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
No reviews completed in reporting period		

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels¹ involved in IQA

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

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

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair		4	2		2	4				4	
Secretary			2		2						
Academic/Discipline Specific		11	8		3	15	1			13	3
Student Representative											
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission		6	5			11					11

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance and Management of Quality Assurance

The Office of the Registrar was very involved in adapting and responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. There continued to be a significant disruption to assessments/ examinations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which meant that academic staff had to assume academic administration tasks around examinations and assessments that would not have been normal practice. There was a very significant reduction in terminal exams and a move to alternative type of assessment. Each programme was requested to document the changes to the modules and to highlight areas where alternatives would compromise the programme learning outcomes. All the data was collected and reviewed under the Registrars Office before approval of the changes by Academic Council. A significant focus of the office was the communication of changes and priorities to both staff and students and assistance to staff. This support will continue for the foreseeable future until the pandemic recedes and allows a return to normal operations.

There have been significant increases in the number of students requesting special consideration, deferrals and reviews and appeal of results, due to the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Conferring for the reporting period was a live face to face conferring for our graduates on November 22-24th with multiple smaller ceremonies by approximately 950 students out of the total 1840 graduating students attended. The event was streamed live.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

The IT Sligo Research Integrity Officer founded in the reporting period a National HEI Cross Institutional Research Integrity Training group which is a group of 7 HEIs who design and deliver interactive Workshops. CIRITS aim is to provide engaging and collaborative workshops and providing knowledge to address the Research gaps within the Research Communities.

The three research offices of the CUA worked collaboratively (Working Group 2 of the Connaught Ulster Alliance is the group that develops initiatives and activities in the Research, Development and Engagement area.) Over the reporting period in preparation for becoming a TU in the academic year 2021/22 a number of key developments were delivered which will have a positive impact on the L9/10 Quality Assurance environment, ensuring that it is fit for purpose for the new Atlantic Technological University and will drive the scale and quality of growth that is planned. Examples are:

1. Establishment of a Postgraduate Education and Training Development sub-group. A key feature of research provision in the ATU will be structured research degrees. These will require further development of a suite of accredited graduate education modules and agreements on structured degree formation.

The Terms of Reference for the Group were agreed, and a number of meetings have been held. Discussions on the existing CUA graduate education modules supported a sectoral discussion at THEA which led to the proposal and agreement of a sectoral credit recognition process for the technological sector.

2. A system of discipline-based cohort graduate education programmes was proposed and developed – Postgraduate Research Training Programmes. The PRTPs include accredited learning, summer schools and other postgraduate student career development activities. Guidance Documents were prepared, and negotiations were held with union groups. A call will be made in 2020-2021 for application.
3. One of the most important decisions in the Quality Assurance of L9/10 research programmes has been a decision to purchase a Research Information Management system. This will manage the full information flow for every part of the research process, including QA approvals, reviews, etc.

Working Group 2 assessed the systems included in the HEA-net RIMs procurement framework and selected the Elsevier PURE system. The CUA is currently hiring associated project delivery and implementation staff.

4. The task of Business Process Alignment across the CUA Research Offices has been initiated. Each currently has a Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Postgraduate Research. A day-long workshop has been held to identify any gaps or conflicts in delivery, and the process of agreeing a common approach is underway.

Programmes of Education & Training

Development of the CUA LTA Principles document

The LTA Principles document was informed by the strategy of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the ten principles for the enhancement of teaching and learning proposed following extensive discussion among various European higher education institutes – the EFFECT principles. The CUA Learning and Teaching team have aligned all EUA EFFECT principles to the CUA LTA initiatives and they are also mapped to the National Forum Strategic Priorities 2019-2021. The teaching and learning principles aim to enhance the profile of teaching and innovative pedagogies, strengthen the link between education and research, and promote the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning. The principles

document has been approved by the three academic councils of the three Institutes of the CUA and will be operationalised in the new Technological University.

Digital Badging at IT Sligo

In the Academic Year 2020-21, we paused progressions on much of our staff-focused digital badge courses due to the pandemic. We focussed on providing training to academic staff for online delivery of lectures and support of students. These include Moodle Basics, Academic Integrity for Staff and Staff Induction.

However, our student-focussed digital badges were continued. The Academic Writing Digital Badge is outlined under Student Supports, in this document.

Online Academic Induction Programme with Digital Badge

In the reporting period, CELT developed a bespoke one hour per week /six week Online Academic Induction Digital Badge for all new academics. This induction programme relates specifically to the operational and additional day-to-day duties of a lecturer outside of their teaching and learning remit. All sessions are recorded and available to staff who register to join the programme. On successful completion of the programme, staff complete a Moodle Quiz and attain a Digital Badge.

Online Academic Writing Digital Badge



The Academic Writing Digital Badge was developed under Work Package 3 of the Innovative Opportunities Transforming Higher Education (iNOTE) project. It has been designed as part of a framework of flexible resources that are easily embedded in curricula. This freely available, self-directed and interactive programme was designed to develop the academic writing skills of all students. Covering key topics in academic writing, this programme is particularly useful for those transitioning from 2nd to 3rd level, remote learners and lifelong learners returning to education. Students can complete any of the seven individual units and attain a digital badge for each unit successfully completed or they can complete all

7 units and attain an overall programme digital badge. Over 3,000 individual badges were completed and over 300 complete programme badges awarded.

Online English Language Support Programme

Supporting students for whom English is not a first language across the Connacht Ulster Alliance through the implementation of an Online English Language Support Programme. Across the CUA each Institute's strategic plan aims to grow the number of international students for both on campus and online programmes. Therefore, we must support these students to not only succeed in their academic programme but to develop and enhance

their English Language Skills to graduation and beyond into the work force, thereby maintaining retention and success. Supported under the National Forum SATLE funding, the Centre for Enhancement of Learning & Teaching (CELT) led the programme across the CUA in collaboration with Native Speaker English Language School.

The aim of this project was to provide IT Sligo, LYIT and GMIT students with high quality online English language support that included live online lectures, online video lessons and tests. The programme was available to all undergraduate, postgraduate and Erasmus students across all three Institutes. The programme offered support with English language in relation to reading, writing, listening, and talking skills.

In total, **228 students** from across the CUA registered for the main programme between **Sept 2020 and March 2021**. Feedback from students demonstrated the effectiveness of the programme. It gives them the confidence to go forward with their academic programme by virtue of improved use of English. Full video presentation is available to view:

<https://itsligo.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Sessions/List.aspx?folderID=a7e2004d-8adf-4d84-9ae6-aaa90108ccb6>

Student Supports

AsIAM Autism Friendly University Award Application

The Institute made a formal application to AsIAM to be considered to become an Autism Friendly Campus. The Institute like other HEIs have an increasing number of students with a diagnosis of Autism. There was a recognition that in order to support this cohort of students achieve their potential the Institute had a responsibility to provide an environment conducive to same. The application required the Institute to provide evidence of consulting with students with a diagnosis of Autism about the development of the Autism Friendly campus, evidence the local Autism support group had been consulted, a track record of engaging with students with autism to date and that all functions of the Institute were supportive of becoming an Autism Friendly campus. The application was successful and support staff are now in place.

Universal Design for Learning – Developments in IT Sligo 2020-2021



UDL – IT SLIGO

Climbing the UDL Ladder:
Building a Culture of
Inclusion in Higher
Education

Inclusion of UDL as an action in the Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2022 demonstrates commitment to adopting a more inclusive curriculum design to suit the diverse needs of ALL learners. Strong buy-in was achieved through seminars, workshops, UDL digital badge attainment, and active engagement with UDL related

projects and research demonstrating the benefits of UDL for all learners, rather than focusing solely on disability.

National Roll out of UDL Digital Badge participation

Working with the AHEAD and UCD Access & Lifelong Learning teams who developed a ‘Digital Badge for UDL’ course, IT Sligo’s 5 UDL Badge Facilitators collectively facilitated 147 participants within IT Sligo, LyIT (A CUA partner) and other institutes, including FE & ETBs from around the country i.e. IT Sligo facilitated **22%** of the National Roll-out of this course in 2020-2021. This digital badge provided participants with a strong introduction to the UDL Framework and provided the opportunity to implement UDL approaches within the teaching activities they are currently undertaking. It was successfully completed by 536 participants in FET and HE nationally.

Programmatic Review & Universal Design for Learning

The Faculty of Business and Social Sciences are currently preparing for a Programmatic Review (PR). To promote the incorporation of UDL into programmes, a specific “**PR & UDL tile**” was created on the UDL Moodle page. CELT continues to provide support for staff during module development.

Inaugural HEI UDL Conference May 2021

“Climbing the UDL Ladder: Building a Culture of Inclusion in Higher Education”

This Online Universal Design for Learning (UDL) conference took place on Wednesday 26th May 2021, with over 500 participants from HEIs, FEs & Networks from across Ireland and Internationally. Simon Harris, Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science officially launched the conference. The conference investigated a myriad of approaches to UDL through an exploration of shared best inclusive practice.

Guiding the development of UDL across the CUA

To centralise UDL efforts and share best UDL inclusive practice, within the CUA, IT Sligo UDL Working Group collaborated with colleagues in both GMIT and LyIT to expound upon and to offer guidance in relation to the findings of the effective institutional approach initiatives to teaching, learning & assessment through a Universal Design for Learning lens within a higher education institute. The UDL Working Group met with designated staff members of GMIT and LYIT to review UDL efforts to date and to further provide a schedule of guided works going forward which included:

1. Audit style meeting with UDL reps from both GMIT and LYIT conveyed developments to date
 2. Recommendations and plans were devised to arrange bespoke workshops to support CUA partners
 3. Individual UDL Roadmap work plans were created based on where each institute is currently on the UDL ladder (links below)
- IT Sligo UDL Roadmap: <https://infogram.com/1pmq5prkld96pqb3w59plegk0dtzl9n0ed5?live>
 - LYIT UDL Roadmap: <https://infogram.com/copy-lyit-udl-roadmap-1h7g6k0951zq02o?live>
 - GMIT UDL Roadmap: <https://infogram.com/gmit-udl-roadmap-1hdw2jp059krj2l>

Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

Regional Engagement

IT Sligo has been funded by Enterprise Ireland to support the building of a Border Region Manufacturing Cluster (BORMAC). An “Ignition Team”, drawing on regional HE partners, industry bodies and development agencies, has been established to promote and guide the cluster in its first phase of dialogue with existing networks and companies. The Cluster has recruited its first 24 company members and has begun organising events based on four of areas of joint need, including skills development, identified by those members. HEIs will be informed by the work of the Cluster as to which courses need to be developed and opportunities for expert briefings, student placement and innovation projects will all be explored where appropriate. One of the benefits of the Cluster is that it can provide a more effective bridge between HE and companies in the sector.

European partnership has been built on a €10m project funded by Horizon Europe. The SCORE project, which involves 28 academic, public and private sector partners in ten regions across the EU and is led by IT Sligo, focuses on developing and evaluating collaborative strategies in response to coastal erosion.

Public information and Communication

Student recruitment during a pandemic

The marketing and student recruitment function within IT Sligo manages the marketing for the institute and is responsible for promoting more than 240 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for full-time and part-time students to the institute. The 2020/2021 academic year saw many lockdowns and restrictions, which brought many challenges to traditional student recruitment activities. The improvements in marketing assets

and information as a result of the changes made during the pandemic will benefit student recruitment and applicant information well into the future.

The challenge of recruiting students during a pandemic brought new opportunities;

- Video content; Hundreds of programme information videos and 'how to' directional content was recorded and made available to applicants.
- IT Sligo was the first HEI to create a [schools presentation feature film](#) to showcase the IT Sligo campus and facilities. This engaging video was very well received by schools in contrast to the normal PowerPoint presentations they received.
- Assets: Several photography, videography and digital graphic projects took place to increase our bank of professional assets to improve our marketing collateral and digital recruitment campaigns.
- Internal Events: Open Days, Information Days and Inductions were all flipped online.
- External Events: The team took part in multiple virtual events hosted externally such as the National IGC Conference where we were a supporting sponsor, Higher Options and postgraduate recruitment fairs.
- Website: The pandemic gave us the opportunity & necessity to invest time in improving the information we had available to applicants.
- Publications: Less time on the road gave us time to focus on our publications which included our CAO and Online Learning Prospectuses, Quick Guide, Northern Ireland Applicant Guide, Sports Scholarship Brochure, Applicant Newspaper and an Offer Pack.

Impacts

- School Engagement: A focus on professional and proactive engagement with Guidance Counsellors across Ireland delivered regular engagement with 87% more schools & FE colleges when compared to 2018.
- As a result of our efforts listed above, together with improved applicant communication, IT Sligo saw an increase of 32% in CAO applicants selecting IT Sligo on the CAO. 23% increase in mentions and 9% increase in 1st preference resulted in a 10% increase in net acceptances.
- Online Learning at IT Sligo achieved their cumulative application target of 7,500+ for the September 2021 and maintain their position as 'most flexible learning students' in the Irish Times Good University Guide.
- IT Sligo made the top 10 ranking in the Good University Guide and retained our ranking of number 1 for student to staff ratio, we remain 3rd for investment in our campus facility and was ranked number 1 for flexible learning students.
- uMultirank awarded IT Sligo joint 3rd best performing university in Ireland

Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG) : Green Campus

HEI's are widely recognised as having a key role catalysing change across society towards a more sustainable future (EPA, 2019²; EUA, 2021³). This is supported in IT Sligo's Strategic Plan, 2017-2022 which includes a specified commitment to 'develop a green campus'. IT Sligo formally committed to the Green Campus programme in April 2019, which is coordinated nationally by An Taisce, and supported internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). Beyond the Green Flag, IT Sligo saw the need for an overarching Sustainability Strategy that would establish a longer term, public commitment to sustainability.

Challenges

1. Engaging and uniting a diverse campus community to adopt a common, agreed approach to improving environmental best practice and culture throughout the Institute.
2. Undertaking this initial transition towards a Green Campus and applying for our Green Flag award during the Covid pandemic, and while operating off campus was a significant challenge.

Impacts Achieved

1. IT Sligo was officially designated as Green Campus in May 2021 and awarded the Green Flag, a symbol of our commitment to continuous environmental improvement.
2. A Sustainability Strategy and Charter were approved by IT Sligo's Governing Body in October 2021, setting out a public commitment to specified sustainability targets over the next five years. These commitments span across the central pillars of 1. Governance, 2. Operations, 3. Teaching, Learning & Research and 4. Our Community.

Sustainability Charter: [Sustainability Charter V1_0 May2021 \(itsligo.ie\)](#)

Sustainability Strategy: [Microsoft Word - SustainabilityStrategy_FinalV1.0Sept2021 \(itsligo.ie\)](#)

Information on Green Campus activities and Green Flag award: [Sustainability - Institute of Technology Sligo \(itsligo.ie\)](#)

Customer Relationship Management – Online Student applications

The Strategic Plan 2017-2022 highlighted the need for a CRM to enable us to interact and operate effectively with all customers. Earlier projects introduced a CRM into the online applications process. In the review period a process improvement initiative entitled 'Recruitment 2.0' was run with CRM as an enabler focused on driving improvement in the application and registration process.

Overall achievements included:

- updated email templates and CRM flows to communicate with applicants
- improved views and ways of working to better handle multiple applications from one applicant

² [Research Report 280.pdf \(epa.ie\)](#)

³ [universities without walls a vision for 2030.pdf \(eua.eu\)](#)

- updated registration solutions to extract from CRM and upload to Banner, allowing users to control the process.

Between applications opening in February 2021 and end of August 2021 we successfully managed 6,645 Online and Springboard applications from 5,295 applicants. The success of this project may also lead to future updates within the Dynamics CRM system.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The Institute participates actively in the work of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). The Head of Student Success, the Head of Teaching and Learning and the Head of Online Learning Student Experience all sit on the NAIN Plenary Group. The Head of Student Success participates in the work of the NAIN WG#1, the objectives of which are to:

1. Identify and agree common definitions and establish a national lexicon to be agreed by the larger network
2. Identify and agree Principles of Academic Integrity
3. Collate current approaches to the prevention, detection and sanctioning of academic misconduct and review the international guidance available to identify and disseminate national good practice guidelines.

The Head of Online Learning Student Experience and the Assistant Registrar have provided expert advice and input to NAIN in relation to remote proctoring of examinations.

IT Sligo have both a student focused academic integrity module and staff focused academic integrity module available and promoted to all students and staff. The modules are cited on the Institutes VLE platform - Moodle. The student focused module is comprised of 3 units- Defining academic integrity, demonstrating academic integrity in my work and Breaches & Difficult situations. Students can earn an IT Sligo academic Integrity Badge upon completion of the module. Link [here](#).

The staff focused module is comprised of 3 units- Exploring academic integrity, breaches of academic integrity Teaching and Assessment design. It requires 3 hours online engagement and a two-hour workshop. The module Academic staff can earn an IT Sligo academic Integrity Badge upon completion of the module. Link [here](#).

Unit 3 of the Online Academic Writing Programme that was developed during the reporting period and referred to earlier focuses on *Avoiding Plagiarizing: Citation, Referencing & Paraphrasing*. All students complete a module in year 1 to assist their transition into third level education. Within this module students are taught how

to reference, paraphrase and what constitutes plagiarism and a breach of academic integrity. The teaching is supported by the Academic Writing Centre and library who offered both 1:1 and group sessions on referencing/ plagiarism/ paraphrasing etc.

Software: The plagiarism detection software Turnitin is deployed in the detection of plagiarism.

CPD for academic staff: A number of workshops have taken place with academic staff to further develop knowledge and skills regarding Academic Integrity.

Expanding assessment modalities: As a result of the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic in Q1 2020 and the inability to run traditional examinations academic staff selected to assess their modules via Open Book Exams (OBEs). It was recognized that lecturers would require support to construct authentic OBEs and students would need advice on how to prepare for this mode of assessment. The Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) in collaboration with the Centre for Online Learning (COL) developed a range of supports to address this requirement.

OBE Guide: Students link [here](#).

OBE Guide: Lecturers link [here](#).

There was a significant increase in remote proctoring driven by professional bodies and specific requests from lecturing staff. This increase in proctoring presented challenges both from an Academic (user privacy concerns, in equality, digital anxiety, academic oversight) and Administrative (scalability, very resource intensive and proctor provider capacity to align with ITS systems) perspective. However, as the Institute had previous experience in this area it was used relatively successfully. In order to support the integrity of the exam process, the Institute introduced a number of controls such as scanning the room prior to the examination, a proctor ratio of 1:2 students, exploration of all red flag incidences within a certain time period etc. The Exam regulation procedure was amended in the reporting period to reflect the parameters around proctoring. (Exam 032) Remote proctoring lends itself well to certain exam types e.g. short or long typed answers but continues to be problematic where exams are handwritten. Remote proctoring has its place as part of the wider range of exam options and the exam office will continue to work with academic staff and the provider to try and improve the service for students. The service is evaluated from the perspective of various stakeholders and a report prepared for Academic Council as part of the Annual examination report.

The repository of resources detailed in the QQI 2020 publication Academic Integrity: resources for remote and online learning, teaching and Assessment serves as a valuable resource to staff. Students and staff were made aware of their role & responsibilities under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2019 in relation to academic cheating.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No. QQI QAG section	Relevant objectives	<p>Planned actions and indicators</p> <p><i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i></p>
5.0	Teaching, Learning & Assessment	<p>Continue to support academic teams in Remote delivery and assessment</p> <p>Expansion of UDL in all aspects of curriculum development across the CUA</p> <p>Agree a unitary set of Examination Regulations for the Atlantic Technological university</p> <p>Collaborate with CUA partners on mapping on the TLA offices of the three individual Institutes could work within a unitary university.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registrars Function/ Centre of Online Learning / Academic Council</p> <p>CINNTE recommendation: 4/24/18, Strategic plan objectives 1, 2 & 6.</p>
7.1	Support for Learners	<p>Continue to support at risk students to engage in their programmes for the duration of restrictions aligned to the current pandemic</p>

		<p>Progress initiatives required to secure endorsement as an Autism Friendly campus.</p> <p>Progress initiatives identified in the Institute Mental Health Action plan to support student's mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Pilot the Pass Peer Assisted Learning programme with a cohort of year 1 students</p> <p>In collaboration, with CUA partners conduct a review of student services functions across the three Institutes to inform the configuration of student services in the Technological university.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registrars Function/ Schools / Academic Council/ Head of Student Success</p> <p>CINTE recommendation: 4/24/18, Strategic plan objectives 1, 2 & 6.</p>
4.0	Staff recruitment, management, and development	<p>Increase number of Senior lecturer posts across the institute to support new staff and to take responsibility for bespoke QA activities within their discipline.</p> <p>Promote the participation in both academic and PMSS induction programmes.</p> <p>Increase the use LinkedIn learning to support staff PMDS.</p> <p>Executive committee to promote and support staff who identify as female to participate in the Aurora Programme</p>

		<p>Progress the Institutes Gender Equality Action Plan</p> <p>Develop a plan QA for Alignment of Academic QA process across the CUA</p> <p>Unit Responsible: HR Function/ Schools / Executive committee/ Registrar Office ITS, LyIT and GMIT</p> <p>CINNTE key recommendation: 1, 3, Strategic plan objective 6.</p>
2.1	Document approaches to Quality	<p>Revisions to chapter, 1, 5 and 6 of quality manual to be completed.</p> <p>Continue to evaluate where new policies and procedures are required to strengthen QA system.</p> <p>Development a plan for Integration of St Angela’s College into the new CUA. Support the operational measures necessary to achieve a successful integration, e.g. Due Diligence, Business Plan Development, Staff negotiations, QA Review and Programme Approval.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registrars Function/ Schools / Executive committee</p> <p>CINNTE: Key recommendations 1 & 2, Strategic plan objective 6.</p>

a. 5	Learner Admission, progression and recognition	<p>Support all stages of the upgrade of the Student Record system Banner to version 9 from Blueprinting through to testing and Implementation. Supporting the Student Record System throughout the Academic Lifecycle</p> <p>Participate in the roll out of the National RPL project through the appointment of an Institute RPL coordinator and the development of an action plan.</p> <p>Provide a hybrid induction programme for learners that allows them to participate in activities at their own pace.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registrars Function/ Schools / Head of Student Success/ C.O.L. /IT services</p> <p>Strategic plan objective1, 2 & 6.</p>
1.1	Governance and management of Quality	<p>In collaboration with LyIt and GMIT Registrar colleagues devise a Quality and Enhancement framework document to shape a unitary approach to QAE in the forthcoming technological university.</p> <p>In collaboration with LyIt and GMIT Registrar colleagues secure resources to advance the development and roll out of a unitary QAE system.</p>
1.3	Embedding a quality culture	<p>Continue to embed a quality culture through the development of procedures, education of staff in relation to QQA responsibilities, staff participation in reviewing quality initiatives,</p>

		<p>securing additional resources to support staff to enable the implementation of QA processes.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registrars Function/Schools / Academic Council</p> <p>CINTE Key recommendation 1, 2. Strategic plan objective 6.</p>
6.1	Assessment of learners	<p>Programme teams to review range of assessments deployed in light of the learnings learnt from the introduction of alternative assessments as a consequence of the pandemic.</p> <p>Continue to work on enhancing the integrity of proctored examinations</p> <p>Implement and Assess impact on one COIL Project</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registrars Function/Schools / Academic Council</p> <p>Strategic plan objectives 1 & 2, 6</p>

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Programmatic Review Faculty of Business & Social Sciences	May 2022	May 2016
Library services	Spring 2022	N/A

The Faculties of Engineering & Design and Science underwent Faculty Reviews in the academic year 2018/19.

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The Institute of Technology, Sligo will cease to exist on March 31st, 2022. On April 1st the legacy Institutes of ITS, GMIT and LyIT will become the Atlantic Technological University. The Faculties of Science and Engineering & Design of the then Legacy ITS will be due to have both Faculty and Programmatic Reviews in the academic year 2023/ 2024.

An Academic plan for the Atlantic Technological University will need to be developed which will guide the timing of further reviews.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

4.1 Case Study 1: iNOTE Work Package 3

The main objective of the iNOTE project was to build digital capability for flexible learning delivery in the West/Northwest region under the CUA. Work Package 3 (WP3) led by IT Sligo is 1) developing the delivery and effectiveness of flexible learning from a student services and student experience perspective; 2) the determination of appropriate support systems and identification of gaps; 3) the provision of significantly more equitable student support services for flexible learners and 4) report on the effectiveness of the Online Student Advisor role.

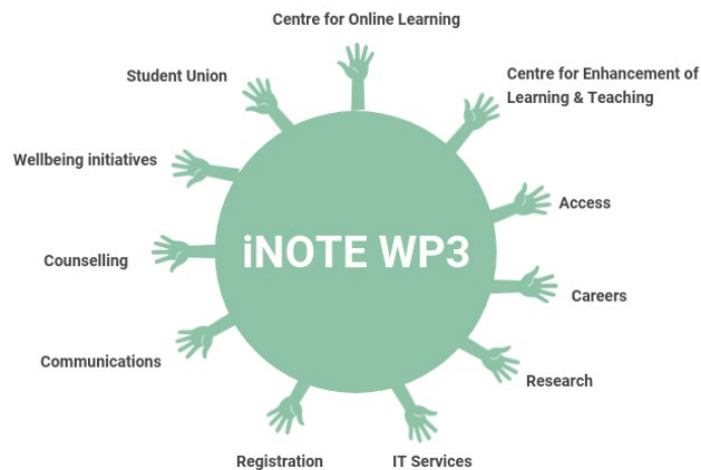


Figure 1: iNOTE campus approach to student support

WP3 created and piloted many supports across the CUA to support flexible learners, these were invaluable to all students during the COVID emergency remote teaching and learning experience. The project used a CUA student focus group research method to identify the supports students needed. Supports were structured under three main categories before they start, while they study and when they move on, this was summarised in the interactive "Your Support Journey Framework"

Examples of iNOTE funded projects can be seen throughout this report however, three key areas include inclusion, wellbeing, and virtual labs.



Figure 2: Your Support Journey

Inclusion:

Two new roles were piloted, the inclusion support worker and a Student Support and Programme Development Officer (SS&SPD). The SS&SPD led the customisation of Academic Module Manager (AMM) among other initiatives.

Wellbeing Supports

The project rolled out two online wellbeing tools across the CUA.

SilverCloud, a cognitive behavioural therapy toolkit that can be accessed directly by students in distress. Being Well Living Well (BWLW) toolkit offers students practical support with living well, feeling well, staying safe and spending well.

Further project are under development through a Masters Student.

Virtual Labs

A variety of remote laboratory solutions have and are being piloted in iNOTE, such as a remote lab Learning Science software to support Bioscience and Chemistry lab simulations; the feedback on these tools was very positive as a result it will be mainstreamed in 2022.

4.2 Case Study 2: Higher Education For All - Full-time degree programmes accessible via online/blended learning (HigherEd4All)

The HEA project aims to provide flexible, full-time online degree programmes through the CAO for students who would find it challenging to attend an on-campus course due to caring, family or business responsibilities, disability, social communication, cost barriers or geographical isolation. This new innovative full-time online teaching and learning model aims to support access and inclusion in higher education. To date, the project has two degrees listed on the CAO since namely, the Level 8 BA (Hons) in Writing and Literature and the Level 7 BSc in Health and Medical Information Science. In 2021-22 seven students received a project bursary equivalent to the SUSI grant (these are new models of learning and have yet to be recognised by SUSI for student funding). The CAO applications of 31 writing and 20 science first preferences, these converted to 21 writing and 15 science course acceptances.

Supporting students remotely is a challenge, the project has built specific student supports before they start to build their self-confidence, help them evaluate their skills and weaknesses, and help them select their course. Integrating programme specific and general iNOTE supports, in addition to the support identified further supports required by students via the project researcher. For example, the students identified the need for leaving certificate pass maths course, this course was built and is now available through open access as a MOOC on [opencourses](#) moreover, further foundation courses are now under construction to support the students, in the areas of technology, access, academic research and writing.



Figure 1: HigherEd4All Leaving Certificate Pass Maths MOOC

Moreover, the Student Support and Programme Development Officer works closely with students to assess if they need extra supports. Additionally, they monitor and support student engagement, and wellbeing through virtual coffee mornings. Enabling them to informally check in with the students and encouraging them to get to know and support each other.

The approach and use of teaching technologies varied considerably between the science and the writing programme, however both programmes were built using universal design for learning and assessment principles. The Science programme adapted a large-scale delivery model, similar to the model they use

with the part-time online students. Using Moodle (a virtual learning environment) for their lecture notes, assessments, and student communication; Adobe Connect (online class software) to deliver their live classes and Panopto (recording software) to record all their classes. This model offered students who were unable to attend the live classes the opportunity to “catch up” by watching the recordings and asking questions through the discussion forums. The science cohort enjoyed this flexible delivery model as it enabled them to work around other commitments or health issues.

In contrast, the writing programme team adapted a small-scale delivery model. Using Microsoft Teams for their lecture notes, assessments, and live delivery, this team opted to record some (not all) of their live lectures using Panopto. Here students were split into small groups, to enable interactive sessions, with live feedback from the lecturers and their peers. Most lectures were not recorded because the programme team felt the development of writing skills requires students to share their personal experiences to develop their writing skills. The small live non-recorded sessions created interactive safe spaces where people felt they could open-up without worrying about the recording. Initially, the students did not like this model of teaching, however, during their end of year student feedback session, they reported they were happy with this approach and requested its continuation in year two.

4.3 Case Study 3: Development of a Graphic Facilitation course for staff

Graphic facilitation is known to help engage students in their learning and encourage retention by building confidence; fostering a sense of belonging; creating a space for reflection on the student journey and learning process; improving concentration and listening skills; making note-taking enjoyable; and providing flexible pathways into education for non-traditional learners.

Graphic Facilitation incorporates a variety of visual approaches to teaching & learning in order to encourage participation, facilitate dialogue and provide a big picture perspective. Approaches vary, but all combine words and pictures. Graphic facilitation offers a simple visual approach designed to teach basic concepts, approaches and techniques quickly in order to engage students. Graphic facilitation methods are used by AGILE and SCRUM coaches, change initiators, software engineers, healthcare planners and community organisations.

A graphic facilitation course was developed during the reporting period to support lecturers and PMSS staff in using principles of UDL with their teaching methodologies through the principle of representation to support IT Sligo students. The initial course was offered over ten weeks to 16 members of staff. This initiative had a pan-institute appeal. Topics covered drawing basic shapes, people, environments, objects, developing poster templates, customer / learning journeys, visual CV, Business Snapshots, mind mapping, visual agenda, structuring content, storytelling, thinking in metaphors, live drawing. Each participant was required to upload content into Microsoft Sway in the format of an e-Portfolio. Participants were introduced to a range of technologies including MS Teams, Sway, Miro, Moodle. The engagement with these technologies allowed opportunities to practice in a safe environment before implementing their newfound skills in classroom work-based situations. The programme was evaluated very positively and will continue to be delivered.

4.4 Case Study 4 Pilot- COIL: Collaborative Online International Learning Project

In the reporting period, the Institute conducted an in-house pilot using the principles of COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) with students on the Bachelor of Business Studies L8 Year 1 programme. C.O.I.L. “connects you and a colleague in another country to develop collaborative projects that your students do together across time zones, language differences and geographical distance using online tools. It becomes one aspect of your course, supporting your student learning goals, giving you and your students the opportunity to engage hands-on with your course concepts and new ideas and – most importantly – exploring them from different cultural perspectives” (COIL Centre, SUNY (State University New York) The aim of the pilot was to work closely with our partner University Georgian College, Canada on developing a suitable COIL project that would work well between both Colleges. The aim was to link students with comparable overseas students on a similar module, to provide an opportunity to work together on a project, to learn from each other and also learn about different cultures. It was important to ascertain specific requirements necessary for project success whilst being cognisant of potential challenges, prior to roll out of full COIL project in Semester 1 2021.

COIL planning begins with collaboration between academics from different institutions who want to bring intercultural and global learning into their classes.

Lecturers work together to:

- Define student learning goals
- Determine the length of the interaction
- Design comparative and collaborative activities
- Select methodology and technology tools for collaboration
- Monitor student work and learning

Students work together to:

- Develop effective international/intercultural teams
- Discuss course assignments and content
- Complete a project-based activity as part of their coursework
- Reflect on both the academic content of the course and the intercultural exchange that takes

The project for the mini pilot was titled ‘IT Sligo BBS L8 Year 1 Class of 2021 Take Action for the UN Sustainable Development Goals’. Students had to focus on how to advance the objectives of one selected United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as part of their Challenges of Management module.

Reflection on the pilot:

There are many aspects that need to be discussed when developing a COIL module, such as language use, timing and calendars, harmonizing COIL module learning goals with overall course objectives, methods of

assessment, classroom management issues, and technology tool selection. Students and staff evaluated the experience very positively and a larger project will be rolled out in the next reporting period.

4.5 Case Study 5 Use of Academic Management System GURU

During the review period the use of the Academic software GURU continued to be expanded and developed in five key areas

(i) **External Examiner(EE) Management**

All External Examiners are now active on the system for the review of Exam Papers and Continuous Assessments. This means that all planned assessment is shared, reviewed and responded to in a digital format that is secure and has removed the need for printing and posting.

(ii) **Nominations Contracts and Payments:**

Since Oct 2020, the nomination of EE has been facilitated through GURU, starting with nomination / CV, approval and contract acceptance electronically. QA changes to support these changes from a paper based system to the electronic system were approved Chapter 3 Assessment of Students. This included a significant review and bench marking of the External examiner arrangements. The system allows much better oversight of EE and programmes and management of contracts and payments.

(iii) **GURU Archive**

In November 2020 the GURU Past Paper Archive went operational through the Library website. This is a very useful resource for students. The archive now contains four years of past papers in a searchable database of past papers with much improved user-friendly search functionality compared to the previous system.

(iv) **Training**

Training was delivered by external GURU expert in Nov 2020 targeted at different groups i.e. lecturers, heads of department, administrators and examination office, with some sessions recorded for further use.

(v) **Final Report Submission:**

All EE Reports are now submitted using GURU, hardcopy or emailed versions of a final report are no longer accepted. Reports are directed to the Head of Department in the first instance and are then forwarded out to the programme committees electronically for review and inclusion in programme monitoring.

Overall the use of GURU for External Examiner and Exam Paper / Assessments material has significantly improved the access to and security of our examination processes in a digital format.