Institutional Review Report 2019

Maynooth University

QQI REVIEW

CINNTE

Contents

Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important functions is to ensure that the quality assurance (QA) procedures that institutions have in place are effective. To this end, QQI carries out external reviews of higher education institutions on a cyclical basis. This current QQI cycle of reviews is called the CINNTE cycle. CINNTE reviews are an element of the broader quality framework for institutions composed of Quality Assurance Guidelines; each institution's Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Institutional Quality Reports (AIQR); and Dialogue Meetings. The CINNTE review cycle runs from 2017-2023. During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of each of the Universities, the Institutes of Technology and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).

Each CINNTE review evaluates the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of each institution. Review also measures each institution's compliance with European standards for quality assurance, regard to the expectations set out in the QQI quality assurance guidelines or their equivalent and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures. CINNTE reviews also explore how

institutions have enhanced their teaching, learning and research and their quality assurance systems and how well institutions have aligned their approach to their own mission, quality indicators and benchmarks.

The CINNTE review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to reviews, including:

– the publication of Terms of Reference;

– a process of self-evaluation and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);

– an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers;

– the publication of a Review Report including findings and recommendations; and

– a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This institutional review of Maynooth University was conducted by an independent Review Team in line with the Terms of Reference in Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the Review Team. It also includes the response by Maynooth University to the report.

The Review Team

Each CINNTE review is carried out by an international team of independent experts and peers. The 2018 institutional review of Maynooth University was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. The Review Team was trained by QQI on 18 October 2018. The Chair and Coordinating Reviewer undertook a planning visit to Maynooth University on 19 October 2018. The Main Review Visit was conducted by the full team between 10 December and 14 December 2018.

Review Team for the Institutional Review of Maynooth University

CHAIR

Dr John Bassett is President Emeritus at Clark University, which he led from 2000 to 2010. He also served as President of Heritage University (2010-17) and as Dean at Case Western Reserve University. (1993-2000). Prior to that Dr Bassett was a faculty member at Wayne State University and North Carolina State University.

Dr Bassett has served on a number of boards including the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the National Association of Independent Schools and Colleges (NAICU), both of which boards he chaired. He has chaired seven accreditation site visit teams for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. A scholar of American Literature, he has published widely on Faulkner, Twain, Sherwood Anderson, and other writers.

COORDINATING REVIEWER

Tony Platt graduated from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth with a degree in education and an MA by research into the development of bilingual library provision in Wales. He also holds an MBA from the University of Essex. Mr Platt has spent most of his working life in university administration, tackled most of the 'Registry' functions at one time or another and worked with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to establish a Graduate School, subsequently becoming responsible for its management and development. Mr Platt has worked for QAA (and HEQC before that) as an audit/review secretary/review co-ordinator and subsequently as a part-time Assistant Director at QAA, working largely on developmental projects, review methods and reviews. Since 2017 he has been engaged as a zero-hours Review Manager including work on degree awarding powers scrutiny and consultancy work. Mr Platt has also worked as a Co-ordinating Reviewer for a number of ELIR reviews, and reviews in Ireland and Lithuania.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Dr Lena Adamson is an associate professor of Psychology at Stockholm University. She recently stepped down from Director General of The Swedish Institute of Educational Research. Dr Adamson has twenty years of leadership experience in a number of different organisations, academic and non-academic, national and international, and wide experience in many fields and disciplines in higher education. Dr Adamson also has extensive experience of quality work focussed on quality assurance issues at all levels in HE; teaching level, department level, institutional level, national level and in different international settings. This includes being the main author of a QA system for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), Quality for Learning. She is registered as a reviewer with a number of QA agencies.

LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

Rebecca Maxwell Stuart is a PhD student at Heriot-Watt University in the School of Social Sciences where her research on Transnational Student Engagement examines the differences in student experience at campuses in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia. She also has teaching responsibilities in Research Methodologies and Business Management and is Dissertation Coordinator for undergraduates.

Ms Maxwell Stuart is a member of the European Students' Union (ESU) Quality Assurance Expert Pool and a QAA Scotland ELIR Reviewer. She also participated as an international reviewer in seven institutional reviews for Kosovo Accreditation Agency and in three quality assurance agency reviews for ENQA and EQAR. She is currently Deputy Chair of the Education & Social Care Subject Panel of the UK's Teaching Excellence Framework.

QUALITY ASSURANCE REPRESENTATIVE

Professor Barbara Dooley is Dean of Graduate Studies and Deputy Registrar at University College Dublin (UCD). She provides support to the Registrar and Deputy President on enhancing the student experience and ensuring the delivery of the university education strategy. As Dean of Graduate Studies, Prof Dooley works with her team to align UCD's structured PhD with Ireland's National Framework for Doctoral Education to ensure that robust quality assurance is integral to UCD's doctoral education. Prior to her appointment, she was Vice-Principal for Teaching and Learning in the College of Social Science and Law (2009 to 2014) and Head of the School of Psychology (2005 to 2009). Prof Dooley has teaching experience at all levels from undergraduate through to PhD supervision and is the Director of the UCD Ad Astra Academy, which nurtures exceptional students by offering them unique supports and opportunities to further develop their potential.

Prof Dooley holds a PhD in Psychology from UCD. She is an active researcher and supervisor with over 55 publications in peer-reviewed journals. Her field of research is on the application of psychological theory and methodology to a range of priority mental health areas such risk and protective factors in youth mental health, body image research, alcohol and eating disorders. Prof Dooley is a member of the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG), a committee member of the International Youth Mental Health Research Network, a steering group member of the European Universities Association – Council for Doctoral Education, member of the Universitas 21 Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies and UCD's Universitas 21 Senior Leader.

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Dr Kevin Marshall is Head of Education, Microsoft Ireland. He is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre of Research in Information Technology (CRITE) at Trinity College Dublin. He has represented IBEC on a number of education committees such as the Teaching Council and the National Council of Curriculum Assessment (NCCA).

Dr Marshall serves on a number of boards – Rehab Group, Marino Institute of Education and Learnovate Research Centre, located in Trinity College Dublin. Prior to working in Ireland, he worked in Boston Public Schools in the Office of Research, Assessment and Evaluation where he ran a number of research projects focusing on developing new performance assessment and statistical models to enhance student performance. Dr Marshall has a BA in Psychology from UCD, an MSc from the University of Hull and a Ph.D. from Boston College.

Section A

Introduction and Context

Introduction and Context

Maynooth University is the newest institution within the National University of Ireland, becoming an autonomous university under the Universities Act 1997. Maynooth University, however, is also an old institution, tracing its lineage back to the founding of the Royal College of St. Patrick in 1795. For many years it was primarily or only a Catholic seminary.

In 1910 it became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland. Under the Universities Act (1997) it was formally established as the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, which is a constituent University of the National University of Ireland. In 2015 the Governing Authority decided that the primary name of the University should change to *Maynooth University*.

Maynooth University is also the fastest growing university in the Irish system, expanding from some 4,000 students in 1997 to about 13,000 today. Recognised primarily but not solely for expertise in the social sciences and humanities, it has also targeted strengths in science and technology. Its most important professional programmes are relatively new. The Department of Law was established in 2009 and the School of Business in 2010. The highly regarded Froebel College of Education, which began in 1943 under the Dominican Order, became part of Maynooth University only in 2013 and is housed in the University's newest building.

Maynooth University strives for excellence in teaching and research in a very challenging context. In the past decade, the recent economic recession has resulted in severe resource constraints: funding available to the University for a typical BA student saw a reduction of 18%. While pay cuts were put in place to reduce the impact, the net effect was a decrease in funding of approximately 12% per student. Other restrictions such as the Employment Control Framework and the sheer shortage of learning spaces have made progress at Maynooth University slower than planned and slower than students would wish

The University, however, in its new Strategic Plan has highlighted changes and improvements that should be made as economic circumstances allow. Maynooth University has prioritised the maintenance of teaching quality including maintaining the student: academic staff ratio of 25:1. This was corroborated throughout meetings with stakeholders during the site visit. However, the cutbacks and increasing student numbers has put the quality of a number of resources under strain. These include the learning infrastructure and campus environment, some aspects of student support and the student experience, administrative processes and systems, and investment in the professional development of staff.

Maynooth University is, not surprisingly, a very different institution from what it was during the last institutional review in 2010, which was conducted by the Irish Universities Quality Board, a predecessor body to QQI. In the October briefing the University claimed to have acted on all sixteen recommendations from that review, and the Review Team found no basis for disputing their claim. The University is now much larger, with new degree programmes, new alliances, a clearer sense of its mission, and a record of achievements. It now defines itself as a research university with equal commitment both to teaching and to research. It was clear to the Review team that faculty and administrators want Maynooth University to be recognised as major research partner among Irish universities. That commitment makes this institutional review of quality assurance especially important as an evaluation of the University's oversight of quality during a unique period of growth and ambitious strategic planning, albeit at a time of restricted public funding.

The first two priorities in the new Strategic Plan (2018-2022) are to expand research excellence – by means of significant internal investment and with a goal of increasing external research funding by 50% by 2022 – and postgraduate programmes, with growth

of some six hundred additional master's students and an even stronger innovative doctorate. These priorities will build on achievements of the last few years in undergraduate education, including a new curriculum, and consolidating the strengths of that curriculum is a third priority in the new Plan. The other three priorities—enhancing the student experience, comprehensive and ethical internationalisation, and diversity inclusion—are all consistent with the first three.

While Maynooth University has committed itself institutionally, as exemplified in both the ISER and the most recent AIQR, to a culture of quality and self-examination, with so much on its agenda and so many moving parts, it must ensure that commitment to quality at the top is matched by the same commitment throughout the University. The Review Team agrees that leadership recognises the kinds of excellence achievable for Maynooth University since it tied its strategic plans for growth in research and graduate study to areas of institutional excellence and national need. That is, it is emphasising areas such as social sciences and policy studies, education, and specific sciences, where the University already has a strong reputation.

Maynooth University is committed to the same level of quality assurance for programmes that result from collaborations and partnerships as it is for programmes run entirely by the University. The primary collaborative providers now are the Military College and the Crafts Council of Ireland. The Review Team met with staff overseeing the programmes with the Military College and concluded it was indeed meeting the same standards of quality assurance (See section on "Other Parties involved in Education and Training"). Each institution, moreover, has an administrator that serves on the other institution's Academic Council. The team was also informed that procedures for the Crafts Council programme were similar.

More recently, as part of its commitment to the internationalisation of the University, Maynooth University has been developing a linked provider partnership with UCSI College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and a joint college with four undergraduate programmes with Fuzhou University in China. Some of the arrangements for these programmes have yet to be completed, but Maynooth University assured the team that all procedures for quality assurance will be established in 2019 before students are registered for the programmes. These procedures will be based on Maynooth University guidelines plus international best practices as well as NUI and QQI expectations (see Objective 4 "Provision of Programmes to International Learners" below).

Maynooth University, as part of its research and technology transfer initiatives, has also established relationships with Knowledge Transfer Ireland and *MaynoothWorks*, a business incubator. These developments have made the University a partner with, for example, Kildare County Council and the University of South Florida. The Review Team saw no reason to believe that the same expectations for quality assurance in research would not be followed in relation to those partnerships as are followed for Maynooth University in research.

Section B

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

Methodology Used to Prepare the ISER

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

Methodology used to prepare the ISER

The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report was designed to assess the current level of Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement at Maynooth University. It describes the University's programmes and activities and the means of evaluating the effectiveness of every major University activity, what the University learns from such evaluations, and how it improves on the basis of what it learns. The ISER was prepared following—and to some extent along with—a strategic planning process. That culminated in approval of the University Strategic Plan (2018-2022). The two processes together provided for alignment between strategic planning and quality assurance.

While ISER preparation in a sense began in autumn 2017 with initial conversations between the University and QQI and with the preparation of internal materials, the consultation process began in late January 2018 with the appointment of the Institutional Coordinator. For three months extensive consultations and briefings took place on campus involving faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Meanwhile a CINNTE Task Group was established along with a CINNTE Consultative Forum, which facilitated discussions around campus of key issues addressed by the Review.

By the end of April 2018 material for different sections of the ISER had been developed by the Task Group, directors, and the University Executive, supplemented by input from faculty and students. A draft Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) analysis for Maynooth University was prepared by the Institutional Coordinator and the Quality Enhancement Officer for comment by faculties, Academic Council, and Governing Authority. A first draft of the ISER was prepared by June 19 for review by University Executive, Task Group, Consultative Forum, and Quality Committee. Following feedback, a second draft was prepared over the summer. By the end of August, it had been reviewed by the same groups. A third draft was prepared and submitted to the faculties and then approved by the Academic Council on 5 September 2018.

The ISER includes a description of a wealth of data that was used to inform the report. It also benefitted from reports of consultations over the last few years on the curriculum, research institutes, the Strategic Plan, the Campus Master Plan, and more.

Overall, the Review Team considered that the process undertaken by the University was truly consultative with input by relevant groups and evidence of active participation by these groups, including senior management, academic staff, support services staff, students and representatives of Maynooth University Students Union, and external representatives. The ISER demonstrated significant capacity for self-analysis. It was particularly evident to the Review Team that despite the economical constraints and the challenge of the significant growth in student numbers the University had faced in the past decade, the process had been truly reflective and had benefitted from coinciding with the development of the next iteration of the Strategic Plan.

COMMENDATION 1

The Review Team commends Maynooth University on the comprehensiveness of, and inclusive approach to, its ISER process.

Quality Assurance/Accountability

Objective 1 – Current Quality Assurance
Procedures

Objective 2 – Quality Enhancement

Objective 3 – Procedures for Access,
Transfer and Progression

Objective 4 – Provision of Programmes
to International Learners

Quality Assurance/ Accountability

Objective 1 – Current Quality Assurance Procedures

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

The AIQR 2018 for Maynooth University asserts a University commitment to quality evaluation, and comparison with AIQR 2017 yielding an appreciation for the process of rethinking, improving, and revision that has been taking place on campus. The ISER says (p. v) that the "concept of quality is broadly interpreted as the manifold processes, activities and initiatives that assure standards, enhance effectiveness and promote innovation across different functions of the University," and the University asserts that it is committed to showing, in line with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core), that it is creating an "embedded culture of quality assurance and enhancement." The current Maynooth University Framework for Quality lists eight Overarching Principles. The Overarching Principles address purpose, university culture, design and implementation (with national and international standards), scope, inclusivity and transparency, external validation, engagement of students and stakeholders, and public confidence. The operational principles address process: periodic cycles, a focus on units not individuals, holistic scope, key metrics, and follow-up. The objectives address maintenance of public and internal confidence, confirmation of current standards, facilitation of enhancements, and preparation for external reviews. These have consistency and coherence and seem appropriate for Maynooth University at this time

COMMENDATION 2

The Review Team commends Maynooth University's progress towards embedding a culture of quality evaluation and enhancement which includes coherent quality review strategies

Implementation and oversight of Quality Assurance is led by a Director of Strategic Planning and Quality, who reports to the Deputy President, and by the Quality Committee, which functions as a joint committee of the Governing Authority and the Academic Council. How that dual reporting process will play out in the long run is not yet clear. Working relationships between the bodies and the committee seem healthy, but it is not clear whether the Governing Authority over time will see itself as less involved on a daily basis than the Academic Council or will exercise active oversight.

As already stated, the ISER was developed at approximately the same time as the Strategic Plan (2018-2022) and the Review Team understands that consultations on that plan elicited a number of suggestions for quality improvement to which Maynooth University is now committed: better integrated planning processes, reappraisal of the postgraduate programme portfolio, better workload management, investments in staff development, stronger digital platforms, and a campus master plan more closely tied to curricular and research agendas. Part 3.1 of the ISER, moreover, lists four kinds of progress made while following specific recommendations from the overall 2010 Institutional Review: integration of quality assurance with strategic planning, development of innovative approaches to teaching large classes, development of principles to support a consistent approach to student feedback [still a work in progress], and a revision of committee structures.

The ISER continually asserts that Maynooth University consistently makes sure that academic practices and policies are aligned with QQI, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL) and European (Standards and Guidelines for

Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area; ESG) guidelines, and that programmes are aligned with the Irish NFQ. The team's enquiries have justified that assertion, for example in relation to teaching and academic practices (ISER p.17) and postgraduate programmes (ISER p.32) and their being designed as a comprehensive system. In order to document more effectively staff members' adherence to the principles for teaching and learning, in line with QQI Guidelines for Teaching and Learning, particularly those on "learning environments" and "assessment of learning achievement", the Academic Council is preparing to act on new "Teaching and Learning Guidelines." Maynooth University is also dedicated to educating and graduating "lifelong learners" who early on are able to take ownership of their own education. Evaluating success in reaching this laudable goal, of course, is a challenge, both because it is often difficult to know when a student has indeed taken such ownership and because whether students who become "lifelong learners" can only be assessed over time.

ISER indicates five principles the University believes are the underpinning principles for effective teaching and learning (adapted from European Principles for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning) and also seven kinds of processes that are meant to assure quality programme implementation. These consist of rigorous programme approval processes; periodic reviews of departments, units, and Maynooth University strategies; use of external examiners and departmental examination boards; student surveys; and personnel appointment and promotion processes. The team's meetings with staff suggest that Maynooth University Senior Management has been responsive in addressing perceived weaknesses in quality and in making improvements based on what these processes have revealed. The Centre for Teaching and Learning, moreover, is a useful resource for quality improvement as it provides technology support, offers courses for tutors and staff training, and facilitates stakeholder feedback.

It is the Review Team's opinion that Maynooth University is sincerely student-centred. It generally has good academic support services including the Maynooth University Access Programme, student wellbeing services and the Mathematics Support Centre. Such services' quality is regularly evaluated, and it is clear—largely because of funding cutbacks—

that there are capacity issues for student services and particularly student life; there is a shortage of on-campus housing; and there are not as many sports opportunities or student-centred facilities as at other Irish universities. Maynooth University has identified the needs and plans to address them as funding allows, although the source of that funding is not yet clear. Faculty, staff and administration, nonetheless, seem committed to the QQI Guideline for "an integrated approach from the perspective of the learner" and "access to services.".

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The operations of Maynooth University are carried out in accordance with principles in "Governance of Irish Universities 2012", published by the Higher Education Authority. The University each year presents to its Governing Authority for approval a Statement of Governance and Internal Control. Its governing structures are in line with the Universities Act 1997.

The Governing Authority and the Academic Council are the two primary oversight bodies for the University. The Governing Authority has full responsibility for strategic direction, appointment of the President, general conduct, and revenue and property, and for approving and overseeing a strategic plan prepared by the President. It is a body of thirty, one half from outside Maynooth University and one half from inside (administrators, faculty, staff, students). It has six committees, three of which—including the new Quality Committee—are joint committees of the Governing Authority and Academic Council. Governing Authority members who met with the Review Team were almost entirely internal members. While this limited the breadth of perspectives provided, the team picked up no reasons for concern about oversight of quality at Maynooth University by the Governing Authority.

The Academic Council, of about seventy members and chaired by the President, is the primary academic oversight body. It consists of faculty, staff, and students. It oversees decisions on curriculum, instruction, and research. Nine areas of oversight are outlined in the University Profile 2018. The Council has ten committees including, for example, the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Academic Programmes Committee, and the Graduate and International Education Committee. A review of

agendas and minutes for both Academic Council and Governing Authority indicates both are operating in line with their mission. The Review Team concluded that Academic Council exercises rigorous quality oversight of University academic programmes.

Throughout the site visit it was evident to the Review Team from meetings with staff at all levels that, despite some weaknesses in communication (see recommendation below), senior officers by and large work well together and retain a talented and loyal staff along with a student-centred culture. Administrative offices seem well organised under their respective vice presidents, directors, and officers, and also seem to be interacting effectively. The culture makes possible the development of an ambitious but realistic strategic plan, campus master plan, and Master's Task Force.

COMMENDATION 3

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for developing a strong leadership team that works well together, with talented and loyal staff as well as a student-centred culture.

All units go through the same kind of rigorous periodic review as academic programmes, and written reports of those reviews indicate thoroughness in assessing quality performance and encouragement of units to enhance quality. As the University embarks on more aggressive fund-raising initiatives as part of its quest for the new revenue sources needed to maintain the quality of programmes, and as it upgrades its marketing and Maynooth University communication strategies, it may want to consider some presence in the University Executive group of a senior external affairs person. On the other hand, as reflected in the most recent quality review of Student Affairs, there is also some sensitivity on campus about the absence of someone like a dean of students in that same group.

Despite the University's successes in attracting, retaining, and graduating students, in playing a leadership role in working with non-traditional students, in producing significant research, and in maintaining a healthy campus culture, it is also true that there are significant infrastructure issues addressed in the ISER and in this report—including inadequate learning and activity spaces (see "Support for Learners" below), deferred maintenance (see "Staff Recruitment, Management and Development" below),

and student-support staffing (see "Staff Recruitment, Management and Development" below)—involving governance and management as well as financial questions.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Review Team recommends that the University reconsider the balance among spending priorities to avoid negative consequences particularly to its student-oriented reputation.

The academic parts of the University are organised into 28 departments and schools, which are divided among three faculties, each with its own dean. A fairly recent redefinition of the role of the dean, making the position one of leadership and management, has been an important and helpful change in maintaining quality assurance of programmes. The deans and heads, as well as faculty and staff working with them, are an impressive group.

QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) indicates that the system of governance should be aligned with mission and strategy. The Review Team felt that there was good alignment of the system with the mission, vision, values, and the thirteen goals for the period 2018-2022 as spelled out on pages 8-9 of the Maynooth University Profile for CINNTE Review 2018. The same can be said for alignment of governance systems with the new Strategic Plan. The challenge for Maynooth University is to make sure that the system remains adequate for the University's recent ambitious commitment—as set out in its Strategic Plan—to being a "major research university" as well as an excellent teaching institution.

The recent appointment of a Vice President for Engagement, changes in the roles of deans of faculties, evolution of the committee structure including the relatively new Quality Committee, like revisions this past year in the AIQR, all suggest the University is quite engaged in trying to assure that its governance structures are appropriate for a rapidly changing institution.

COMMENDATION 4

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for its ambitious vision and Strategic Plan, which if successful can reposition the University to be an even greater asset for the Irish people.

There is a feeling in many parts of the University that better communication by senior management with the campus about the functions of the various administrative offices would help allay concerns about the direction of the University and the handling of University challenges, as would making more information about the University's financial health and more data about budgets and enrolments available to the campus. The team saw these concerns as relevant to attempts to establish a culture of quality enhancement across campus with broad buy-in by staff.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Review Team recommends that Maynooth University address its communication gaps, particularly between executive offices and departments. Improvements in this area can also ensure that quality enhancement initiatives are more systematically captured through the governance structures and can be properly tracked back to quality assurance processes. (See also Section 2)

PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Maynooth University offers close to a hundred different undergraduate degree (Level 8) programmes taken by approximately 8,000 (FTE) students. There are also a small number of students in certificate and diploma programmes or foundation courses. The majority of degree-seeking students are in the three-year BA programmes with the rest in the four-year BA International and BSc programmes. While Maynooth University offers solid majors in the natural, mathematical, and information sciences as well as electronic engineering and robotics, its most heavily populated areas are in the humanities and social sciences as well as related professional areas—education, law, and business.

Maynooth University also offers some sixty postgraduate programmes at masters, diploma, and doctoral levels with about 1,900 students. Of these about 1,000 are in taught masters programmes, about 500 in diploma/certificate courses, and about 400 in

research and professional doctoral tracks. Almost 40% of masters students are in Education.

Procedures for developing new programmes are laid out in the AIQR and involve two steps. A preliminary departmental proposal—lacking modular details—is sent to the Dean and Faculty Executive and the Teaching and Learning Committee to ensure inter-unit coordination. It then goes to the Academic Programme Committee. If approved there, the department submits a full proposal to the Academic Programme Committee (and to relevant faculty for input). It also goes out to external reviewers and then returns to the committee for approval and to the Academic Council for final approval. The process has widespread support from faculty and staff. It is, moreover, in line with QQI Guidelines for "programme development and approval" and with NFQ requirements. A number of interdepartmental proposals have recently been developed. The Review Team noted that the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies is a significant player in that process with the Dean for Teaching and Learning playing a leadership role.

There is a well-established process for regular review of academic programmes. From evidence of committee minutes and the Review Team's meetings it appears that the process is rigorously followed. External members from universities outside Ireland and where appropriate from industry are an important part of the process, and programmes are assessed both in terms of institutional standards and in terms of external benchmarking. Student feedback is collected through course evaluation results and minutes from student-staff committees. Maynooth University is now in its third cycle of programme reviews based on current procedures established in 1996. The last institutional review of quality assurance (2010) led to "a more holistic institutional approach to QA/QE processes," an enhanced format, and greater alignment of strategic planning and quality assurance. The processes are well aligned with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) for "programme monitoring and review."

COMMENDATION 5

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for developing and implementing a rigorous review procedure for programmes and units, and for

following it through three cycles that have included quality improvement plans with monitoring following each review.

The most important recent development at undergraduate level is the new curriculum, which was designed not only to help students shape their own education but also to establish new learning goals such as critical thinking skills and the broader perspective gained by means of experiential education. (For further details on the new undergraduate curriculum, see section on Teaching and Learning below.)

COMMENDATION 6

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for developing a creative new undergraduate curriculum aimed at improving the quality of the student learning experience and for developing a rigorous plan to assess its effectiveness.

Maynooth University is committed to quality assurance and quality enhancement of the new curriculum and it has a robust evaluation plan in place. Like the Review Team it also realises that the value of some of the new curriculum's priorities can only be well assessed over a longer term than the years spent in college. The Review team believes that the campus is aware of the need for supplementing on-campus criteria with employer-based, graduate school-based, and alumni-based instruments. (For further details on gathering feedback from stakeholders, see section on Teaching and Learning below.)

The ISER lays out the goals of the new curriculum and its nine key components, with particular focus on critical skills, experiential learning, and elective courses. It also describes early efforts at evaluation and seven values to be emphasised during ongoing implementation of the programme.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Review Team recommends that the University develop a plan to evaluate the longer-term impact of its ambitious new curriculum through possible surveys of employers, alumni, and graduate students.

While the ISER reports on existing methods for quality assurance and quality enhancement in postgraduate programmes, it also admits the

need for more development in this area, including creation of a Graduate School. The Review Team noted some variation in the quality of assessment among programmes. The new Strategic Plan makes expanded graduate programmes and improved management, assessment, and support for graduate studies a priority. The Graduate Office, partly through its Master's Task Force, is committed to strategic growth of masters programmes in line with University expertise, regional needs, and opportunity. Maynooth University has a unique opportunity to develop innovative postgraduate programmes and modules, building at times on interdisciplinary planning, that respond to current and changing needs in the workforce.

COMMENDATION 7

The Review Team commends the University on its initiative, through the Master's Task Force and other planning, to grow its postgraduate enrolment in line with national needs and University expertise.

The innovative curricular culture, focussed on quality and national need, has led to a creative undergraduate curriculum and robust quality evaluation plan, and a structured PhD that responds to the needs of the workforce at large beyond academia.

The Master's Task Force is only part of a larger strategic plan to grow the postgraduate profile of Maynooth University. The last quality review of postgraduate studies (2015) was especially positive on the quality of care for and support of students but recommended that, with the growth taking place, there needed to be more centralised restructuring of the Graduate Students Office (GSO) and a review of the postgraduate portfolio in line with the University's goals and mission. The restructuring, with plans for a new Graduate School, and the systematic review of programmes are under way, while a new Graduate Dean was appointed in 2016-2017. The Strategic Plan calls for growth in the number of masters students from about 1,000 to 1,600 and in doctoral students from 400 to 600. While these are huge increases, especially in light of the personal oversight needed for postgraduate students, the University identified these targets following a scoping analysis and has given assurances that they will be accompanied by appropriate supports. The growth will be largely

in areas of existing university expertise—teacher education, social sciences, and humanities, as well as in newer programmes in business and law, software engineering, and data sciences. These plans have also been correlated with predicted national need according to University administrators.

The Ph.D. programmes have been, not surprisingly, traditionally defined as research programmes. Maynooth University, however, is proud that it "pioneered the development of the structured doctorate in Ireland." This development included not only new processes to support and monitor progress of students, including more regular oversight by chairs and deans of faculty of their doctoral students, but also elements and modules that are intended "to broaden the skills and support the future employability of graduates." The Review team learned that these changes did not have the universal support of faculty, largely because the traditional research design of programmes prepared students for only certain careers—in line with what some faculty saw as their sole mission—whereas the demand nationally for doctoral graduates was for students able to fill a much broader set of positions "across all sectors in the knowledge society" (ISER). The structured doctorate is now much better embedded in the Maynooth University identity, in part because of training provided by the Graduate Studies Office. Now there is an ongoing review of the taught portions of the structured PhD with an emphasis on graduate critical skills as they are tied to employability.

It is clear that the University is committed to "refining and diversifying (its) approach to the doctorate, particularly in areas of skills and employability" and its connection to national need. The Strategic Plan also calls for the necessary increases in staffing, spaces and resources for postgraduate students. It articulates a need to consider the potential of interdisciplinary programmes and "engaged and practice-based research" with broader communities. It also plans a series of international forums on the changing nature and value of the doctoral degree in the twenty-first century. It was clear to the Review Team that Maynooth University is serious about defining its special niche in the landscape of doctoral research programmes in Ireland, and about quality assurance of those programmes since each programme (ISER, p.33) is regularly reviewed by the Vice-President Academic and the Dean of Graduate

Studies for programme design, admission and induction and supervision practices, use of external examiners, conduct of examinations, graduation data, and research environment.

COMMENDATION 8

The Review Team commends the University on the development, implementation, and continuous assessment of the structured doctorate degree.

The University's policies and guidelines for research degree programmes are in line with the 'QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Research Degree Programmes)'. Each research student, moreover, completes an annual progress review, overseen by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice-President Academic. The Graduate Studies Office (GSO) provides support of many kinds for students and partners with the Research Development Office (RDO) to seek research scholarships for students. For the past few years, there has been an emphasis on enhancement of the supervision of postgraduate research students by faculty members; and the ISSE survey of graduate students suggests some ninety per cent of students are satisfied or very satisfied with the supervision they receive. The Review Team also noted that, based on meetings with staff and faculty, the Postgraduate Feedback Council is the "best practices" unit for effective provision of student feedback on programmes (see "Information and Data Management" below); and the University makes use of evidence from that feedback.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT

Maynooth University has been very fortunate to have developed over many years a talented, loyal, collegial, student-centred staff in both academic and administrative areas. The University is considered by those working there to be a good place to work, and the Review Team noted that staff are fully committed to the success of Maynooth University students. The Review Team heard this comment over and over from staff at every level, and moreover students were very positive about the staff with whom they interact. They said the staff are always willing to help and are sensitive to the needs of individual students, including those with disabilities.

Having said that, the Review Team must also say that there are emerging patterns of frustration that by and large result from pressures caused by the budgetary problems. As the funding allocated per student goes down while enrollment grows, more support units become understaffed. During discussions with staff it became evident that, more and more, staff see their units as not performing at the level of quality expected. More pressure is put on the very best employees to do even more. So far, the University has avoided a major burn-out problem; but the Review Team became aware that such was possible should workload issues not be addressed. The frustration has at times been intensified by the lack of possibilities for promotion.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Review Team recommends that the University develop a transparent and flexible workload model for both academic and administrative staff to address concerns that have resulted from increased enrolment along with budgetary constraints.

The ISER asserts that University hiring practices are consistent, equitable, and transparent, and that procedures assure candidates' qualifications and values are aligned with international norms. The Review Team felt no reason to question that statement. The processes are in line with ESG and QQI standards for fairness and transparency.

The processes for hiring academic personnel and administrative staff are similar although overseen by different personnel. The University has been especially attentive to gender issues and asks that all hiring committees include at least 40% women (and 40% men). It has a gender equality action plan (2018-2021) and can show some success over the past few years. The University is proud of receiving the Athena SWAN Bronze Award. There are women, moreover, in senior administrative positions, although the percentage of female professors is not large (31%, although the figure is 42% in humanities and social sciences). In STEM areas 100% of those in Professor A category are male. Within the administrative category 69% of those earning less than €45,000 are female, but only 30% of those earning over €105,000. The ethnic and racial diversity of the Maynooth staff cohort compares favourably with that of the total population of Ireland.

Faculty and staff development are areas of great challenge for the University, largely because of budgetary limitations. Like deferred maintenance, staff development is one of those budget lines too easily cut when funds are limited. In the academic area, since priority has been given to maintaining healthy student/faculty ratios, instructors have been hired, but faculty members suggested to the Review Team that development opportunities for new academics have been reduced. The Review Team did learn that new instructors receive a good level of mentoring from more experienced colleagues. The Team, however, believes that academic staff development should be more formalised and consistent across departmental lines.

It is also true that the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the relatively new Dean of Teaching and Learning have provided significant positive change in the area of faculty development. The Centre now provides courses for new staff and tutors and customised workshops; it provides technology support and training in how to use the Moodle learning environment; and it can help with the evaluation of teaching through the use of learning analytics. The professional diploma and professional certificate in higher education are not currently offered to staff to enhance their teaching practice.

COMMENDATION 9

The Review Team commends the University for its progress in improving the quality of teaching and its plans to make additional progress in this area.

The new Strategic Plan projects a Teaching Innovation Fund, masterclasses, periodic review of the taught portfolio, and new educational technology. The Review Team hopes that a new funding plan will be able to help Maynooth University implement these important quality upgrades in the near future. Given the stated value by management of making teaching and research equally important in evaluations for promotion, this kind of support is even more essential. The four research institutes, it must be added, have helped new faculty members embark on research careers. The shared intellectual interests of the academic staff involved with those centres make them positive forces in faculty development.

New administrative staff may at the present time have a thinner support system than academic staff.

Of course, they may share interests with and learn from veteran staff in their area, whether it be student affairs, technology, physical plant, admissions, or something else. But the Review Team learned that in effect much of the "development" for a new departmental administrative assistant, for example, had come from a senior colleague in some other department volunteering to provide useful mentoring for the new employee. The Review Team learned that Human Resources had met with the Departmental Administrators' Forum for a needs analysis discussion on training, in the context of the ongoing development of Heads of Department and a revised Induction Programme. This engagement served to inform the content of a subsequent Skills Training Programme for Administrative Support Staff. The HR department is also considering a mentor programme which could operate across departmental lines. In addition, Maynooth University is developing a competency model for entry and next level positions.

The Review team is confident that the Department of Human Resources truly wants a robust programme of staff development; but with limited personnel and limited digital resources, by its own admission during the review visit, it spends almost all of its time on the most essential personnel functions and only limited time on staff development. The Department in its latest internal quality review received high marks for its dedication to staff and students, its user-centric approach to service, and its operational effectiveness. The Review Team confirms this evaluation of the Department of Human Resources.

Fortunately, the new Strategic Plan includes a robust agenda for improving the quality of staff development provided at Maynooth University and based on discussions with them during the main review visit, Human Resources personnel seem eager to be at the centre of the implementation. The agenda will include career pathways for all categories of staff, performance management systems (with regular feedback mechanisms), and a stronger induction and mentoring platform. It will include an improved promotion process and a set of awards for exemplary service. It will emphasise "a positive organisational culture" by means of a set of steps to enhance employee engagement and partnerships. To address another University need, the agenda will also focus on leadership progress to develop future University managers, supervisors, and leaders. The agenda

will also include establishing a "Process Quality Improvement Centre" to utilise digital potential to make University operations more efficient and effective.

The QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines suggest that the main question regarding staff is whether the University takes "responsibility for the quality of its staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively." According to the Maynooth University Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, the goals and objectives of the institution are "firmly focused on providing staff with an excellent work environment in which innovation is fostered and a collegial ethos is sustained." The Review Team believes that the University has fulfilled QQI expectations and its own stated ambitions. The Team is concerned, however, that, with workload concerns and deficiencies in staff development, this very important asset may in the future be compromised. At the same time, evidence both in the ISER and the Strategic Plan indicates that the University understands its challenges and has a clear plan for addressing them as funding allows. This challenge can be addressed by considering the introduction of a formal system to measure and develop performance supported by regular mechanisms for feedback and procedures to encourage enhancement.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Review Team recommends that the University develops a timescale and funding plan for the kind of robust staff development articulated in its Strategic Plan.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Maynooth University is committed to offering its students an outstanding university education with strong connections between its research and teaching. The University's Teaching and Learning Guidelines are underpinned by five general principles, which are adapted from the European Principles for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning noted above.

This was all strongly confirmed during meetings both with academic staff and with students. Teachers were enthusiastic and committed to their teaching mission,

and the majority of the students that the team met were indeed very positive about their teachers and how engaged and approachable they were. All this corresponds well with the results from the ISSE 2018 where additional questions for Maynooth University, also with positive results, were included concerning independent learning and assessment.

COMMENDATION 10

The Review Team commends the University for its very professional, engaged and approachable teaching staff as evidenced from the results from student surveys and by meetings with both teachers and students.

The commitment to have and to develop the teaching-research nexus is also clearly stated in the ISER: "Progression and promotion processes support teaching development by giving the same weight to teaching quality and educational innovation as is given to research and scholarship." This was elaborated on by the President who said that the aim is to have teaching that is led or informed by research, while encouraging staff not to dedicate all their energy to teaching. This is a sound approach which should ensure that the University will not be seen solely as a teaching institution.

As outlined above, the Maynooth University approach to teaching and learning is underpinned by five general principles. These include: a university learning experience which nurtures and enables the development of students as critical thinkers and problem solvers, equipped for life-long learning; teaching is core to academic practice and is respected as scholarly and professional; teaching and learning are student-centred; teaching and learning are collegial processes; and learning, teaching, and research are interconnected and mutually enriching. These five Teaching & Learning Principles are evidenced in the new sector-leading undergraduate curriculum (UGP; referred to above under the section Programmes of Education and Training) which had a pilot launch in 2015/16 and was fully implemented in 2016/17. The UGP rests on three pillars: critical thinking skills, experiential learning and a flexible degree structure. The reform followed extensive internal and external consultation and was also guided by international experience from other universities.

The University has an unusually ambitious evaluation and research plan attached to the programme, giving the University unique possibilities to develop a truly research-based full educational programme. This is highly unusual when it comes to university education where the teaching/research nexus is most commonly interpreted as content related, and, if related to the way teaching is performed, usually focused on singular aspects, rather than on full programmes. The evaluation and research plan also gives the University the opportunity to develop a comprehensive curriculum evaluation framework, which can be applied in other, future, higher education settings. The Review Team acknowledges that there are implementation issues to be addressed and further evaluated

The evaluation results for the first student groups of the new UGP are positive, although these should be seen as preliminary findings. Creating a deeper understanding of both student learning and the student experience will be an important part of the evaluation and research plan, as will be identifying any unintended consequences.

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COMMENDATION 11

The Review Team commends the University on its ambitious new undergraduate curriculum based on international research, societal needs and students' demands for flexibility

Students offered both positive and negative comments about the flexible degree structure, quoting timetabling difficulties and examination clustering. Students in the sciences also stated that they had a problem scheduling the right progression in their courses because of the conflicts between the demands of the new curriculum and the requirements of their major.

The critical skills courses are sometimes presented as "designed to help first year students to learn, experience, practice and develop various essential skills that will support students' ongoing studies" and sometimes as critical thinking skills which "employers seek in graduates such as the ability to understand and deliver complex arguments, evaluate evidence, make balanced judgments". Critical skills and critical *thinking* skills overlap indeed but are not the same and the University may wish to consider clarifying this distinction in its documentation.

The Review Team felt that there was a need for some clarification about experiential learning. It is generally described in academic literature as a pedagogical model consisting of four parts: concrete experiences, reflection on the experiences, synthesising the experiences and abstracting new knowledge. The use of experiential learning is commended since this is a well established pedagogical approach promoting active learning and especially well suited for fostering the skills and competences society needs from

university graduates. An Experiential Learning Community of Practice has also been established. By using the portfolio model Maynooth University also practises an appropriate assessment method for this type of programme. Experiential learning, however, should not be immediately equated with work placements or other activities outside the University, although these could well be the first step in the experiential learning circle.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Review Team recommends that the University take steps to clarify the purposes of and goals for the critical (thinking) skills and experiential learning components of the new curriculum, and that the experiential learning model be further developed.

Building on the experiences from the work with the new UGP, Maynooth University has established a Master's Task Force to review and restructure the taught postgraduate provision. The aims are to facilitate greater interdepartmental cooperation and to maximise the quality, relevance, coherence, flexibility and efficiency of taught postgraduate provision. A steering group was formed to rationalise eight different working groups, but no alumni were engaged. The Review Team learned that the report is planned for publication in December 2019 with a pilot scheme to begin in 2020.

The new Undergraduate Curriculum work was thoroughly inspired by previous international work by a set of research-intensive universities across the globe, which are recognised internationally for leadership and innovation in curriculum reform as well as in research and scholarship.

The adapting of the European Principles for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning into the Teaching and Learning Guidelines is another example of how the University engages both nationally and internationally in order to enhance teaching.

The ESG 1.3 Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment Standard requires that institutions ensure that its programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. The QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) stipulate regular monitoring of the learning experience and processes to be in place to ensure

that the content of programmes reflects advances in the relevant disciplines and that the pedagogic style incorporates national and international effective practice. There should also be active engagement with the wider national and international community of practice to enhance teaching and research.

The Review Team found that Maynooth University has processes in place to safeguard these standards, whilst it also works according to its own Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Principles for Teaching and Learning.

COMMENDATION 12

The Review Team commends the University on its awareness and adoption of principles of teaching and learning as expressed in steering documents at European and international levels

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) call for the University's assessment framework to establish its philosophy on and approach to assessment of learners and to address the administration of assessment. While Maynooth University is still developing some of the particulars of its framework, the University does comply with this expectation. The faculty members whom the team met take assessment of learning seriously, as does the leadership group of heads and deans and the Teaching and Learning Committee. The Review Team met faculty members who are aware of new knowledge about testing processes. Albeit with some scepticism about over-assessment, they do seem to appreciate how good assessment supports good teaching and learning. There is, however, legitimate concern among students that the University does not have a well communicated set of procedures beyond the department level for handling student complaints about, for example, grades.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Review Team recommends that Maynooth University develop and clearly publicise to students and staff policies and procedures for handling student complaints about grading and instruction.

Maynooth University faculty and staff are drawing on resources related to new assessment mechanisms for student learning and are also aware of the need for

different mechanisms in different disciplines. They follow the grading norms in the National University of Ireland: Grade Descriptors, and University assessment practices are very much in line with QQI and ESG expectations. In addition to standard grading and evaluation by instructors of student performance, the University makes extensive use of external examiners, whose involvement not only addresses student performance but also programme quality.

External examiners' reports from 2016-2017 have been read thoroughly by members of the visiting team, along with a University summary of the 2018 reports. The reports, along with departmental commentaries on those reports, suggest that this has been an important part of the system of assessment. The reports indicate external examiners find Maynooth University student performance to be quite often very good. Perhaps more importantly the examiners find themselves well aligned overall with instructors in terms of their evaluation of student performance. In effect external examiners are not only assessing student learning but also addressing the standards of assessment being followed by Maynooth University staff.

Regarding the University's engagement with the national community, the external examiners provide an effective method for keeping in touch with both national and international development and benchmarking in relation to teaching and learning practices at programme level.

COMMENDATION 13

The Review Team commends the University for effective use of its external examiners to raise quality oversight of student learning and also to benchmark its own assessment processes and standards against wider norms.

At times examiners suggest staff might extend their marking a bit more over the full scale of marks, implying that Maynooth University faculty are cautious about assigning high marks to excellent work. At times examiners also suggest more clarity up front by staff about grading expectations. Several examiners who have been working with Maynooth University for a number of years comment on the improvements in course design and examination methods over the last few years. Overall, examiners find Maynooth University grading practices sound,

and the Review Team is of the view that this evaluation is correct.

Each department has responsibility for assuring that adequate assessment mechanisms are in place for courses and students. On an informal level many faculty members use classroom mechanisms to obtain immediate feedback from students. While these may not be part of systematic evaluation, many faculty members committed to their teaching find these student comments to be the most valuable feedback they get about the quality of the classroom experience from the learner's perspective.

Student evaluations are a regular part of the assessment of teaching. The Student Evaluation of Learning Experience Survey (SELE) is used in each module, and each year the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is used. While these results tend to be positive about Maynooth University teaching (see commentary above under the section Teaching and Learning), the response rate is poor and as a result some faculty question the overall value of the surveys. Some have suggested that if class time is used for the surveys, the response rate will be high and the results more valid. There are also problems of student fatigue with assessment bunching and complaints about the rigidity of questions. Academic Council is open to the piloting of alternative assessment mechanisms and customised surveys. The procedure for reviewing such innovations is just getting established.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Review Team recommends that the University develop procedures to improve student participation in course and programme evaluation and to make student feedback more meaningful and usable.

SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

With the significant growth of the student population in recent years, investment in academic staff has been prioritised to maintain the student and academic staff ratio. As reflected in the ISER (p43) "it has not been possible to provide resources for the broader student services and supports... these areas now urgently require investment."

Therefore, the resource constraints under which the University has operated, and the need to grow student

enrolment during a severe recession, has perhaps had its greatest impact on the services, resources and infrastructure available to support learners. This was reflected in the ISER and heard by the Review Team repeatedly from staff and students during the site visit.

Capacity issues are an area of concern with regards to ensuring resources are fit for purpose and accessible. For example, the 2015 quality review of support services found capacity issues related to services such as counselling; this was further reflected during discussions at the site visit. During the site visit it was mentioned that while the new library attracted a significant increase in usage the spike did not decline as expected and there has been a sustained increase in the number of students accessing the library on a daily basis. The limited capacity and availability of informal learning spaces was found to be problematic and often students would be found sitting on the floor in the library. Throughout the site visit concerns relating to health and safety were raised in relation to capacity monitoring.

In accordance with the new Strategic Plan, all policies that guide teaching and learning will be reviewed and brought together in a single integrated Teaching and Learning Policy framework although this work has not yet begun.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Review Team recommends that the University increase coordination of support services and evaluate current capacity and resources to ensure that resources available to learners are adequate.

The appointment of a Dean of Teaching and Learning provides opportunities to explore collaborations and synergies, as well as to lead new initiatives. However, as noted in the ISER and throughout the site visit, there is opportunity to enhance the collaboration between support services. It should be noted that following the 2015 quality review of student services, the delivery of support services was reorganised so that the health and welfare services could operate in a more coordinated manner. Despite this, the Review Team believes there is opportunity for further coordination of support services at governance level, to provide institutional oversight of support services for learners.

While the University provides a number of services to students to support them in their studies, during the site visit it became clear that students were often confused as to where to access these resources. Students also reported difficulty in accessing the University website for useful information on support services. Responses in the student World Cafe as well as in a meeting with Student Union representative highlighted that students often went to the Student Union to be redirected to services. The Student Support Hub was recently created to alleviate some of these concerns. Several students at the World Cafes and in meetings with student representatives said that they see it as helpful in directing students to appropriate services.

Both the ISER and other documents, for example the Maynooth University Teaching and Learning Guidelines, express a strong commitment to providing high quality teaching and learning experience to students. The University's commitment to self-monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning on all activities is high, and the Review Team noted a number of different evaluations are listed, many with good results. The results from external examiners also confirm that the University's academic standards are high and comparable with similar institutions internationally.

The quality of the learning experience is monitored on an on-going basis by two annual student surveys, the Student Evaluation of the Learning Experience (SELE; module level survey) and the annual Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE). The University is also aware of and takes into consideration steering documents on national and European level. In the 2018 ISSE additional questions in response to the ESG 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment) and the Guideline 6 (Assessment) from QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) were included, also with positive results.

COMMENDATION 14

The Review Team commends the University on the combination of the teaching evaluations offered by the Teaching & Learning offices, the use of external examiners, and the ambitious programme of evaluation and research in the planning of the undergraduate programme contributing to the development of very high-quality education.

Response rates for student feedback, however, are very modest (around 20%). During the site visit, the Review Team heard from students that they did not see the value in responding to these surveys. These attitudes were reinforced by academic staff who believe they do not fulfil their intended purpose. They also raised concerns about confidentiality and negative feedback based on limited responses adversely affecting promotion opportunities for academic staff. The Review Team understands that a review of SELE is taking place and supports this.

The University has further informal surveys within services, but these are reviewed at service level, rather than as part of a cohesive approach across the institution. While it is clear through the ISER that reviews of student services are ongoing, there is no adequate feedback loop that would help students understand how their input has helped to enhance student services.

As mentioned above, the University participates in the *Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)* which is administered to first and final year undergraduates, and to postgraduate taught students. The 2018 ISSE highlights the supportive environment at Maynooth University with 61% of the students agreeing that the University provides support to help students succeed academically and that they used learning support services such as the Mathematics Support Centre and the Writing Support Services. Open question responses included a number of responses relating to improving learning resources such as additional seating. (ISER, p20).

A standard problem with student surveys administred at the end of a study unit is of course that any suggested and implemented changes will not affect the student suggesting the changes – a reason in itself for reduced enthusiasm to take the survey. Consideration should be given to first defining the specific need for the student feedback, determining whether there is a need for the teacher to improve study units or for the University to gather overall information about the student experience in order to make comparisons between programmes and over time.

The Review Team suggests that Maynooth University might like to consider the introduction of a systematic approach of conducting "micro evaluations" during modules/courses, enabling the teacher to make immediate changes, subject to the requirements of the curriculum.

The University has a strong collegiality ethos in which student feedback on an informal basis is continually collected. The lack of digital infrastructure and systems prevents the University from tracking responses centrally, particularly from a longitudinal perspective.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Review Team recommends that the University take measures to ensure the closing of feedback loops to students as a result of their responses and that the University explore opportunities to electronically record student feedback from various resources for longitudinal purposes.

The University provides a range of personal and welfare supports for students including a dedicated Student Support Officer that helps to provide coordination of support services for students in difficulty. The Review Team understands that there is tension in resources for pastoral care; counselling and medical services in particular are straining with the increasing demand for these services and the lack of staff available to provide support.

Accommodation is an area of concern at a national level for students and this is reflected at Maynooth University. In response to difficulties faced by its students, the University is investing in further on-campus accommodation, as well as a home finder service to assist students to find accommodation off-campus.

The strong collegiality ethos of the University is embedded throughout its services. The Review Team understands that despite the lack of investment in support services in recent years, the Review Team heard consistent reports of support and administrative staff going above and beyond the call of duty for students.

COMMENDATION 15

The Review Team commends the University for its talented, committed and hard-working student services and its administrative staff for their strength of commitment to students' needs.

Staff are appropriately qualified for their student service responsibilities; however, it is a challenge for

the University and for staff to find opportunities for staff development within these support services.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Review Team recommends that the University invest in robust staff development opportunities, particularly for support staff.

There are a number of services related to programmes available to students. The Review Team learned that the Mathematical Support Centre originated at departmental level to provide additional support to school leavers. It was then discovered that there was a need for mathematical support across a number of departments and so an investment provided University-wide support. This is evidence of quality enhancement in providing effective support services that are responsive to student needs.

Maynooth University has a proactive body of academic student representatives that are involved in quality matters pertaining to the student experience. Engagement is mainly through departmental student-

staff committees alongside internal quality review processes. The Review Team found that both staff and students were aware of the importance of student representatives, although closing the feedback loop could be further strengthened. It was noted in the ISER alongside the site visit that there is opportunity to improve training and handover of student representatives. An opportunity to improve this would be to consistently publish and circulate the minutes of student-staff committees to the appropriate student and staff bodies.

The University has a close working relationship with Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) in some areas. The site visit highlighted the strength of working relationships between student officers relating to education and welfare and appropriate University staff and management. However, the Review Team noted some areas of tension in relation to the partnership relationship between the University Executive and the Student Union. For example, the Review Team heard that establishment of a Student Partnership Agreement encouraged by the *National*

*Student Engagement Programme (*NStEP) has met with resistance from the University Executive Team. The Review Team found that there were no regular meetings between the University President and MSU President. Such meetings would improve the partnership between the University and MSU.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Review Team recommends that the University consider a pattern of regular meetings between the President and the President of the Students' Union in order to enhance the partnership.

Moreover, the Review Team understand there is tension relating to the responsibility of management and the funding of clubs and societies, sport and recreation. These activities are currently managed through the Students' Union; however, University staff with responsibilities in the areas of sports and recreation believe the current model does not function effectively for student wellbeing. Further concerns were raised in relation to the promotion and celebration of student success in these areas from the University. The Review Team found that awards received by students in areas of extra-curricular success were not publicised by the University.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Review Team recommends that the University clarify areas of responsibility between the University and the Students' Union that include clubs and societies, athletic teams and recreation.

Established in 2009, the Postgraduate Feedback Council provides a vehicle for feedback on areas relating to the postgraduate student experience. This is run twice a semester, with student representatives from all departments. The development of a Postgraduate Student Union Rep who is a member of the PGFC allows for postgraduate issues to be represented effectively within the MSU, as MSU focused on undergraduate issues previously. During the site visit staff and students commended the work of the PGFC in helping enhance the postgraduate student experience. This is an area of commendation as the University has shown the need to have a dedicated space for postgraduate feedback. It highlights the partnership between staff and students, particularly as members of the PGFC will be leading the Master's Task Force.

COMMENDATION 16

The Review Team commends the work of the Postgraduate Feedback Council as an area of effective student engagement pertaining to the needs of postgraduate students.

Maynooth University has a growing number of incoming international learners on campus and through collaborative provision. Growth of international student numbers is a strategic priority of the University and quality of provision is monitored through the Graduate and International Committee. (see Objective 4 – Provision of Programmes to International Learners)

Both students and staff seemed quite unaware of the arrangements for complaints and appeals which are addressed in the current Teaching and Learning policy guidelines. The Students' Union also expressed some dissatisfaction with the University's arrangements. Although both students and staff agreed that most issues were easily dealt with face to face at departmental level, it is important that the University has a document which clearly describes these processes and also communicates them to all parties involved, especially new students. Similar concerns were expressed about the arrangements for defining and detecting plagiarism. The relevant policy document was thought by some to be too strict; the policy was known to sometimes be circumvented by penalising students locally instead. Suggestions were made that there should be more guidance for students on referencing in an effort to prevent plagiarism rather than penalising it after the event. Given that plagiarism and impersonation are growing problems in academia, the University should consider being more proactive in this field.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Review Team recommends that the University develop transparent and easily accessible information about University policies and procedures for addressing student complaints and appeals as well as plagiarism.

INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Maynooth University is well aware that its digital platforms are not adequate for its next decades of teaching and learning, student and faculty support, or

its own business practices and that they are far from adequate for its new vision of being a major research university and larger postgraduate institution. On the other hand, its IT Services division, in its most recent internal quality review (2017), was commended for staff commitment to students, faculty, and administrative personnel, as well as for staff's eagerness to receive more training and be part of new initiatives. The staff are a real asset.

The University, moreover, recently strengthened the leadership and strategic capacity in IT services which has already developed a policy framework for IT services and provided clearer strategic direction for IT progress. All quality reviews of administrative units will from now on include a focus on IT services and how they can best enable better business practices at the University.

So while the Review Team found, through discussions with staff and students, that the current IT systems in use in the University are no longer fit for purpose and are not adequate for strategic planning or to provide basic services, the University has articulated the promotion of operational excellence and digital transformation as a distinct strategic goal: "We will build capacity for operational excellence and digital transformation and adopt a 'digital first' strategy in the design and implementation of all University processes." (See 10.1, p.57, Strategic Plan)

The Office of the Chief Information and Innovation Officer has set forth a bold ambition to adopt a dual approach to IT governance and service delivery, balancing the need for stable and effective operations with the need to accelerate digital innovation in support of the strategic goals of the University. The Review Team feels that this approach, if implemented, will set the University on a solid footing to achieve its bold ambitions.

The emphases in the new Strategic Plan related to digital transformation all have quality improvement as their rationale: to make business processes and digital services more efficient and simpler; to adopt a "digital first" strategy; to improve research and curricular innovation through digital infrastructures built on existing Maynooth University expertise; to enhance the quality of teaching and learning technologies and expand blended learning opportunities; to prioritise development of a much needed student information system; and to support

students and staff in learning effective use of the new technologies.

The fundamental tenet underpinning any digital transformation, however, is the establishment of a robust and agile infrastructure that is developed in line with the current principles of architectural design, which advocate for a hybrid model that utilises the existing infrastructure but can also make use of the public cloud. To support the potential increase in the number of postgraduate students and researchers and the increase in research funding, moreover, the University may want to make strategic investments in the areas of Management Information Systems (MIS) and a data and research infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Review Team recommends that the University engage in an institution-wide evaluation of all the data requirements necessary, existing and new, to build a robust infrastructure that can support the new Strategic Plan.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

While recognising that it has certain internal communication issues to address, mentioned elsewhere in this report, Maynooth University and the Review Team recognise that a clear strategy for public information and communication should underpin implementation of the new Strategic Plan. That will include upgrading the quality of external communications. To some extent this is a natural step in the growth of an institution from a small, largely undergraduate and regional instructional university into a large research- and teaching-based university with broadly-based constituencies and with a national impact. To some extent it is also the result of recognising that public funding alone will no longer provide the revenues needed for Maynooth University to reach the goals defined in its new Strategic Plan, and that new sources of support from alumni, friends, and corporate partners are essential to maintain quality performance in its operations.

Toward those ends the University is developing a strategy to raise the profile of Maynooth University as not only an excellent place for student learning but also a superb research institution, to engage

more effectively with alumni to make them more aware of the accomplishments of their alma mater, and to increase philanthropic support. That strategy requires investments in marketing, media relations, and fundraising capacity. There is much at Maynooth University of which alumni, friends, and community can be proud. Its challenge is to find vehicles to tell that story in ways that can bring a far greater return to the University than the cost of the investment.

In line with that goal, the Review Team felt that the University has developed a comprehensive set of informational materials for both existing and prospective learners. They outline, in depth, the various pathways an incoming student may take upon entering the University; and that variety of pathways, in fact, is one of the University's strengths. Furthermore, the literature clearly indicates for prospective learners the qualification to which a programme leads, the associated amount of credit, and the level of the credit on the National Framework of Qualifications. In addition, for existing students, the materials provide details of a range of offerings they may choose as they embark on their programme. Whether because of these materials or simply the quality of the Admissions Office or something else, the University has experienced enormous growth in interest, applications, and numbers of students in recent years. While that increase in numbers brings other complications and challenges, there is no question that the word is out effectively that Maynooth University can be a splendid place for a student to learn.

The Review Team also recognised that the University has appointed a Director of External Relations with responsibilities for communications and marketing, alumni and fundraising. The quality of external materials generally, as evidenced for example by the most recent issue of the University magazine, is improving. Maynooth University, moreover, has also made an investment in its Foundation and recognises the importance of building philanthropic strategies to engage alumni, friends, and corporate partners. The Review Team responded positively to these steps because it sees significantly increased philanthropic revenue as essential for quality performance as the University moves forward on its new Strategic Plan.

COMMENDATION 17

The Review Team commends the University for upgrading the quality of its public information and communications in print developed for current and prospective students and for embarking on a broader plan to improve external communications.

A modern vibrant communications strategy, however, also relies on an enhanced and accessible website. The University has a significant amount of work to do to raise its website quality to the level of its print materials. It will want to review its current website in line with executing the Strategic Plan and with current website standards. It may also want to connect, for example, with the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), which brings together people from industry, disability organisations, government, and research labs from around the world to develop guidelines and resources to help make the Web accessible to people with auditory, cognitive, neurological, physical speech, and visual disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Review Team recommends that the University develop a strategy for improving the quality of its website that is appropriate for the new Strategic Plan and for engaging the audiences important to its future.

OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Maynooth University has the responsibility to provide quality assurance for all awards that result from collaborative or linked provision of programmes or courses. The Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement specifies a two-stage process for quality assurance in the context of collaborative provision; Section 10.2 of the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) set out the processes for such collaborations, which are subject to appropriate internal and external quality assurance procedures.

Maynooth University has established protocols for collaboratively provided programmes leading to a joint award by Maynooth University, Dublin City University and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, which together deliver programmes provided by the 3U Partnership. In relation to such programmes, to ensure quality processes across the partnership, a

protocol was prepared for the academic leadership, management, governance and quality assurance of such programmes. This protocol was approved in 2015 by the Academic Councils of the 3U Partnership. It was subsequently applied to joint programmes and awards provided by the higher education institutions in the Midlands East and North Dublin regional cluster. In anticipation of further developments in collaborative provision, including international partnerships, the Quality Committee in 2018 approved terms of reference for a sub-committee to review and oversee all aspects of the arrangements for quality assurance of collaborative provision. This systematic approach to quality is to be commended and ensures transparency between institutions delivering shared programmes. The level of activity across these clusters currently is low and consequently the Review Team considered the partnerships with the Military College and the Crafts Council of Ireland as better examples of how the process of quality assurance and enhancements work.

In the ISER Maynooth University states that it applies the same quality assurance procedures to programmes delivered in partnership as it applies to the University's own programmes. In each case the programmes are subject to the same approval process and the same cycle of reviews that are applied to all programmes provided by the University and the external examiners are appointed by the University. As stated in the introduction, in the case of the Military College, Maynooth University's Vice-President Academic is a member of its Academic Council and the Registrar of the Military College is a member of the Maynooth University Academic Council. This is an example of best practice. In discussion with a representative from the Military College it was evident that the processes for programme oversight and quality assurance & enhancement map the processes presented in the ISER. Furthermore, The Centre for Military History and Strategic Studies (CMHSS) is an example of the close link between the University and the Defence Forces. The Centre was built upon pioneering work undertaken by the Department of History and the Department of Adult and Community Education and was launched formally by a former President of the University and a senior member of the Defence Forces in February 2009.

Despite the clear protocols in place, a review of external examiners' reports for the Defence Forces suggests the quality of the programmes on offer could still be enhanced. For example, there were concerns that the Cadet Course's specific academic objectives, as stated in the Standard Cadet Course Syllabus of Training, are not being met as well as they should be; and there were concerns that "long answers" might be more appropriately graded in consultation with Maynooth University academics. The Review Team learned that the external examiners' reports will contribute to the larger discussion that is currently underway between the University and the Defence Forces, including academic programmes within the history department, on the best way forward for this and other academic programmes which are credited by Maynooth University.

We were not afforded an opportunity to meet with any other collaborator, although we were assured that same processes apply to programmes provided in collaboration with the Crafts Council of Ireland.

Maynooth University has delegated authority from QQI to provide quality assurance for all awards that result from collaborative or linked provision of programmes or courses. The quality assurance arrangements for the recently agreed international partnerships with Fuzhou University in China and UCSI College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, will be completed over the coming year prior to the recruitment of students. The governance and quality assurance arrangements will take into account international best practice, specifically the Quality Assurance for Collaborative and Transnational Provision of Academic Programmes leading to NUI Qualifications (2013) and the Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct for the National University of Ireland and its Member Institutions (2013). In addition, Maynooth University has recently established a linked provider partnership with UCSI College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to provide teaching support for the joint college in Fuzhou. These partnerships form part of Maynooth University's long-term internationalisation strategy of forming deep and sustainable links with overseas partners through student and staff mobility and research collaboration. On discussion with the Vice-President Academic, it was evident that the mechanism by which this quality assurance is to evaluated is not as yet fully developed. The Review Team felt that, in advance of these partnerships commencing, clear protocols and processes need

to be in place to ensure the quality of the teaching provision and the quality of the programmes being delivered. (see Objective 4 – Provision of Programmes to International Learners)

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Review Team recommends that in advance of collaborative overseas partnerships commencing with student enrolments, clear protocols and processes regarding the quality of teaching provision are put in place, to ensure that quality is assured and maintained.

Several of the programmes delivered by Maynooth University are accredited by external bodies. Such accrediting bodies provide additional evidence of the quality of the programmes on offer. Examples of accrediting bodies include CORU (Ireland's multi-profession health regulator), The Teaching Council, Chartered Accountants, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Irish Tax Institute, Honourable Society of King's Inns, Engineers Ireland (Institute of Engineers Ireland), and the Psychological Society of Ireland. Several programmes have multiple accreditation. The Review Team met with external stakeholders during the Site Visit including representatives from the Regional Skills Forum, IBEC, National Economic and Social Council, KPM, and Tusla Child and Family Agency. Accreditation is awarded for a period of years and must be re-applied for, demonstrating that programmes must meet minimum quality standards on an ongoing basis.

Section 10.3 of QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) states that quality assurance procedures include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external, independent, national and international experts (where appropriate), including the selection and recruitment of expert panel members. There are two different types of external examiners appointed in Maynooth University: Subject Extern Examiners, who are appointed to exercise oversight of a subject or subject area in Maynooth University and Special Extern Examiners, who are appointed to read theses submitted for the award of Doctoral and Research Master's degrees. For all external examiner appointments there are clear procedures for recruitment detailed on the website. The processes are transparent and designed to assure the quality of taught programmes (undergraduate

and postgraduate) and research degrees. In addition, standardised templates are used by external examiners to report what was examined. All procedures are in line with best practice internationally. External examiners provide valuable annual evaluations of curriculum, assessment, outcomes and academic standards in each discipline. The majority of external examiners are from universities outside Ireland. Each external examiner provides a written report to the University, and each department/school reviews the report and provides a written response to the Vice-President Academic. The external examiners' reports confirm that academic standards are high and comparable with similar institutions internationally. A new initiative to share best practice across departments, launched in the 2017/18 academic year, involves the preparation by Faculty Deans of a synthesis of the reports and responses from the departments in their faculty for discussion at faculty and department/school level. The Review Team found the synthesis of reports to be a good cohesive and comprehensive approach that effectively communicates best practice. However, in discussions with academic staff during World Cafe sessions, the Review Team learned that some staff members are concerned that pockets of best practice are not always being shared or supported.

SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) calls for review and self-evaluation of all aspects of University programmes and operations to be a standard part of its quality assurance system. The expectation is not only that quality will be regularly assessed internally, but also that what is thereby learned will be the basis for continuous improvement. The Guidelines include a number of self-monitoring procedures.

In line with such QQI expectations, Maynooth University has been working to establish a culture of rigorous self-evaluation. As mentioned above, the AIQR 2018 the University outlines eight overarching principles in its Quality Framework as well as eight Operational Principles and eight Objectives of its Framework. All of these are built on the belief that quality assurance begins with rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring, even though of course they also involve formal external evaluation.

In Maynooth University, the process for internal quality review of a programme or unit begins with a Self-Assessment Report, completed in line with guidelines established by the relatively new high-level Quality Committee and supported by the Office of the Director of Strategic Planning and Quality. A review of several of these Self-Assessment Reports indicates that they are undertaken with seriousness by units and programmes.

The Report is followed by the establishment of a Peer Review Group with both internal and external members. Following a site visit, that group submits a report to the Quality Office. A review of these reports indicates that, along with the Self-Assessment, they provide each unit with a good assessment of its strengths and of areas needing attention. The unit is then asked to prepare a Quality Improvement Plan for review and approval by the University Executive. The Quality Committee, along with the Academic Council and the Governing Authority, receives the results of the process. The unit or programme then takes part in follow-up and ongoing monitoring.

COMMENDATION 18

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for its systematic efforts to build a strong culture of self-evaluation with clear principles and objectives.

The ISER reports that departmental feedback plus post-review quality enhancement initiatives reflect support for this process, praise for the quality and fairness of the reviews, and belief that programmes and units are truly improving themselves as a result of the process. To be sure, some units have been more prompt than others in submitting their Quality Improvement Plan. The Quality Office and Quality Committee are implementing greater consistency in timing in this regard. Some of the self-assessments, moreover, are developed with less rigour and thoroughness than specified in the procedures. The ISER indicates Maynooth is already addressing that challenge. It should be added that the Peer Review Group recommendations have led not only to changes in the specific units being reviewed, but also to addressing broader University challenges such as the need for stronger staff development, for more student support, and for addressing IT deficiencies.

RESEARCH

Maynooth University has set itself the goal of being recognised for a "leading international role in a number of thematic areas of research that address" major societal challenges. It is an ambitious goal but one that is framed realistically by not demanding of itself broad comprehensive research excellence but rather excellence in areas based on institutional strengths and national needs. Maynooth University is particularly recognised in Ireland for its strengths in a number of areas including social sciences and humanities; engaged research; geography and planning; geographical information systems; sociology and political science; networks; biochemistry, microbiology and immunology; wave power; climate modelling; microwave astrophysics.

The University has comprehensive policies and procedures to assure and enhance the quality of its research. These procedures relate to staff, facilities, strategy oversight and implementation, and there is a suite of operational and developmental support services provided by the Research Development Office (RDO). The Graduate Studies Office implements its own policies and procedures to provide quality assurance in relation to doctoral education

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COMMENDATION 19

The Review Team commends Maynooth University on the development of a Research Development Office (RDO) as a single point of contact to support all aspects of research from identifying funding streams through to post-award.

The clearest description of the current research agenda is in Maynooth University's new Strategic Plan (2018-2022), which lays out some quantitative and qualitative goals and reflects the actual strengths of the University, particularly its potential to impact major policy areas through interdisciplinary initiatives at times involving sciences, social sciences, and humanities departments together. The Strategic Plan also describes useful measurements for quality assessment and enhancement going forward. Connecting the University to Knowledge Transfer Ireland as well as to *MaynoothWorks,* a business incubator, moreover, will help University researchers respond to the needs of industry as well as to the policy sector.

The Review Team commends the University on the realistic proposal in the new Strategic Plan to build research capacity--with quality assurance plans--in line with actual University expertise and potential as well as national need.

The University research strategy is primarily based on attracting and retaining excellent staff, and on the further consolidation of the established research institutes and centres of different scales. The institutes, as well at the designation research centres, which are more single themed or subject based, and a number of smaller research groups not defined as centres, represent the University's strengths and priorities, provide supports for networks of researchers, and facilitate collaboration across disciplines and thereby provide the critical mass for interdisciplinary approaches to societal challenges. Following a review in 2017, the Academic Council in May 2018 adopted a revised system consisting of four University research institutes, four designated research centres and a number of local research groups. Different criteria apply to the establishment / designation of each of these units, and to the manner in which they are supported. The University research institutes and designated research centres will each be subject to strategic and quality review on a five-year cycle commencing in 2019. The four research institutes have brought together researchers with shared interests and encouraged new research activities.

The Review Team commends the University on the effective use of research institutes to cultivate an inclusive research culture and research initiatives across departmental lines, capable of attracting large-scale EU funding.

The research performance of departments is reviewed as an integral component of the periodic quality assurance reviews of academic units. Self-evaluation of the research performance of the departments and institutes is an integral part of the formal periodic quality review process of each academic unit. In addition to these units and to the Research Development Office, a University Research Committee, according to the ISER (p5) "contributes to a more coherent and inclusive research strategy, involving both top-down and bottom-up engagement and it also facilitates cross-faculty and trans-disciplinary research. The Review Team met with the members of the Research Committee and Institute Directors as part of the review group representing Directors of Research Institutes/Centres and members of the Research Committee.

The ISER acknowledges Maynooth University's decline in research funding with low success in securing EU funding (ISER p.49). In an endeavour to meet Maynooth University's ambitious targets to attract high quality prestigious grants to the University, its research support unit (Research Development Office) underwent restructuring in the past two years, with a significant focus on attracting EU funding. The Research Development Office (RDO) is a support unit for faculty assisting in all aspects of research funding. Principal Investigators now have one port of call. Support is available for identifying funding calls, application assistance, budget support and post award support. The institutional supports and services provided by the Research Development Office (RDO) are an essential part of the University research strategy, particularly in relation to promoting a culture of research excellence, securing external funding to support research, safeguarding, assuring and enhancing quality in research practice and outputs, and assuring research integrity.

The quality of Maynooth University research is measured and monitored by indicators such as field-weighted citation rates, peer assessments, evidence of policy impacts, and success in securing competitive research funding. The University has a long history of securing EU funding in spite of setbacks in recent years, and success has provided valuable learning for new faculty and staff looking to win competitive international funding. Funding successes are one indicator of research quality for an institution. In addition, some administrators and some faculty members indicated that the University was in the process of making some strategic hires to enhance its research quality.

A new research information system has been developed, which enables heads of departments to access research activity within their department. This system can generate reports for the University Research Committee and Governing Authority. Over the past year Maynooth University has reviewed

its internal funding scheme, scholarships scheme and funding provision for mobility. These initiatives were set in place in an effort to ramp up EU funding success. As mentioned above, support is now in place to buy out time from teaching to support the ambition of attracting high quality research funding. One strength is the manner in which institutes work closely with the RDO. In addition, the Directors of Research Institutes meet regularly as a group with the VP Research. This approach brings expertise together, normalises research culture within the ecosystem, and gives increased confidence to go outside to collaborate with other groups.

For faculty not in research institutes, there has been a concerted effort by the Research Development Office to foster a research culture, through social events, bringing in international speakers, bringing up local or national issues and getting people talking together. Other initiatives to support a quality research culture include bringing people together who have not traditionally sought grants and a research week which is broader than the outputs of the institutes but includes work in departments and work across institutes. These initiatives provide an environment to support anybody wishing to do research and are aimed at bridging some of the difficulties that have prevented Maynooth University from being more successful in attracting high quality funding. Evidence of embedding this research culture into the University is found in the research activity of its faculty. Faculty with whom the Team spoke felt that most of their colleagues are now research-active, with only a few not engaged in some kind of research.

Maynooth University houses the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI), which is a national trusted digital repository for Ireland's social and cultural data. The DRI is a research organisation with staff members from a wide variety of backgrounds, including software engineers, designers, digital archivists and librarians, data curators, digital imaging experts, policy and requirements specialists, educators, programme and project managers, social scientists and humanities scholars. DRI was originally built by a research consortium of six academic partners. Core academic institutions continue to manage the repository and implement its policies, guidelines and training. These are the Royal Irish Academy (RIA), Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and Maynooth University. The DRI is an important example of the research

quality carried out by Maynooth University and fits with the expertise of the University in demonstrating its leadership in policy and social culture.

Faculty in Maynooth University engage in wider dissemination of its research output beyond peer reviewed journal publications. Many staff from the humanities and social sciences contribute in a variety of ways to the arts, culture, social and economic development, and environmental policies. As outlined in the ISER, specific examples include invited participation in national and international policy/ strategy advisory bodies; preparation of strategies to support local authorities, local communities, and private enterprises; provision of workshops targeted at audiences of practitioners in many fields; and organising cultural events at local and national levels. These activities represent the very strong public service and civic engagement commitment of the University. Staff are encouraged to engage in such activities, which are recognised as an important component of the service contribution of academics when they apply for promotion.

Maynooth University is known for research expertise in the social sciences, with faculty contributing to national debates on housing, community development, education outreach and the media. The term used in the ISER to capture this activity was 'Engaged research at the national level'. In addition, *Maynoothworks* collaborates with industry to deliver on its research mission and focus on knowledge transfer. Other areas of investment support early career researchers to take their research to the next level by providing an ecosystem to bid for large national grants through the Irish Research Council or the highly competitive European Research Council grants. All of the inputs that Maynooth University provides are linked to increasing the quality of research output.

Other evidence of research quality is demonstrated through the field weighted citation index (FWCI), which is a key measure of the quality of publications output of the University as a whole. Maynooth University has improved significantly on this measure over recent years. In 2010, the FWCI for the whole University was 1.00. Since then the general trajectory has been upward, peaking at 1.90 in 2014, when Maynooth University publications had the highest score of any Irish University. Over the seven years

2010-2016, Maynooth University's average FWCI was 1.35, the fourth highest of the Irish universities. The outstanding international quality of the University's leading researchers is also evidenced by external peer review for prestigious awards such as ERCs (with four awards in geography, sociology, medieval Irish and computer science), and two Royal Irish Academy gold medals for researchers in geography and psychology.

The ISER provides several indicators of the University's research quality including endorsing the *2005 European Charter for Researchers and the European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*, growing by 20% research publication outputs (2010-2016) despite a decline in research income, with 14.3% in the top 10% of cited publications worldwide.

Collaborative research with enterprise and commercialisation activity is a core activity of the University. An important milestone was reached in 2015 with the opening of the 1600 sqm *MaynoothWorks* business incubator (ISER p.53), to support research outputs as part of its aims. The quality of this research output is reflected in patents (4) and invention disclosures (14). In addition, there is a strong commitment to other forms of knowledge transfer to communities beyond the University, and community-engaged research is a feature of the University, for example Maynooth University is an active participant in the *Campus Engage National Network*.

QQI's Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies (p. 3) indicate the need for "an integrated system of quality assurance" that builds "upon the peer review mechanisms widely employed in research funding and publication." It also indicates that these should complement Quality Assurance procedures related to "research education and training." The team believes that Maynooth University is compliant with these expectations.

Overall the University is aware of its research strengths, areas for development and has a strategy to achieve its ambitious goals. A main concern with delivering on these goals is with regard to staff workloads in the absence of a University wide workload model. In addition, the diversity of the student population and the ethos of staff in supporting all its students will come under pressure if staff numbers remain as they are while pursuing an aggressive research agenda.

Objective 2 - Quality Enhancement

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

The Review Team noted a number of examples of enhancement of quality (noted below), a key mechanism for this being the Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) which are signed off after each review.

As a result of the combined developments of the Strategic Plan (2018-2022) and the ISER, Maynooth University has established better integrated planning processes and has begun to address some weaknesses in quality assurance.

The University demonstrates a clear commitment to enhancement, although it is not always evident that initiatives for enhancement are as a result of deliberate steps undertaken at institutional level. The Review Team has recommended that improvements in respect of communication gaps, particularly between executive offices and departments could, inter alia, ensure that quality enhancement initiatives are more systematically captured through the governance structures and can be properly tracked back to quality assurance processes (see Objective 1 – Governance and Management).

It is clear that Maynooth University aspires to and is committed to quality assurance and quality enhancement. The Review Team concluded this from the University's mission, stated values, and operational principles, and from the Review Team's December meetings with University personnel. On the other hand, the University's impressive ambitions and strategic plans to become a major research as well as a teaching institution, its enormous growth in enrolment during the past decade, and the budgetary constraints caused by reduced funding per student from the national government have all come together in such a way as to limit the University's ability to make all of the qualitative enhancements on its agenda. It has done as much as possible to keep qualified teachers in the classroom for its students in somewhat the same student/faculty ratios as before, but at the same time has not been able to maintain or enhance the support structures also essential for high quality performance. Nonetheless, the Review Team believes—based on the written documentation and

the sessions during the team's visit—that Maynooth University leadership understands well what steps must be taken to assure and enhance high quality performance in both the instructional and research activities of the University going forward, and that the University will take all possible steps to increase revenues, make necessary trade-offs, and exercise good judgment to enhance the quality of Maynooth University going forward. The results will come down to what steps are actually "possible."

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE INSTITUTION'S MISSION AND TARGETS FOR QUALITY

Maynooth University is in a period of transition. It has always had some areas of strong research along with a reputation of being an excellent teaching institution; but now it aspires to have its profile defined equally for its teaching and research, to be recognised equally for its outstanding research—particularly in areas of primary expertise—and its outstanding teaching, which has had for years the corollary recognition of being accessible to and supportive of non-traditional students of several kinds. It is clear that the stated mission, most easily accessed on page 8 of the "Maynooth University Profile for CINNTE Review 2018," provides for that breadth of assured quality. It covers the aspect of "public research university," the dimension of a "community working together to inquire and discover, teach and learn," and the element of "innovation" and commitment to a "free, open, equal, democratic and sustainable society." The stated "Vision" that follows is in line with the mission with commitments to both "research and teaching" as well as "equality and diversity." The stated "Values" and the thirteen goals for 2018-2022 follow well from the Mission and Vision. Those thirteen goals correspond to the sections of the Strategic Plan 2018-2022 on six primary goals and seven secondary goals for the University. Reaching those goals will, of course, depend on a great deal of quality enhancement over the next few years, enhancements that will only be possible through increased revenue streams and wise decisions about allocations of those resources. The Review Team, as articulated throughout all the sections of Objective 1, believe that the loyal and talented personnel, the

culture of self-evaluation, and the clear articulations of the right goals for the University all make continued enhancement of the quality of Maynooth University programmes possible. The team also recognises that difficult realities will continue to force the University to make tough decisions that may involve deferral of some of the aspirations. Having said that, the Review Team would also say that the targets for quality are aligned with the University's stated mission and values.

INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

What follows comes in two parts: first, enhancement of quality at Maynooth University in recent years and second, areas of enhancement needed over the next few years.

RECENT ENHANCEMENTS IN QUALITY

Overall Enhancement of Quality Assurance Procedures

Revisions in the AIQR from 2017 to 2018 reflect decisions to improve processes for Quality Assurance, to achieve greater consistency in programme reviews, and to define more clearly the principles and objectives of the University's Framework for Quality.

As a result of the combined developments of the Strategic Plan (2018-2022) and the ISER, Maynooth University has established better integrated planning processes and has begun to address some weaknesses in quality assurance.

Governance, Management

Changing the role of faculty deans to one of executive management has improved oversight of programme quality.

The decision to create a vice president for engagement is in line with the strategy to improve the quality of research and postgraduate programmes.

Expansion of the Alumni/Development operation and the Foundation is improving the revenue stream needed to address current quality issues.

The new Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan are designed to support improvement of quality in programmes, research, and student life.

Programmes of Education and Training

The new undergraduate curriculum has been designed to improve the quality of overall undergraduate education in several ways, including lifelong impact, and is accompanied by a rigorous plan for evaluation.

The Master's Task Force, along with other initiatives to build postgraduate programmes, are first steps in major improvement of the quality of postgraduate education at Maynooth University.

The structured PhD has been an important enhancement within Maynooth University's commitment to address national priorities in postgraduate education.

The programme review process is in its third cycle and is being followed now, as evidenced by review of the reports and relevant committee minutes, with greater rigor and uniformity to assure quality.

Teaching and Learning

The appointment of a Dean of Teaching and Learning has already led to new collaborations and initiatives to improve learning quality. Academic Council, moreover, has approved new, integrated "Teaching and Learning Guidelines," which will help the University monitor the quality of both instruction and the assessment of learning.

Assessment of Learners

Maynooth University has increased its use of external examiners, who not only provide another level of professional assessment of learning but also provide the best overall evaluation of the quality of Maynooth University instructors' standards of assessment of student learning.

Supports for Learners

Establishment of the Mathematical Support Centre and University-wide support for math learners has had a demonstrable impact on the quality of student learning in mathematics. The Writing Centre has had a similar impact.

Public Information and Communication

The University has developed a much improved and comprehensive set of informational materials for existing and prospective learners, as well as

qualitatively improved public communication materials in print (not yet in the digital area).

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, and Review

Maynooth University has improved the consistency of its programme and unit self-evaluations as well as the compliance of units in drawing up quality improvement plans following reviews.

Research

The new Strategic Plan outlines the most thoughtful plan yet for Maynooth University research of high quality that is based not only on University excellence and potential but also on regional and national needs.

Research institutes and centres are being more effectively used to initiate and support research initiatives of high quality.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS

The Review Team suggests the following areas which the University should consider in driving forward strategies for enhancement:

– internal communication, particularly so that quality enhancement initiatives can be systematically captured and tracked back to quality assurance processes.

– the procedures used for student feedback on courses and programmes so that it can be more effectively used, to improve response rate and effectiveness of course evaluations for quality enhancement purposes. Particular attention should be paid to closing the feedback loop for students and teaching staff.

– staff development and performance management programmes, as well as oversight of staff workloads, both to achieve greater productivity and to strengthen morale

– continued enhancement of teaching and learning through such steps as the teaching innovation funds and development of credible systems for measuring quality of teaching.

– the platform for information technology and data analysis, as well as the University website, as part of building an overall infrastructure of people, spaces, and technology suitable for the next two decades at Maynooth University.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Review Team recommends that the University consider driving forward institutionally-led strategies for enhancement, particularly in the following areas: internal communication, procedures for student feedback on courses and programmes, staff development and performance management programmes, as well as oversight of staff workloads, the continued enhancement of teaching and learning, the platform for information technology and data analysis, as well as the University website.
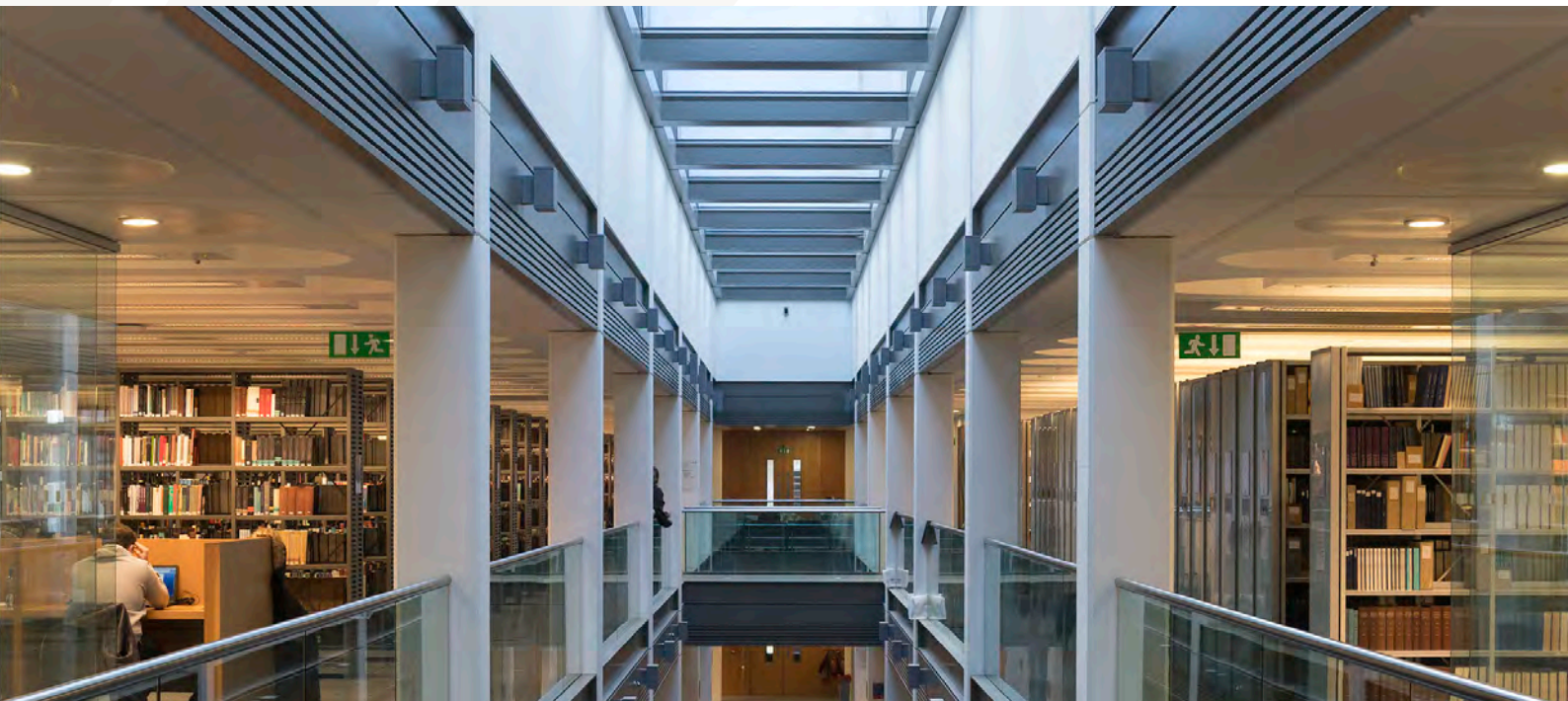
Objective 3 – Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

Maynooth University is the national leader on all dimensions of widening participation in university education, based on the HEA Higher Education System Performance (2018) publication. In 2017, 28% of undergraduate new entrants came from socio-economic groups under-represented in higher education, 15% had a disability, especially of a physical and/or sensory nature, and 47% came from households where neither parent had a higher education qualification.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ATP

Maynooth University takes a strategic approach to Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) from recruitment strategies to pre- and post-entry supports. The success of this approach is evidenced by the diversity of its undergraduate new entrants (above). At the recruitment stage Maynooth University provides information to prospective students in many formats including the prospectus, social media, the Maynooth University website, open days, visits to schools and liaising with career guidance counsellors. To ensure progression to postgraduate study, Maynooth University hosts a dedicated postgraduate evening and recruitment strategies provided by the Graduate Studies Office. To further enhance ATP the information provided includes not only information on the programmes offered at the University but more importantly entry requirements, progression requirements and supports available to ensure success while studying.

Alongside detailed information the University has transparent published entry criteria, including supplementary procedures that are applicable to students who experience barriers to participation, including those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with a disability, and students who seek to transfer from further to higher education. Making entry criteria explicit is aligned with QQI's Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies, Section 3.2, which stipulates that institutions have pre-defined and published regulations, which

are consistently applied, associated with all areas related to learner admission, progression, recognition and certification of awards. Maynooth University follows the QQI guidelines in respect of ATP. Such procedures include documentation on access policies and admission processes. The procedures also state that access policies and admissions procedures must be implemented consistently and in a transparent manner. The Review Team found the University not only to be compliant with these guidelines but to be commended on its excellent brochures, constructive outreach to schools, external face for second-level schools and non-traditional entrants.

Page 11 of QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) sets out the following: 'Fair recognition of education and training qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning'. Maynooth University, within its ISER, provides evidence of having done this through the number of alternative access routes to its programmes. These include routes for mature students and students transferring from other colleges of further education as well as a year-long foundation programme Certificate in Science. A further alternative entry route for those who wish to return to study but have not studied in any formal way for a number of years is provided through a "return to learning course" developed by the Department of Adult and Community Education.

Maynooth University is active in promoting better access, transfer and progression for students with further education and training awards. An example of this is its leadership in the development of the Further Education to Higher Education (FET2HE) Network, established in 2015 across the Midlands East-North Dublin (MEND) Regional Cluster. The University is also leading efforts to address the higher education needs of the most marginalised communities, such as Travellers, co-ordinating the CollegeConnect programme, which was awarded funding of €2.2 million in 2018 by the HEA to enhance educational aspirations for acutely under-represented groups in the Midlands East and North Dublin region. All of these routes provide strong evidence in support of the University's widening participation agenda and demonstrates national leadership.

The Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP) is responsible for widening participation and enabling students from non-traditional backgrounds to succeed in the University. Through MAP, the University provides specific supports for mature students, and students entering through *the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)* and *Disability Access to Route to Education (*DARE). This support includes pre-entry preparation programmes, post entry supports, and additional financial support. Of particular note are the different orientation programmes tailored to the student cohort, for example the orientation programme for mature students, disability office orientation day, launchpad orientation programme for HEAR and DARE students and the technology transition programme, tailored to the student cohort, which aim to aid the transition to university education. Post-transition support is essential to ensure timely progression.

The University has a significant number of additional post-entry supports again focused in the main on the specific student cohort to ensure that the needs of the student are central and the supports likely to be successful. These include Summer Programmes for incoming mature and international students, the library, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Career Development Centre and the counselling service. All of these activities demonstrate the University's commitment to learner induction to both the university and the programme of study the student is engaged with. Additionally, the ISER (p.39) provides ample evidence of the excellent work that the University does in this area and its success in attracting a high and growing proportion of non-traditional entrants and the high progression rates of 82-84% for disadvantaged students, students with a disability and mature students compared to a

progression rate of 85.5% for all students.

The recruitment, transition and post-entry strategies that Maynooth University has established are designed to meet the needs of a diverse student cohort who feel valued as part of the Maynooth University community and supported, through a strong support network, to succeed while studying at the University. Students who participated in the World Café meetings expressed to the Review Team how well the University supported them in their programmes and named many of the support offices as being central to that success.

COMMENDATION 22

The Review Team commends the University on its national leadership and strategic approach to Access, Transfer and Progression at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with recruitment, transition and post-entry strategies established to ensure the success of its diverse student cohort.

The Review team noted that, despite these developments, currently there is no forum for the consideration of widening participation across the institution, which could ensure the long-term sustainability of the widening participation success of the University and to meet one of the goals of the next Strategic Plan 2018-2022 – to "build on our record of national leadership in widening participation to become a model university for diversity and inclusion".

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Review Team recommends the establishment of a University widening participation committee to ensure the long-term sustainability of the widening participation success of the University.

Objective 4 – Provision of Programmes to International Learners

INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS

Maynooth University has a growing number of incoming international learners on campus and through collaborative provision. Growth of international student numbers is a strategic priority of the University and quality of provision is monitored through the Graduate and International Committee.

There is an Office for International Students that supports recruitment and provides bespoke induction for international learners. Moreover, the University has dedicated pre-sessional English courses for incoming international students. The Review Team found appropriate support for students partaking in Erasmus (incoming and outgoing), noting a good balance between incoming and outgoing Erasmus students. International students receive tailored information prior to commencing their studies, with dedicated pre-sessional English language courses available. International students have access to the same services as domestic students. The Review Team felt that students could be further supported by the provision of dedicated services and activities during their studies. In addition, The Review Team found during the site visit meetings with international students and members of the International Office highlighted that international students often had difficulty integrating with the broader student community.

The Review Team recommends that the University dedicate further services for international students with a focus on integration within the Maynooth University student body.

Transnationally, the University has recently set up a joint college with Fuzhou University in China as well as a having a linked provider partnership with UCSI College in Malaysia (see p.30). The Review Team felt that, while these partnerships support the University's Internationalisation strategy, there was inconsistency and confusion over the responsibilities of these partnerships. At present, it appeared to the Review Team that potential risks and overall operation of these partnerships are not being sufficiently anticipated. The ISER refers to UCSI college providing teaching support for the joint programmes delivered at Fuzhou University. However, the Review Team was unable to receive sufficient evidence to support this statement, with divergent responses in relation to responsibilities of curriculum design and teaching responsibilities. While these prospective students are ensured access to appropriate resources and support through the Memoranda of Understanding, the Review Team found details promising access to 24-hour library support which is not a service currently provided at Maynooth University. The Review Team has recommended (p31) that arrangements be put in place to ensure that quality is assured and maintained in its transnational partnerships.

D

Conclusions

Conclusions

During this period of rapid growth and change at Maynooth University, the University strengths and challenges are closely related. The Review Team finds its commendations and recommendations are often the flip side of each other. At a time of constrained funding, the University has been impressively ambitious in curricula, postgraduate growth, research agendas, and national profile while undergraduate enrolment has also boomed. With tighter funding, decisions were made to keep student/instructor ratios as healthy as possible but to limit expenditures on support staff, learning spaces, and overall infrastructure. Fortunately, because Maynooth University has developed a culture of rigorous self-evaluation and quality assurance, administration, faculty, and staff are aware of where the shortcomings lie and have started developing plans to address them. It is important that the University have such plans, with a calendar for implementation, and a strategy for supplementary revenue sources to make implementation possible, for both quality and reputation will depend on making wise decisions about implementation strategies and schedules.

What follows are brief summaries of each section of the Review Team's report on quality assurance and enhancement with attention to what calls for commendation and what necessitates a recommendation. Then the Team lists a number of specific commendations, often recapturing points made earlier in the report. Finally, the Team highlights five primary commendations and five primary recommendations.

THE ISER

The Team commends the inclusive process followed and the candid recognition in the report of quality concerns as well as University strengths.

OVERALL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Team commends the University for developing a culture of self-examination with a focus—in each part of its programme and with each new development—on quality assurance and enhancement.

GOVERNANCE

The Review Team commends the University for its talented leadership team that works well together and for recent positive changes in, for example, the role of faculty deans and in plans for new senior positions. At the same time the Team must acknowledge the role of leadership and management in decisions that have led to deficiencies in infrastructure and staff support. The Team also recognises that some gaps in communication on campus should be closed. On the other hand, the ambitious yet realistic new Strategic Plan is evidence that Maynooth University leadership knows where it wants and needs to go, given the capacity for the University to command the resources needed.

PROGRAMMES

The Review Team finds the new undergraduate curriculum challenging and innovative, the evaluation plan rigorous and appropriate, with perhaps some need to add a way to measure longer-term benefits for students. There are also some clarifications needed for students to grasp the meaning and purpose of the "critical skills" and "experiential learning" components, as they are very important components. The Team also commends the University's development and implementation of the structured PhD, the University's systematic planning to grow postgraduate studies in ways tied to national need and University expertise, and its methods to evaluate and improve those programmes. It also commends the University for the effective programme review system now in its third cycle.

STAFF

The Review Team commends the University for having developed such a loyal, talented, student-centred staff in both academic and administrative areas. It also recognises and emphasises the fact that, especially with the large student growth, a number of departments are understaffed. Both performance and morale problems are emerging. The Team recommends that the University develop, with the involvement of staff, a consistent and clear workload management model. It also recommends

the development of a more robust staff development and succession programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

An impressive institutional commitment to teaching has been advanced by a new dean and university centre along with supports within the three faculties; is evidenced by giving equal weight to teaching and research for promotions; and is further testified to by University awareness of additional steps such as better methods for evaluating teaching and the establishment of a Teaching Innovation Fund.

ASSESSMENT

The Review Team was especially impressed by—and commends—the effective use of external examiners not only for evaluating student learning but also as a check on faculty grading practices.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

The Student Affairs staff is talented, hard-working, and committed to the students. It is too small to do everything it should, especially in the area of student life. Resources are not adequate in terms of personnel or space. The Team also recommends that the University develop a more reliable system for gathering student feedback on courses and programmes so that it can be used effectively. The Team also recommends the University publicise widely and clearly to students and staff its procedures for handling student complaints about grades and teaching. It will also be important for Maynooth University to clarify some uncertainties about oversight of certain programmes where both the Students' Union and the University have an interest and role.

INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The University's information technology platform and its data processing resources are not adequate for the ambitious new Strategic Plan. The new director in that area is already developing an ambitious plan to correct those deficiencies going forward. The Review Team recommends that the planning be comprehensive in light of the University's mission and plans.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Review Team commends the University for enhancing its print communications in recent years, both for admissions and broader audiences, and for taking more seriously the need to engage alumni and utilise the Foundation for revenue growth. The team also recommends that significant attention be given to the website and electronic communication.

OTHER PARTIES

The Review Team recognises that Maynooth University has handled its partnerships with the same qualitative standards as its internal programmes. It recommends that as programmes are developed abroad such assurances remain in place.

SELF-EVALUATION

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for its culture of self-examination and continuous improvement, as evidenced by the AIQR process, by the production of the ISER coinciding with the development of the Strategic Plan, and in meetings with staff and students at all levels.

RESEARCH

The Review Team commends Maynooth University for its new Strategic Plan in research, which is ambitious but realistic and is tied to University expertise and national need. It also commends Maynooth for effective use particularly of its research institutes, but also research centres, to encourage faculty research initiatives.

ATP

The Review Team acknowledges Maynooth University's national profile as a leader in all dimensions of widening participation in university education and commends Its leadership and strategic approach to Access, Transfer and Progression at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

INTERNATIONAL

The University does a commendable job of balancing its own students going abroad with international students coming to Maynooth University. It provides services to those students but may want to develop ways to integrate them more often with the rest of the student body.

# The Review Team commends Maynooth University for:

1. The comprehensiveness and inclusive approach to its ISER process.

2. Progress towards embedding a culture of quality evaluation and enhancement which includes coherent quality review strategies.

3. Developing a strong leadership team that works well together with talented and loyal staff as well as a student-centered culture.

4. Its ambitious vision and Strategic Plan, which if successful will reposition the University to be an even greater asset for the Irish people.

5. Developing and implementing a rigorous review procedure for programmes and units, and for following it through three cycles that have included quality improvement plans with monitoring following each review.

6. Developing a creative new undergraduate curriculum aimed at improving the quality of the student learning experience and for developing a rigorous plan to assess its effectiveness.

7. Its initiative, through the Master's Task Force and other planning, to grow its postgraduate enrolment in line with national needs and University expertise.

8. The development, implementation, and continuous assessment of the structured doctorate degree.

9. Its progress in improving the quality of teaching and its planning to make additional progress in this area.

10. Its very professional, engaged and approachable teaching staff as evidenced from the results of student surveys and by meetings with both teachers and students.

11. Its ambitious new undergraduate curriculum based on international research, societal needs and students' demands for flexibility.

12. Its awareness and adoption of principles of teaching and learning as expressed in steering documents at European and international levels.

13. Effective use of its external examiners to raise quality oversight of student learning and also to benchmark its own assessment processes and standards against wider norms.

14. The combination of the teaching evaluations offered by the Teaching and Learning Offices, the use of external examiners, and the ambitious programme of evaluation and research in the planning of the undergraduate programme contributing to the development of very high-quality education.

15. Its talented, committed, and hard-working student services and administrative staff in their strength of commitment to students' needs.

16. The work of the Postgraduate Feedback Council as an area of effective student engagement pertaining to the needs of postgraduate students.

17. Upgrading the quality of its public information and communications in print developed for current and prospective students and for embarking on a broader plan to improve external communications.

18. Systematic efforts to build a strong culture of self-evaluation with clear principles and objectives.

19. The development of a Research Development Office (RDO) as a single point of contact to support all aspects of research from identifying funding streams through to post-award

20. The realistic proposal in the new Strategic Plan to build research capacity—with quality assurance plans—in line with actual University expertise and potential as well as national need.

21. The effective use of research institutes to cultivate an inclusive research culture and research initiatives across departmental lines, capable of attracting large-scale EU funding.

22. Its national leadership and strategic approach to Access, Transfer and Progression at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with recruitment, transition and post-entry strategies established to ensure the success of its diverse student cohort.

The Review Team recommends that the University:

1. Reconsider the balance among spending priorities to avoid negative consequences particularly to its student-oriented reputation.

2. Address its communication gaps, particularly between executive offices and departments. Improvements in this area can also ensure that quality enhancement initiatives are more systematically captured through the governance structures and can be properly tracked back to quality assurance processes.

3. Develop a plan to evaluate the longer-term impact of its ambitious new curriculum through possible surveys of employers, alumni, and graduate students.

4. Develop a transparent and flexible workload model for both academic and administrative staff to address concerns that have resulted from increased enrolment along with budgetary constraints.

5. Develop a timescale and funding plan for the kind of robust staff development articulated in the new Strategic Plan.

6. Take steps to clarify the purposes and goals for the critical (thinking) skills and experiential learning components of the new curriculum, and that the experiential learning model be further developed.

7. Develop and clearly publicise to students and staff policies and procedures for handling student complaints about grading and instruction.

8. Develop procedures to improve student participation in course and programme evaluation and to make student feedback more meaningful and usable.

9. Increase coordination of support services and evaluates current capacity and resources to ensure that resources available to learners are adequate.

10. Take measures to ensure the closing of feedback loops to students as a result of their responses and also explores opportunities to record student feedback electronically from various sources for longitudinal purposes.

11. Invest in robust staff development opportunities, particularly for support staff.

12. Consider a pattern of regular meetings between the President and the President of the Students' Union in order to enhance the partnership.

13. Clarify areas of responsibility between the University and the Student Union that include clubs and societies, athletic teams and recreation.

14. Develop transparent and easily accessed information about University policies and procedures for addressing student complaints, appeals, as well as plagiarism.

15. Engage in an institution-wide evaluation of all the data requirements necessary, existing and new, to build a robust infrastructure that can support the new Strategic Plan.

16. Develop a strategy for improving the quality of its website that is appropriate for the new Strategic Plan and for engaging the audiences important to its future.

17. That in advance of collaborative overseas partnerships commencing with student enrolments, clear protocols and processes regarding the quality of teaching provision are put in place, to ensure that quality is assured and maintained.

18. Consider driving forward institutionally-led strategies for enhancement, particularly in the following areas: internal communication, procedures for student feedback on courses and programmes, staff development and performance management programmes, as well as oversight of staff workloads, the continued enhancement of teaching and learning, the platform for information technology and data analysis, as well as the University website.

19. Establish a University widening participation committee to ensure the long-term sustainability of the widening participation success of the University.

20. Dedicate further services for international students with a focus on integration within the Maynooth University student body.

FIVE PRIMARY OVERARCHING COMMENDATIONS

1. The Review Team commends Maynooth University for developing a strong culture of self-examination focused on continuous improvement and assuring quality in all of its programmes.

2. The Review team commends the University for developing a strong, talented leadership team as well as a loyal and talented student-centred academic and administrative staff throughout the institution.

3. The Review Team commends the University for an innovative new undergraduate curriculum, with a robust evaluation plan, as well as an innovative structured PhD programme.

4. The Review Team commends the University for its ambitious but realistic new Strategic Plan, with quality assurance measurements built in.

5. The Review Team commends Its national leadership and strategic approach to Access, Transfer and Progression at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels with recruitment, transition and post-entry strategies established to ensure the success of its diverse student cohort.
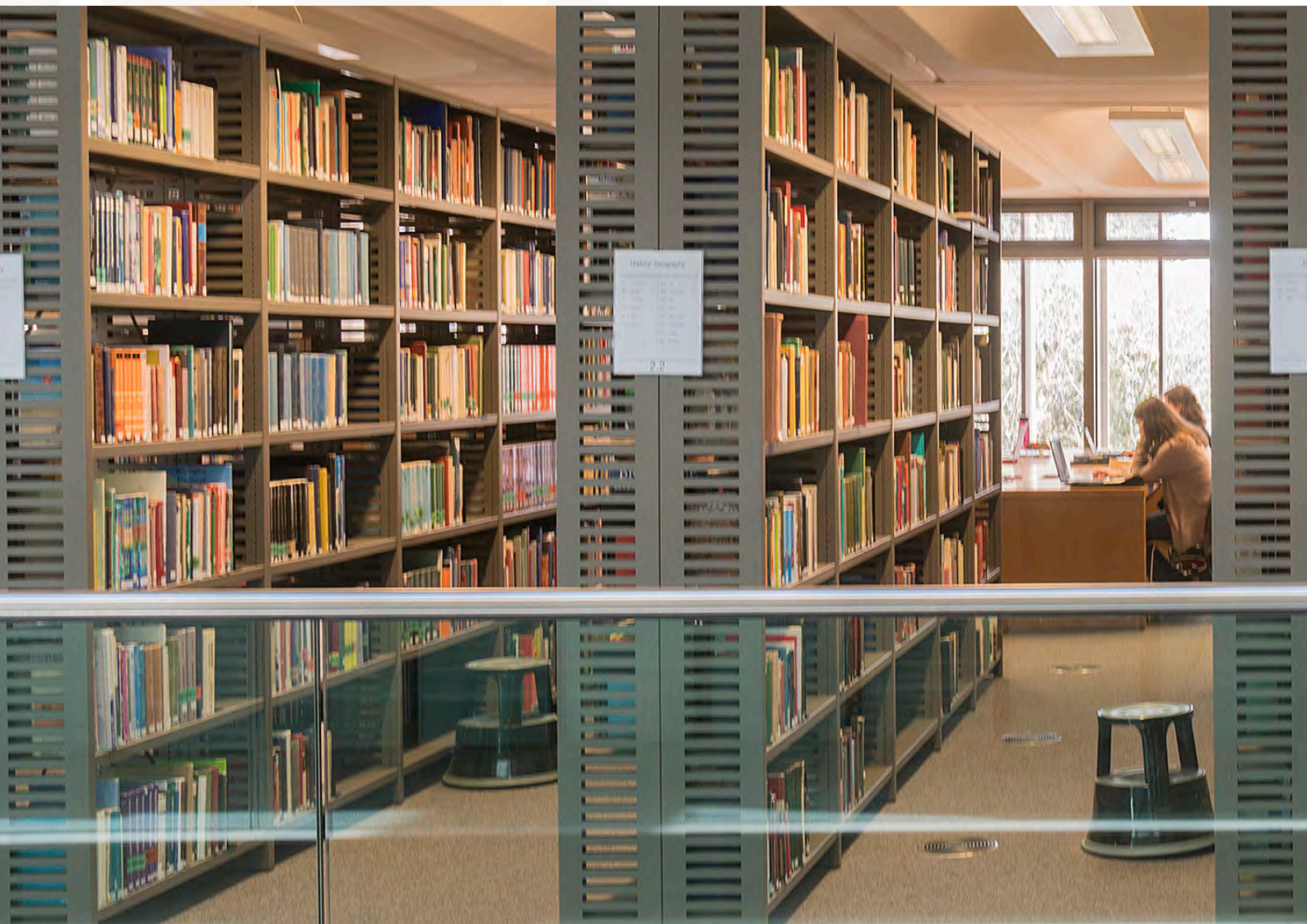
FIVE PRIMARY OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Review Team recommends that the University begin to address its most severe infrastructure issues, in spaces and staffing, before the problems seriously impact both quality and reputation.

2. The Team recommends that the University address workload management issues by developing a fair and consistent model for workload management.

3. The Team recommends that the University develop a more robust system for staff development, promotion, and succession, together with mechanisms for regular feedback to all staff members on their strengths and on areas of national development.

4. The Team recommends that the University, following a thorough survey of institutional needs, improve the quality of its information management platform and portfolio as well as its capacity for data analysis needed to succeed with the new Strategic Plan.

5. The Team recommends that the University develop a better system for collecting and utilising student input on courses, teaching, and the student experience, and for providing regular feedback to students on how their input has helped to improve teaching and learning.

Institutional Response

Institutional Response

Maynooth University response to report on the CINNTE Quality Review

Maynooth University welcomes the report of the independent Review Team for the CINNTE Quality Review. We consider the report to be comprehensive, thorough and fair. We are grateful for the many commendations and also for the recommendations which will assist us in the pursuit of further progress in quality enhancement throughout the university. The University has been on a steep growth trajectory over most of the last decade which has brought both opportunities and challenges as noted in the report. Expansion and diversification have been accompanied by a balanced commitment to both teaching and research and a strongly student-centred ethos.

We are pleased that the Review Team have affirmed that Maynooth University consistently makes sure that academic practices and policies are aligned with QQI, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL) and European (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area; ESG) guidelines, and that programmes are aligned with the Irish NFQ.

We welcome in particular the commendations in relation to the University's progress towards embedding a culture of quality evaluation and enhancement and the systematic efforts to build a strong culture of self-evaluation. The Review Team also commend the University for its ambitious new Strategic Plan in which planning and development are aligned with quality assurance and enhancement.

The Review Team was very much guided by the University's own self-evaluation report which identified some areas where progress has been constrained by the scarcity of resources, and also some practices and procedures that can be further enhanced. Most of the recommendations can be aligned with actions already contained in the *Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022*. The University will continue to seek additional resources to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan in ways that will safeguard and continue to enhance its reputation for quality. We acknowledge the need for significant investment in physical infrastructure to support teaching and research, in better business processes and systems, and in staff throughout the university, including enhanced staff development and improved management of workloads. The University will continue to work in partnership with students to develop better systems for collecting and utilising feedback and for closing the loop on feedback received from students. The University will examine how best to harness the value of data collected throughout the university in order to improve the quality of analysis required to support decisions on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Over the coming months the University will prepare an institutional implementation plan that will, referencing the *Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-22*, identify how the current strengths can be sustained, and how each of the recommendations will be addressed.

Maynooth University wishes to thank the members of the independent Review Team, especially the Chair and Co-ordinator, for their deep engagement with the Review process and for their constructive and supportive approach throughout the review. We congratulate them for their incisive report and for their very helpful recommendations which will be of great assistance in the years ahead. We also thank the members of the Institutional Reviews Unit in Quality and Qualifications Ireland for their guidance and support throughout the review process.

Professor Philip Nolan,
President

Professor Jim Walsh,
CINNTE Institutional Coordinator

21 May 2019

Appendices

Appendix A

Terms of Reference
(Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities
and other Designated Awarding Bodies)

SECTION 1
Background and Context for the Review

1.1 Context and Legislative Underpinning

These are the Terms of Reference for the Review of a Designated Awarding Body (DAB). The concept of a Designated Awarding Body is derived from the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (The 2012 Act) and is defined as *'a previously established university, the National University of Ireland, an educational institution established as a university under Section 9 of the Act of 1997, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland'.* The following institutions are Designated Awarding Bodies:

– Dublin City University

– Dublin Institute of Technology

– University College Cork

– University College Dublin

– University of Limerick

– National University of Ireland, Galway

– Maynooth University

– The National University of Ireland

– The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

– Trinity College Dublin

In 2016, QQI adopted a policy on cyclical review in higher education which sets out in greater detail the scope, purposes, criteria, model and procedures for review. These are represented in the Terms of Reference and the Handbook for the Review of Designated Awarding Bodies. QQI has introduced an annual reporting process for institutions whereby institutions are required to submit an Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR). The aim of the AIQR is to provide a contemporary account of quality assurance (QA) within an institution. Information is provided through an online template and it is published. Collated annual reports are provided to periodical Review Teams. Annual reporting allows institutions and QQI to engage on a regular basis. Published annual reports assist with documentation management for institutions in reviews and lessen the burden on institutions in the lead-up to a review.

This review cycle is being conducted in a very changed context for higher education. The landscape for higher education has been significantly reshaped since the last cycle of reviews commenced. Smaller colleges have been merged with universities and many institutes of technology are reorganising and preparing mergers as part of the Technological University process. New alliances and clusters, envisaged by Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape have commenced. A new approach to public funding has been introduced and operated by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Initiatives for enhancement such as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL) have been formalised at a national level. These developments mean that there are new sources of information and external benchmarks available to institutions that can be used to inform self-evaluation in this review cycle. Key measurements such as entry profiles, student retention, graduate profiles and staff and student satisfaction rates can provide some quantitative evidence of the quality of an institution's offer.

The 2012 Act states that QQI shall consult with the HEA in carrying out the review. QQI has agreed with HEA that this will take the form of engagement with QQI on the Terms of Reference and confirmation of the status of the institution within the higher education system, sharing individual institutional profiles and data with the Team. Further details of the agreement can be accessed here.

This is the third review round of Designated Awarding Bodies. Previous rounds took place in 2004-2005 and 2009-2012.

The 2018-2023 Review Cycle Schedule is:

INSTITUTION	COMPLETION DATES			
	ISER	Planning Visit	Main Review Visit	Report
Dublin City University	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
Maynooth University	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
National University of Ireland, Galway	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019
University College Dublin	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
University of Limerick	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Dublin Institute of Technology	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020	Q1 2021
Trinity College Dublin	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021
University College Cork	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Q1 2022
National University of Ireland	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023

1.2 Purposes

The Policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions highlights 4 purposes for individual institutional reviews. These are set out in the table below.

PURPOSE	ACHIEVED AND MEASURED THROUGH:
1. To encourage a QA culture and the enhancement of the student learning environment and experience within institutions	- emphasising the student and the student learning experience in reviews - providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them - exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures - exploring quality as well as quality assurance within the institution
2. To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance.	- emphasising the ownership of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution - pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level - evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards - evaluating how the institution has identified and measured itself against its own benchmarks and metrics to support quality assurance governance and procedures - emphasising the improvement of quality assurance procedures
3. To contribute to public confidence in the quality of institutions by promoting transparency and public awareness.	- adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent - publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences - evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible
4. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice	- using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution - ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence - facilitating institutions to identify measurement, comparison and analytic techniques, based on quantitative data relevant to their own mission and context, to support quality assurance - promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation

SECTION 2
Objectives and Criteria

2.1 Review Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

To review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the institution through consideration of the procedures set out, primarily, in the AIQR. Where necessary, the information provided by the AIQR is supplemented by additional information provided through documentation requests and interviews. The scope of this includes the procedures for reporting, governance and publication. This also incorporates an analysis of the ways in which the institution applies evidence- based approaches to support quality assurance processes, including quantitative analysis, evidence gathering and comparison. Progress on the development of quality assurance since the previous review of the institution will be evaluated. Consideration will also be given to the effectiveness of the AIQR and ISER procedures within the institution.

The scope of this objective also extends to the overarching procedures of the institution for assuring itself of the quality of its research degree programmes and research activities.

This objective also encompasses the effectiveness of the procedures established by the institution for the assurance of the quality of collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision, including the procedures for the approval and review of linked providers, joint awarding arrangements, joint provision and other collaborative arrangements such as clusters and mergers.

OBJECTIVE 2

To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.
To review the congruency of quality assurance procedures and enhancements with the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.
To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.

OBJECTIVE 3

To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.

OBJECTIVE 4

Following the introduction of a statutory international education quality assurance scheme, to determine compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

2.2 Review Criteria

CRITERIA FOR OBJECTIVE 1

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the institution and the extent of their implementation. The report will also include a specific statement about the extent to which the quality assurance procedures can be considered compliant with the ESG and as having regard to QQI's statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG). These statements will be highlighted in the report of the review.

The statements may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements, recommendations and possibly recommendations for directions in reference to this objective.

The criteria to be used by the Team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- ESG
- QQI Core Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines
- QQI Sector Specific QA Guidelines for Universities and Other Designated Awarding Bodies
- Section 28 of the 2012 Act
- The institution's own objectives and goals for quality assurance

Where appropriate and actioned by the institution, additional QQI Guidelines such as those for research degree programmes will be incorporated.

The QQI Sector Specific Private and Independent Provider QA Guidelines may be an appropriate reference document if they have been adopted by the DAB for their linked providers.

CRITERIA FOR OBJECTIVE 2

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.

This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations in reference to this objective. If identified, innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement will be highlighted in the report.

The criteria to be used by the Team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- The institution's own mission and vision
- The goals or targets for quality identified by the institution
- Additional sources of reference identified by the institution

CRITERIA FOR OBJECTIVE 3

The report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures are in keeping with QQI policy for Access, Transfer and Progression.

This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations and possibly recommendations for conditions in reference to this objective.

The criterion to be used by the Team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

QQI Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression

CRITERIA FOR OBJECTIVE 4

When the statutory international education quality assurance scheme is in place, the report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures are compliant with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations and possibly recommendations for conditions in reference to this objective.

The criterion to be used by the Team in reaching conclusions for this objective is the

Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners

Key questions to be addressed by the review for each objective

– How have quality assurance procedures and reviews been implemented within the institution?

– How effective are the internal quality assurance procedures and reviews of the institution?

– Are the quality assurance procedures in keeping with European Standards and Guidelines?

– Are the quality assurance procedures in keeping with QQI policy and guidelines, or their equivalent?

– Who takes responsibility for quality and quality assurance across the institution?

– How transparent, accessible and comprehensive is reporting on quality assurance and quality?

– How is quality promoted and enhanced?

– Are there effective innovations in quality enhancement and assurance?

– Is the student experience in keeping with the institution's own stated mission and strategy?

– Are achievements in quality and quality assurance in keeping with the institution's own stated mission and strategy?

– How do achievements in quality and quality assurance measure up against the institution's own goals or targets for quality?

SECTION 3
The Review Process

3.1 Process

The primary basis for the review process is this handbook.

3.2 Review Team Profile

QQI will appoint the Review Team to conduct the institutional review. Review Teams are composed of peer reviewers who are students and senior institutional leaders and staff from comparable institutions as well as external representatives. The size of the Team and the duration of their visit will depend on the size and complexity of the institution but in general the Review Team for a Designated Awarding Body will consist of 6 persons. Each Review Team includes a Chairperson and Coordinating Reviewer, and may be supported by a rapporteur, who is not a member of the Team, to take and collate notes of meetings. A single Team may undertake the review of two different institutions.

Reviewers are not QQI employees, but rather peers of the institution. The institution will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their Review Team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, and QQI will ensure an appropriate and entirely independent Team of reviewers is selected for the institution. QQI has final approval over the composition of each Review Team.

There will be appropriate gender representation on the Review Team. The Team will consist of carefully selected and trained and briefed reviewers who have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their tasks. The Team will operate under the leadership of the Review Chairperson.

The Review Team will be appointed in keeping with the following profile:

1.   A Review Chairperson

The role of the Chairperson is to act as leader of the Review Team. This is an international reviewer who is a (serving or recently former) senior third-level institution leader – usually a head of institution or deputy head of institution or a senior policy advisor who:

» possesses a wide range of higher education experience;

» demonstrates a deep understanding of the complexities of the higher education system;

» understands often unique QA governance arrangements;

» has proven experience in the management of innovation and change.

2. A Coordinating Reviewer

The role of the Coordinating Reviewer is to act as secretary to the Team as well as to be a full Review Team member. This is usually a person with expertise in the higher education system and prior experience in participating in external reviews. As the coordinating reviewer is responsible for drafting the report, he or she will possess proven excellent writing abilities.

3. A Student Reviewer

The role of the student reviewer is to represent the student voice in the Review Team. The student reviewer will be typically a PhD student with significant experience of higher education or an undergraduate student who has completed a specific programme preparing them for the role or who has previously had a key role in other institutional reviews.

4. An External Representative

The role of the external representative is to bring a 'third mission' perspective to the Review Team.

In addition to the specific roles above, the full Team complement will include a range of experts with the following knowledge and experience:

- » International reviewer experience
- » EQF and Bologna expertise
- » Experience of higher education quality assurance processes
- » Experience of managing research within or across institutions
- » Experience in governance
- » Experience and proven ability in the advancement of teaching and learning

Details of Review Team roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix B.

3.3 Procedure and timelines

The outline set out in the policy (below) will be elaborated further and timelines will be set out to accompany it, through discussion and consultation.

STEP	ACTION	DATES	OUTCOME
Terms of Reference (ToR)	Completion of an institutional information profile by QQI Confirmation of ToR with institution and HEA	9 months before the Main Review Visit (MRV)	Published Terms of Reference
Preparation	Appointment of an expert Review Team Consultation with the institution on any possible conflicts of interest	6-9 months before the MRV	Review Team appointed
Self-evaluation	Forwarding to QQI of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)	12 weeks before the MRV	Published ISER (optional)
Desk Review	Desk review of the ISER by the Team	Before the initial meeting	ISER initial response provided
Initial Meeting	An initial meeting of the Review Team, including reviewer training and briefing	5 weeks after the ISER, 7 weeks before the MRV	Team training and briefing is complete. Team identify key themes and additional documents required
Planning Visit	A visit to the institution by the Chair and Coordinating Reviewer to receive information about the ISER process, discuss the schedule for the Main Review Visit and discuss additional documentation requests	5 weeks after the ISER, 7 weeks before the MRV	An agreed note of the Planning Visit

STEP	ACTION	DATES	OUTCOME
Main Review Visit	To receive and consider evidence on the ways in which the institution has performed in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference	12 weeks after the receipt of ISER	A short preliminary oral report to the institution
Report	Preparation of a draft report by the Team	6-8 weeks after the MRV	
	Draft report sent to the institution for a check of factual accuracy	12 weeks after the MRV	
	Institution responds with any factual accuracy corrections	2 weeks after receipt of draft report	
	Preparation of a final report	2 weeks after factual accuracy response	QQI Review Report
	Preparation of an institutional response	2 weeks after final report	Institutional response
Outcomes	Consideration of the Review Report and findings by QQI together with the institutional response and the plan for implementation	Next available meeting of QQI committee	Formal decision about the effectiveness of QA procedures *In some cases, directions to the institution and a schedule for their implementation*
	Preparation of QQI quality profile	2 weeks after decision	Quality profile published
Follow-up	*The form of follow-up will be determined by whether 'directions' are issued to the institution. In general, where directions are issued the follow-up period will be sooner and more specific actions may be required as part of the direction*		
	Preparation of an institutional implementation plan	1 month after decision	Publication of the implementation plan by the institution
	One-year follow-up report to QQI for noting. This and subsequent follow-up may be integrated into annual reports to QQI	1 year after the MRV	Publication of the follow-up report by QQI and the institution
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through the annual institutional reporting and dialogue process	Continuous	Annual Institutional Quality Report Dialogue Meeting notes

Note: The total period from start to finish is approximately 15 months but will depend on QQI committee meeting dates.

Appendix B

Main Review Visit Schedule

Institutional Review of Maynooth University

Day 1: Monday, 10th December 2018

TIME	MEETING WITH
09.00-09.30	Institutional Coordinator and VP Academic
09.30 -10.00	President
10.00 -10.30	Private Review Team Meeting
10.30 -11.30	University Executive
11.30 - 12.00	Private Review Team Meeting
12.00 - 12.45	Quality Assurance Team / Members of the ISER development group excluding UE members
12.45- 13.30	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch
13.30 - 14.00	Governing Authority Representatives
14.00 - 14.30	Private Review Team Meeting
14.30 – 15.15	Student Representatives Undergraduates & Postgraduate
15.15 – 15.45	Private Review Team Meeting
15.45 - 16.15	Students Union Officers
16.15- 16.45	Private Review Team Meeting tea and coffee
16.45-17.30	Representatives from Quality Committee & Academic Council
17.30- 18.00	Private Review Team Meeting

Day 2: Tuesday, 11th December 2018

TIME	MEETING WITH
09.00-09.30	Institutional Coordinator
09.30 - 10.30	Members of Teaching and Learning committee & Members of Academic Programmes committee
10.30- 11.00	Private meeting Tea / Coffee
11.00 - 11.30	Faculty deans
11.30 - 12.00	Private meeting Tea / Coffee
12.00 – 12.45	Heads of Schools/Departments
12.45 - 13.45	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch
13.45 – 14.30	International access and other students
14.30 - 15.00	Private Review Team Meeting
15.30 - 16.15	Academic staff from 3 Faculties
16.15 – 16.45	Private Review Team Meeting
16.45- 17.15	Staff supporting implementation of undergraduate curriculum
17.15 – 17.45	Private Review Team Meeting

Day 3: Wednesday, 12th December 2018

TIME	MEETING WITH
09.00-9.30	Institutional Coordinator
9.30-10.15	Directors of Research Institutes and Centres and Members of Research Committee
10.15 - 10.30	Private Review Team Meeting
10.30 - 11.15	Academic staff and post-doctoral researchers
11.15 - 11.45	Private Review Team Meeting tea/coffee
11.45 – 12.30	Staff from Student Support Services
12.30 – 13.30	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch
13.30 – 14.15	Staff in Admissions and Access
14.15 – 14.45	Private meeting
14.45 – 15.15	International office Staff
15.15 – 16.00	Private meeting tea/coffee
16.00 – 16.45	External stakeholders
16.45 – 17.30	Private meeting

Day 4: Thursday, 13th December 2018

TIME	MEETING WITH
09.00-9.30	Institutional Coordinator
9.30-10.15	Staff involved in collaborative Provision and staff from collaborative providers
10.15 – 10.45	Private team meeting
10.45-11.45	Staff from Human resources incl. staff development Staff and staff from Finance and Campus infrastructure
11.45- 12.15	Private team meeting
12.15 -13.30	Campus tour to review facilities
13.30-14.30	Private Team lunch
14.30-15.00	Open slot (if additional meeting is required)
14.30-15.00	*Parallel session: Meeting between QQI Cyclical Reviews Unit and Institutional Coordinator*
15.00-16.00	QQI Cyclical Reviews representative(s)
16.00-16.30	Private Review Team Meeting
16.30-17.00	Oral Report

Day 5: Friday, 14th December 2018

Team begin drafting their report, retaining use of the private meeting space at the University.

Glossary

AIQR	Annual Institutional Quality Reports
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DARE	Disability Access Routes to Education
DRI	Digital Repository Ireland
ELIR	Enhancement-led Institutional Review
Erasmus	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FWCI	Field Weighted Citation Index
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
IBEC	Irish Business Employers Confederation
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
ISSE	Irish Survey of Student Engagement
IT	Information Technology
MAP	Maynooth University Access Programme
MEND	Midlands East-North Dublin
MSU	Maynooth Students' Union
NUI	National University of Ireland
PGFC	Postgraduate Feedback Council
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RDO	Research Development Office
SELE	Student Evaluation of Learning Experience Survey
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UGP	Undergraduate Programme
VP	Vice President

COMÓRA

1922

2 Feabhra
Foilsítear *Ulysses* de
chuid James Joyce i
bPáras

2 February
James Joyce's *Ulysses*
is published in Paris

22 Lúnasa
Feallmharaítear Michael
Collins, agus é tríocha
a haon bliain d'aois, i
luíochán ag Béal na Blá

22 August
Michael Collins, aged
31, is assassinated in
an ambush at Béal na Blá

30 Meitheamh
Scriosann an
tArm Náisiúnta
na Ceithre
Cúirteanna i
mBaile Átha
Cliath, tá stóir
de chartlanna
náisiúnta i
measc an ábhair
a scriostar

30 June
The Four Courts
in Dublin
are destroyed
by national
army shelling,
stores of
national archives
are destroyed

6 Nollaig
Bunaítear Saorstát Éireann
go foirmiúil agus bronnann
Bunreacht na hÉireann
cothromaíocht sa dlí gan aon
idirdhealú ar bhonn inscne

6 December
The Free State of Ireland is
formally established and the
Constitution of Ireland confers
equality in the law without
distinction of sex