

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

2023

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**Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)**  
**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

Dundalk Institute of Technology

2023

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**Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)**  
**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**  
**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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## Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

### Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in Q4 of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access of QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

### Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- When providing reflections on quality enhancement it is interesting to share a broad range of examples including what worked or didn't work.

### Report Structure

#### Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR should provide a succinct outline of the institution's internal quality assurance (IQA) system and include details of the governance and management structures and supports in place, and all policies and procedures underpinning quality across the organisation.

Links to current QA policies and procedures in operation in the institution should be included. Please ensure that all links are correct and functional. As the AQR is submitted in respect of a specific reporting period, it is recommended that the institution establish a unique SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for that reporting period to archive current versions of the policies and procedures and include relevant hyperlinks that are included in the AQR.

The information contained in Part A is carried from one reporting period to the next and should not require substantial update on an annual basis. However, institutions are asked to update and highlight any significant changes in the structures and published material that support the internal IQA framework as they arise.

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

Part B of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution. Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of QA activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement recommendations, or to institutional review recommendations.

#### Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. The institution may also include case studies on topics of their choosing,

demonstrating good practice in QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, the institution is encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other HEIs and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

## Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template<sup>1</sup>

### Legislation

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

### QQI Documents

#### Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

#### Other QQI Policy Documents

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

### Other National/International References

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

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<sup>1</sup> These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

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



## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the Annual Quality Report (AQR) for **Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)** for the reporting period **1st September 2021 - 31st August 2022**.

It was submitted to QQI on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**.

The AQR has been approved by the **Registrar's Office** and was submitted by **Dr Brendan Ryder, Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Registrar's Office**. It will be presented to the DkIT Academic Council in semester 2 in the academic year 2022/2023.

This section provides an overview of the Institution and the process for the development and approval of the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

### Institution Overview

Founded in 1971, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is an autonomous Institute, established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has earned its reputation as the leading higher education provider in the North Leinster-South Ulster region (serving Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath, North County Dublin, Armagh, Down and South Antrim) through its first-class teaching and learning, research and engagement. Set in a state-of-the-art 35 hectare campus, DkIT provides quality learning and teaching to circa 5,300 students across four Schools in Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, and Informatics and Creative Arts in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Level 6 to PhD level, in addition to its long history in apprenticeships. The Institute for Connected Health and Wellbeing brings together DkIT's significant track record and capacity in the Research Areas of Regulated Software, Health and Aging. The Institute also focuses on the Research Themes of Energy and the Environment and Creative Arts. DkIT differentiates itself from other Higher Education Institutions as a cross-border Institute with its distinctive mission and commitment to the educational, economic, social and cultural development of the North Leinster-South Ulster region. As an Institute situated on the border with Northern Ireland, DkIT is at the epicentre between the two main metropolitan cities of Belfast and Dublin along the M1 Economic Corridor.

### Process for the Development and Approval of the AQR

The Annual Quality Report (AQR) is an annual report about internal quality assurance that institutions provide to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and publish every year. It is a key component of the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement system that provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of the Institutes internal quality system. As quality "is everyone's business", the development of the AQR for a particular reporting period is an ongoing iterative and organic process involving all stakeholders in the organisation. The Registrar's Office has overall responsibility for the

production of the AQR and ensures that all inputs to the report are gathered in a systematic and consistent manner for incorporation into the report. Outputs from annual quality assurance and enhancement activities are fed in to the AQR as appropriate (e.g. Programme Board reports, External Examiners reports, Professional Support Units reports, and relevant data is gathered and analysed where available.

Institution-level quality assurance decision-making for a (including the Academic Quality Sub-committee of the Academic Council) play an active part in the compilation of the report and provide feedback on the AQR.

The final AQR is submitted to the Institute's Academic Council (normally at the January/February meeting subject to the schedule of Academic Council meetings for a given academic year) for adoption prior to its submission to QQI which is normally at the end of February.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

This section provides information on the overarching quality assurance system, its governance and management at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), specifically the following:

- Quality Framework;
- Policies and Procedures;
- Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System;
- Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities.

#### 1.1.1 Quality Framework

DkIT operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement which contributes to the achievement of the Institute's Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>). The strategic plan is aligned to the Institute's Mission-Based Performance Compact between Dundalk Institute of Technology and Higher Education Authority (HEA) (<https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/dundalk-institute-of-technology/performance/>).

There are five strategic priorities for the current strategic plan (2020-2023):

1. Changing Landscape in terms of Designations, Mergers and Alliances;
2. Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of Learner Experience;
3. High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation;
4. Enhanced National and International Engagement;
5. Organisational Development and Corporate Excellence.

Figure 1 illustrates the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System, which must be agile, responsive and effective/fit-for-purpose, and its relationship with Institute strategy. The Institute is responsible for the academic standards of awards made in its name, and for ensuring that the quality of learning experiences (both undergraduate and postgraduate), is exemplary, to enable students to achieve these standards. DkIT assures and enhances the quality of its core activities of teaching, learning, research, engagement and service delivery through its regular review and continuous improvement process, its *Quality Framework* (Figure 2).

The mechanisms for assuring and enhancing the quality of provision include (Figure 2):

- Regular review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) processes.

- Robust programme approval and curriculum review processes.
- Robust approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught programmes.
- **Annual Internal Monitoring:**
  - **School Monitoring:** Programme Board reporting (including PRSB annual reports), Student Feedback (programme-level and StudentSurvey.ie), External Examining, programme changes).
  - **Postgraduate Research Monitoring:** (DCU-DKIT Graduate School Annual Reporting to DCU's Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB), postgraduate research student feedback (including PGR StudentSurvey.ie, Others).
  - **Professional Support Unit Monitoring** (e.g. Student Services, International Office, Library, etc.).
- **Periodic Review(s):**
  - **School Programmatic Reviews** including Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body Reviews (PSRBs) Reviews.
  - **Postgraduate Research Review(s).** This includes DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Reviews which are conducted in accordance with the DCU-DKIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement and Research Centre/Group Reviews.
  - **Professional Support Unit Reviews** (e.g. Student Services, International Office, etc.).
- **Annual External Monitoring:**
  - QQI Periodic Quality Dialogue, Annual Quality Report (AQR) (this report).
- Cyclical Institutional Review (CINNTE Review).
- Systematic student engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes.
- Established procedures for the appointment of staff and a range of supports for their ongoing professional development (Human Resources and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)).

Dundalk Institute of Technology strives to achieve excellence in all of its activities and a high quality service to all its stakeholders. A commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement is embedded in the Strategic Plan (2020-2022). A core focus of the plan is a commitment to facilitate meaningful learner engagement and work with learners as partners (pg. 17) (promoting student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities): "*Learner-Centredness: DkIT strongly*

*believes in the empowerment of the individual learner and in affording every learner the opportunity to learn, succeed and meet their full potential personally, academically and professionally, in the workplace and in the community".*

Part of the Quality Framework involves reporting annually to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on quality assurance and enhancement activities through the Annual Quality Report (AQR) process. Information on the annual QQI dialogue for the reporting period can be found in Part B.

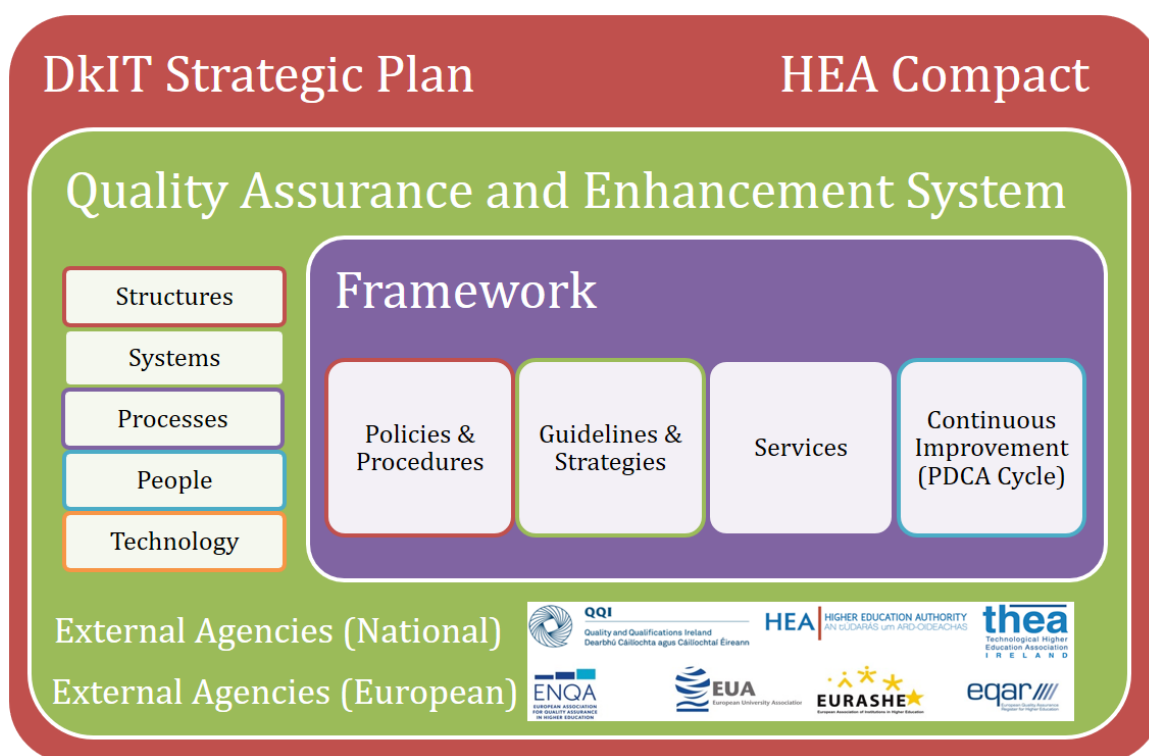
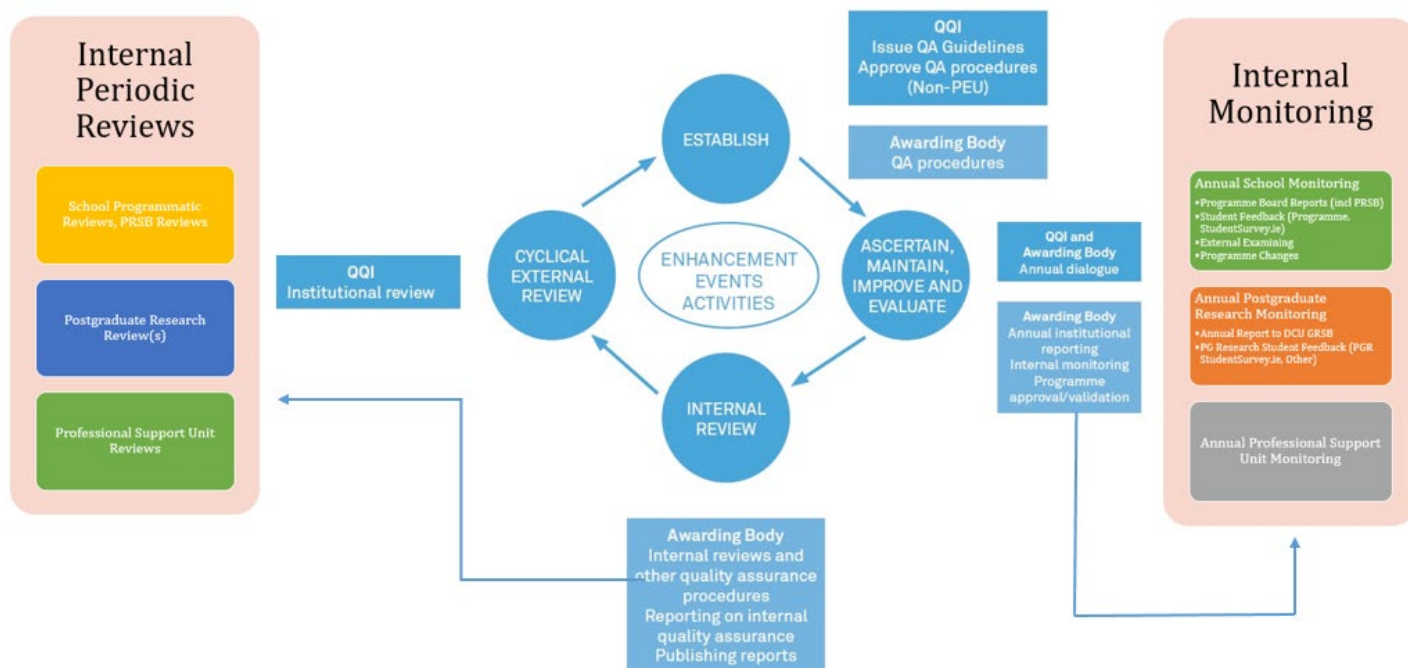


Figure 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

DkIT continues to ensure that Quality Assurance and Enhancement is firmly embedded within the day to day aspects of work at the Institute to ensure that a quality culture underpins all of its activities. All staff within the Institute contribute to the culture of quality and there is acceptance that this is a ‘continual process’ as new challenges and new ways of educating students and developing faculty and staff continue to be central to the work of the Institute.

The Institute has developed a Student Success Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) in line with the recommendation in the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Higher Education System Performance Framework (2018-2020) (<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/managing-performance/system-performance-framework/>) that HEIs put in place an Institute wide Student Success Strategy which embeds ‘whole of HEI’ approaches to student access and completion. The aim of the strategy is to develop a holistic, student-centred approach across

all dimensions of the student experience to foster measurable improvements in: retention, progression and completion rates, student achievements, student engagement and graduate outcomes.



(See enlarged “Internal Monitoring” and “Internal Periodic Reviews” below)

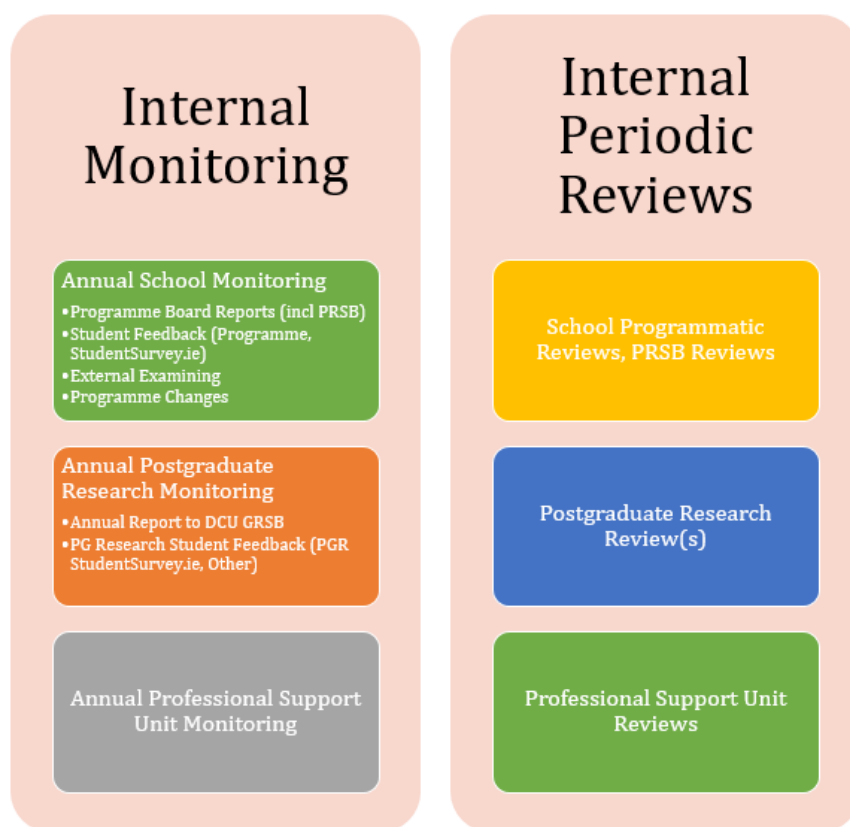


Figure 2: Quality Assurance Framework

## 1.1.2 Policies and Procedures

Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies and procedures are an integral part of the Institute's Quality Framework. DKIT has developed a framework of policies and procedures in the context of best practice within the higher education sector. The policies and procedures are aligned to QQI's Core and relevant Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (<https://www.qqi.ie/node/632>), with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG) (<https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>) and other national and international best practice policies, procedures, guidelines, frameworks and strategies.

Policies and procedures (and associated documentation) are stored in an Institute centralised repository which is managed by the Registrar's Office (specifically the responsibility of the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance). There is one single centralised repository which is utilised as appropriate across the Institute by academic and professional support units (Student Services, etc.) and postgraduate research students and staff. The policies and procedures categorisation scheme / taxonomy has been derived from the dimensions of the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 with the addition of a category for Research and Knowledge Exchange (Figure 3).

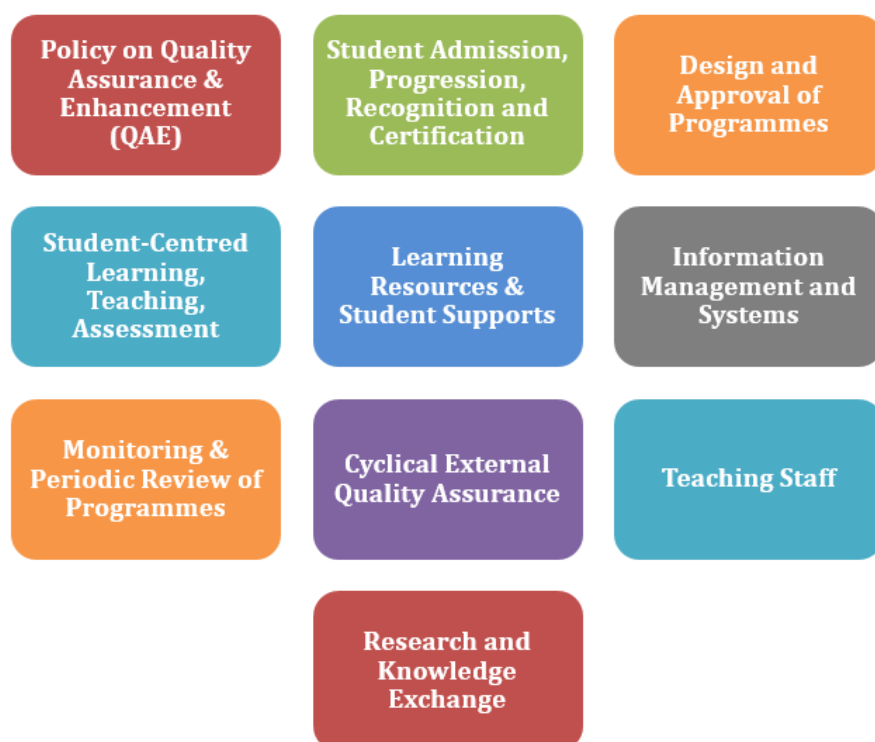


Figure 3: DKIT Policies and Procedures Management (Categorisation Scheme)

A snapshot of Policies and procedures (and associated documentation) for a particular reporting period are made available to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) as part of the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Policies and procedures (including guidelines, frameworks and strategies) are regularly reviewed in accordance with a Policy Review Schedule and a Standard on DkIT Academic Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). Revisions are carried out at least every three years or sooner if deemed necessary and the effectiveness of policies and procedures is regularly monitored through consultation with staff and students. Development and amendment of academic policies and procedures (and related documentation) is primarily the responsibility of the Registrar's Office in collaboration with all Institute stakeholders (academic staff and professional services area staff). All academic policies are subject to Academic Council approval and some are also subject to Governing Body approval. Most are developed and/or reviewed by sub-committees or working groups of the Academic Council, the members of which determine best practice within the higher education sector to ensure that policies and procedures (and related documentation) are relevant, effective and continually being enhanced. Feedback from students, staff members and other stakeholders is also taken into consideration.

Quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures are published on the Institute website and communicated to staff and students (as appropriate) by email (See *Section 7.0: Public Information and Communication*). Training and awareness workshops/events are organised by the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with the aim of communicating and explaining policies and procedures to staff and students and facilitating feedback on their effectiveness. This also serves to encourage Institute members to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to quality assurance and enhancement and embed a culture of quality throughout the organisation.

### **1.1.3 Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System**

#### **Decision Making Fora**

The Academic Council at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amended Act(s). The Governing Body appointed the first DkIT Academic Council in 1993. The Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for



academic quality (assurance and enhancement). The President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar are respectively, Chairperson and Secretary of the Academic Council. Academic Council approves action plans following reviews and these plans are then assigned to relevant academic and administrative/professional service area(s) for operationalisation.

The membership of Academic Council consists of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership currently standing at 54. See the Constitution of the Academic Council at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/governance/academic-council/>. Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings. Where urgent matters arise, these are brought to the attention of the Governing Body by way of a special motion to facilitate Governing Body approval prior to the formal adoption of the minutes.

The Academic Council is supported by the work of the following sub-committees:

1. Standing Committee;
2. Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC);
3. Academic Quality Sub-Committee (AQSC);
4. Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (LT);
5. Research and Innovation Sub-Committee (RSIC);
6. DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (DkIT GRSB);
7. Academic Development and Planning Sub-committee (ADP) (See AQR Part B for the reporting period 2021/2022).

Terms of Reference of the sub-committees can be found at <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/governance/academic-council/academic-council-subcommittees.html>).

Five meetings of the full Academic Council and five meetings of each of the sub-committees are held each year (See AQR Part B for meetings held during the reporting period). The sub-committees contribute to the development of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures at Institute level. In addition to sub-committees of Academic Council, working groups are regularly established to conduct environmental scanning of best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies and procedures (including guidelines, frameworks and strategies). This practice ensures that quality assurance and enhancement is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute.

DkIT continues to strengthen its strategic alliance with Dublin City University (DCU) through the further development of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School. During the academic year 2015/16 the Terms of Reference for the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) were amended to increase the

membership from Academic Schools, with a view to facilitating cross departmental learning and collective experience. The composition of the committee is now in line with the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB). Both DCU and DkIT also have representatives on the other Institution's GRSB. The sharing of best practice with DCU has served to enhance postgraduate research quality assurance at DkIT. This has also involved further development of the Institute's postgraduate research degree regulations in line with those at DCU and taking into account external developments in terms of national policy development.

The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of quality policies and procedures rests ultimately with the Executive Board and falls particularly within the remit of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar's Office). The Executive Board ensures that activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken. At School and Departmental level, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Heads of Section and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring quality assurance and enhancement (including implementing policies and procedures).

The academic management of programmes is the responsibility of the Programme Boards. Opportunities for enhancement of quality policies and procedures are frequently identified through annual school, research and Professional Support Unit monitoring to Academic Council (see activities in the reporting period for further information). Student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Programme Boards ensuring the student voice is heard at this level. Stage Convenors (who provide pastoral care to students) and Programme Directors (who support Heads of Department in the management and operation of programmes) also contribute to Programme Boards, providing a robust front line approach to programme management. Programme Boards provide valuable feedback on all issues including quality assurance and enhancement via their Annual Programme Board Reports at Institute level and also their participation in School/Faculty Boards at School level which contain academic faculty members, School management, School administration and student representatives.

School/Faculty Boards are critical to the operation of quality assurance and enhancement at School level. The School Board collaborate with the Head of School in:

- Developing, implementing and monitoring the School's strategic plans in the context of the overall Institute strategic plan;
- Planning the strategic development of the School's suite of programmes;
- Promoting effective communication and information sharing within the School;
- Fostering participation and a sense of collegiality within the School;

- Promoting the co-ordination of activities relating to teaching and learning and research across departments;
- Promoting and implementing Institute-wide policies and strategies;
- Formulating, implementing and evaluating relevant School-wide policies and strategies.

Further fora, which contribute to the implementation, monitoring and review of quality policies and procedures, include both (i) the Academic Heads Forum (AHF) consisting of Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments, and the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance and (ii) the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC), consisting of representative academic and professional services area managers. In 2018, a Registrar's Heads of Function Group was established by the Registrar's Office bringing together Registry, Quality Assurance, International Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office, Student Services and Library to meet once a month to ensure the seamless integration of services provided by the Registrar's Office.

### Functional Areas

Notwithstanding that all members of staff across the Institute contribute to quality assurance and enhancement, the following functional areas have a particular role to play in the provision of an exemplary student experience:

Area of Responsibility	Functional Area	Reporting to
Quality, Admissions, Examinations, Access, Professional Support Units Student Services, Careers, Schools Liaison, Awards and Conferring, Programme Validations, Student Feedback.	Academic Affairs	Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC)	Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)	
Academic administration and support of postgraduate research students.	Research and Graduate Studies Office	

Support of researchers.		
Support of International students	International Office	
Library and information literacy	Library	
Staff recruitment and professional development	Human Resources	Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity
Information Technology infrastructure and services	Computer Services	
Programme promotion	Marketing and Communications Office	
Administration and support of part-time students	Life-Long Learning Centre	Vice-President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development
Innovation, business development, industry liaison	Regional Development Centre (RDC)	
Delivery and management of academic programmes	Academic Schools ( <a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/academic-schools.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/academic-schools.html</a> ) :  Business and Humanities; Engineering; Health and Science; Informatics & Creative Arts;  Academic Departments	Heads of School          Heads of Department, Heads of Section (as appropriate)

### Professional Support Units (Student Services)

Professional Support Units (Student Services), which are managed by the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (AASAM), operate under the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar

(Registrar's Office) are a team of professional service providers who provide support for students to actively engage in their third level experience. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager meets representatives of the professional service providers on a regular basis to ensure efficient and effective delivery of supports to students. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (AASAM) is also a member of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC). The services are provided to full-time and part-time undergraduate, postgraduate, Springboard and apprentice students:

Service Provider	Description
<p><b>Access:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access Officer (Full-time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Access Service works to increase access to third level from under-represented groups identified as key target groups by the National Access Office of the Higher Education Authority (HEA).</li> <li>• The Service supports the increased participation of these students with a view to successful completion of their programme of study.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Officer (Full-Time)</li> <li>• Learning Support Tutors (Full-time equivalent)</li> <li>• Assistive Technology Assistant (Part-time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Disability Service (DS) provides support to students with a disability or a significant ongoing illness or mental health condition who disclose to the service and request support.</li> <li>• The DS is funded by the Fund for Students with Disabilities (ESF/HEA) and supports students who meet the criteria for funding.</li> <li>• DkIT also offers a general level of support to any student who presents for support through examination accommodations and the range of services provided by other support services including the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health Unit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurse (Full-time)</li> <li>• Nurse (Part-time)</li> <li>• General Practitioner (GP) (7 hours per week)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Health Unit (HU) provides a holistic approach to student wellbeing.</li> <li>• The service provides a general medical, psychological and health educational service to all students.</li> <li>• The HU is an integral part of the Student Services, where cooperation between services plays a vital role in assisting each other to enhance the wellbeing of students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Counselling:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Service (Full-time)</li> <li>• Student Counsellor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Student Counselling Service provides accessible, confidential, non-judgemental support to all registered students.</li> <li>• The Head of Student Counselling is currently the Chairperson of the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI).</li> </ul>

<p>(4 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Counsellor (3 days)</li> <li>• Student Counsellor (1 day)</li> <li>• Trainee (1 day)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Pastoral Care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for Service 35 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral Care is collaboratively involved in the provision of holistic care within the Institute community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sports and Societies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports and Societies Officer (Full-time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sports and Societies Office supports, funds and resources all sports and societies to encourage students to be active and involved and make their mark on student life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Assistance Fund (SAF):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAF Officer (Full-time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fund provides limited support for full-time students who are in severe financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances or who are disadvantaged and require additional financial support to enable them in so far as possible to participate fully in their programme of study while at the Institute.</li> <li>• Additional funding is made available for students who are lone parents and part-time students from other target groups in the National Access Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Careers and Employability Centre (CEC):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers and Employability Co-ordinator</li> <li>• Careers Officer (Full-time)</li> <li>• Employability Advisor (Full-time)</li> <li>• Placement Co-ordinator (Full-time)</li> <li>• Placement Officers (2 x Full-time and 2 x Part-time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) works to ensure that graduates of DkIT are self-aware, self-resourceful and work ready.</li> <li>• To do this, CEC work with students from first year through to graduation in the area of Career Development support and student Work Placement.</li> <li>• We work alongside academic colleagues and industry to embed employability into the curriculum</li> </ul>

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Support Units (Student Service) activities (including monitoring activities) and developments during the reporting period.

## Research and Graduate Studies Office

The Research and Graduate Studies Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/>) is managed by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies and operates under the Registrar's Office (reporting to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar). *Section 4.0: QA of Research Activities and Programmes* provides further information on the quality assurance of postgraduate research activities at the Institute. See AQR Part B for information on postgraduate research activities (including monitoring activities) and developments during the reporting period.

## International Office

The International Office provides supports to international and Erasmus students registered at the Institute. International students form an important part of the learning environment at DkIT, with teaching and administrative staff catering for the needs of students of different educational, cultural and language backgrounds. The International Office comprises of five staff based at the Institute and two international officers, with responsibility for markets across China, Malaysia, India, Nigeria, North America, Brazil and Mexico. International Office staff are the first point-of-contact for students, who need academic, or other assistance.

In addition to the day-to-day administrative supports provided, the International Office also provides a number of additional services, unique to international students, including:

- Airport collection on arrival in Dublin;
- **Accommodation Provision:** The International Office has a part-time Accommodations Officer, who assigns and manages student accommodations for international and Erasmus students in secure accommodation off-campus;
- **GNIB support:** The International Office coordinates appointments and brings students to the local Immigration Office for GNIB provision and renewal on arrival.
- **Recording of international student attendance:** The International Office liaises with the four Schools to record international student attendance, for GNIB renewal;
- **International Welcome Days:** The International Office hosts Welcome Days for international students x3 times yearly at enrolment stage (September, January and June);
- **Pastoral Care:** The International Office has a Pastoral Care Officer on its team, tasked with care of ill students, providing home and/or hospital visitations where needed, and liaises with the Institute's Health Unit. The International Office visits at-risk students in accommodations, where required.

- **Academic and Learner Supports:** The International Office interfaces with faculty and student support services for the provision of academic and learner supports including: Careers Information Day for international students (initiated in 2016 in tandem with the Careers Office); Academic Learner Supports (English and IT) provided through the SDLC; Cultural Coffee Hour (hosted fortnightly for international students by the International Office); All Staff Intercultural Training Workshop.
- **Liaison with Stakeholders:** The International Office is responsible for communications on students' academic progress to University Partners, Recruitment Agents and Sponsoring Bodies;
- **Hosting Visits:** The International Office is responsible for hosting visits from partner universities, for the purpose of Teaching and Non-Teaching Mobilities within the Erasmus framework;
- **Erasmus Awareness:** The International Office promotes awareness of the Erasmus programme within Schools and provides learner support to students preparing for Erasmus Study or Placement.
- **Partner Identification:** The International Office works with Schools to identify new Erasmus partner colleges for learners, for the purpose of study and placement opportunities.
- **Requests and Feedback:** The International Office actions requests from stakeholders around enhancement of student experience, and it elicits feedback from departing students of DkIT on their learner experience.

An organisation chart for DkIT can be found in Appendix 1.

### 1.1.4 Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities

At DkIT, the student voice is valued and the Institute works in partnership with students and is committed to student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement activities. The Institute is also committed to being responsive to student feedback. The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experiences at the Institute.

Students have representation on a range of Institute decision making fora:

<b>Governing Body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Students' Union President and Vice President are ex-officio members.</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Students Union President and Vice President are ex-officio members. There are student representatives on some sub-committees. The 'Student Voice' is a rolling item on the agenda for Academic Council meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Boards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each programme stage has student representation on these Boards.</li> </ul>



<b>Review and Development Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are invited to participate in such activities as they arise, e.g. Programme validations, Programmatic Reviews, Institutional Reviews, Learning and Teaching Scholarship activities.</li> </ul>
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The following primary mechanisms are employed to obtain student feedback on their student experience in DkIT:

<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Postgraduate Research</b>
Programme level feedback (QA3) to Heads of Department on a semester basis	Participation in the annual postgraduate research student feedback survey.
Participation in the annual student feedback survey StudentSurvey.ie ( <a href="https://studentsurvey.ie/">https://studentsurvey.ie/</a> ).	Participation in the bi-annual postgraduate student feedback survey PGR StudentSurvey.ie ( <a href="https://studentsurvey.ie/">https://studentsurvey.ie/</a> ).

Other student feedback surveys are carried out periodically, including:

- Student surveys that are carried out as part of cyclical five-yearly School Programmatic Reviews;
- First year students are surveyed following their induction;
- Surveys are carried out to ascertain student views on various services and/or academic initiatives;
- Recent graduates are surveyed each year between 6-9 months after graduation as part of the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey by the Careers and Employability Centre. The Centre also conducts a national survey CIBYL - which is a Survey of all Higher Education Careers Services in Ireland and UK. Both of these surveys serve as part of national benchmarking and as a student feedback mechanism.

The data collected by these feedback surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and continuously enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. DkIT values the importance of evidence-based decision making and so student intake, progression and graduation data is provided to academic Schools each year for consideration by Programme Boards as part of the programme monitoring process.

See AQR Part B for information on monitoring activities (Academic, Professional Support Units (Student Services), Postgraduate Research, etc.) completed during the reporting period.

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The section provides information on the institution-wide quality assurance and enhancement procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes (i.e. collaborative partnerships or provision with others).

### Collaborative Provision

DkIT delivers the following programmes collaboratively with external partners with graduates receiving DkIT awards:

1. *Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture* and *Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food* programmes are delivered collaboratively with Teagasc at Ballyhaise College, Co. Cavan (<https://www.teagasc.ie/education/teagasc-colleges/ballyhaise/>).
2. *Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours)* degree is delivered fully at DkIT and the first 2 years are delivered collaboratively with Monaghan Institute (<https://monaghaninstitute.ie/>). Students from Monaghan join the DkIT cohort in Year 3 of the programme.
3. *Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies* is delivered on a part-time basis in conjunction with Cork College of Commerce (<https://corkcollegeofcommerce.ie/>).

Higher Education provision with others is carried out in accordance with the institute Policy on Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Awards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). DkIT currently has no transnational programmes.

### Articulation Agreements

DkIT has articulation arrangements (with MoUs) with a number of international collaborative partners (see Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties).

### Collaborative Partnerships

The Institute has a collaborative partnership arrangement with Dublin City University (DCU) for postgraduate research awards (See *Section 4: QA of Research Activities and Programmes*).

The Institute maintains a Register of Collaborative Partnerships and makes the register available as part of its public information policy (See *Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*).

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

This section provides information on the institution-wide approach to the quality assurance of the design and approval of the range of programmes provided including taught programmes and apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes.

It is the policy of the Institute that all programmes are approved by external peer review to ensure that they are relevant, well designed and conform to the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) ([https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)). Programmes are developed and approved in accordance with the Programme Design and Approval Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). As DkIT has placed strategic importance on the development of part-time programmes, the Registrar's Office developed guidelines on the development of part-time programmes. These guidelines provide extensive support on the generation of new programme offerings through the utilisation of appropriate existing modules. The guidelines can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>.

Programme development is carried out by Academic Schools and, in the case of major awards, is subject to initial approval by the Executive Board to ensure that the overall objectives are in line with the Institute Strategic Plan. Following this, the approval process is managed by the Registrar's Office. Academic staff members are provided with ongoing training and guidance, provided collaboratively by the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), in aspects of programme development (e.g. use of curriculum management system (Akari curriculum-<https://courses.dkit.ie/curriculum/>), writing learning outcomes, development of programme assessment strategy, etc.). Each programme is designed such that:

- There are explicit intended learning outcomes (linked to DkIT Award Standards) and the programme meets the objectives set for it, including the learning outcomes and graduate attributes.
- The resulting Award is clearly specified, referring to the level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), award class and type and number of ECTS credits.
- The development is inclusive, involving students and other stakeholders, with due cognisance of external expertise and published information.
- Student transfer and progression are facilitated.
- The expected student workload is defined (through the use of ECTS credits).
- Well-structured placement opportunities are provided where appropriate.
- It is subject to a formal approval process by the Institute's Academic Council.

All proposals for new and revised programmes are required to present a Teaching and Learning Strategy and an Assessment Strategy. Programme documentation must demonstrate that assessments are constructively aligned to module and programme learning outcomes.

All new major awards require a full validation process through an external panel of experts appointed by the Registrar's Office. Non-major awards require validation by an external panel using the Differential Validation process. All programmes require re-validation at five-yearly intervals through the Programmatic Review process.

Changes to programmes between programmatic reviews require approval using one of three processes depending on the magnitude of the changes required:

- **Minor changes** do not affect the programme learning outcomes of a programme. They ensure continued consistency with the recommendations and conditions of the original validation report and do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes. Such changes may include changes to the balance between assessment types in a specific module; changes in module titles; minor changes in contact hours; inclusion or exclusion of, core modules and the rebalancing of credits for particular modules. Minor changes require internal approval only, through the Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC) of Academic Council.
- **Structural Changes** to a programme include changes in delivery modes, inclusion of a new elective strand, inclusion or exclusion of work placement or dissertation, significant re-distribution and re-sequencing of content or a change to the programme title. Where such changes do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes, the programme may undergo a differential validation process rather than a full re-validation.
- **Major changes** which change the programme's intended learning outcomes require revalidation by an external panel. All programmes offered through collaborative provision require full validation in line with the Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards.

DkIT has a significant number of articulation agreements with European and International Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in relation to Erasmus exchanges, student transfers and progression opportunities. The Institute also manages a number of collaborative provision arrangements (See *Section 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision*), underpinned by robust quality assurance frameworks, as follows:

1. Provision of a suite of Agriculture programmes collaboratively with Teagasc (Ballyhaise College, Cavan).
2. Provision of the *Bachelor of Business (Honours)* programme with Monaghan Institute.
3. Provision of suite of Nursing and Midwifery programmes in collaboration with clinical partners (e.g. Health Service Executive (HSE)).
4. Provision of a suite of Engineering Apprenticeship programmes with SOLAS (<https://www.solas.ie/>).

The Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards was invoked in the case of 1. and 2. above, which lead to DkIT awards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

DkIT offers apprenticeships programmes in the areas of Electrical, Motor Mechanics, Plumbing and Carpentry in conjunction with the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). The Department of Engineering Trades works in collaboration with SOLAS (<https://www.solas.ie/>), employers and other agencies to develop and deliver the intermediary and senior phases of a number of apprenticeship programmes. The craft apprenticeships are subject to a national agreement or MOU between SOLAS and the providers.

Apprenticeship is a system of employment-based training and education which enables a person to obtain the skills, knowledge and education required to satisfactorily perform the core skills of their chosen trade. Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which people are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland and typically takes four years to complete. The programmes offered by DkIT comply with QQI's Topic-specific guidance for Apprenticeship programmes (Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes, <https://www.qqi.ie/node/632>).

Engagement with stakeholders is a central part of DkIT's strategy and is regarded as being integral to the quality of programme development and delivery. Schools meet regularly with Industry Advisory Boards which feed into the curriculum. Many departments are increasing their level of participation in 'live' student projects, carried out in consultation with industry or community organisations. All Schools normally avail of 'guest lecturers' from external organisations and many engage in 'site visits'. The DkIT Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/>) coordinates the work placements each year within academic programmes across all Schools. The CEC also organises an annual Industry Day on campus, providing opportunities for industry to meet with students and potential graduate recruits. Interview panels for staff recruitment and programme validation panels are required to have industry representation. The Institute's strategy in relation to interactions between education and providers is informed by QQI's A Strategic Approach to Employer Engagement (Sept 2014; <https://tinyurl.com/2xudhyuc>).

Since 1989, the DkIT Regional Development Centre (RDC) has acted as the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industry, commercial and business life of the region (<https://www.dkit.ie/services-to-business/>). The RDC provides incubation facilities for start-up businesses and provides support to entrepreneurs through schemes such as the Enterprise Ireland (EI) New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (NFP).

The Institute developed and updated policies relating to blended and online learning in the reporting period 2020/2021 with approval at Academic Council postponed until September 2021 in the reporting period 2021/2022, specifically:

- Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (amended).
- Policy on Blended and Online Learning (related policy).

DkIT adopted (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.06, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021) the *QQI Principles for Professional Engagements with Education Providers, including Programme Validation, Professional Accreditation and Approval* (<https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Final-Version-of-Principles-for-Professional-Engagements-with-Education-Providers,-including-Programme-Validation,-Professi.aspx>). The endorsement of the principles was formally communicated by DkIT to QQI on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 with acceptance of the endorsement being confirmed by QQI to DkIT on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes.**

- Academic Council approved the adoption of DkIT Employability Statement and DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 177, Motion 177.07, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021). The Employability Statement and Graduate Attribute Framework were phase one outputs from the DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/dkit-embedding-employability.html>) which was funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning as part of the Strategic Alignment for Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund in 2019 and enhances the Institute's commitment to graduate employability

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

This section discusses the information the Institution provides to learners in respect of access, transfer, progression (ATP) and certification. It also highlights initiatives that the Institute participates in to enhance ATP opportunities for students.

Policies and procedures have been developed to cover a range of matters relating to the student lifecycle, from admission (access), transfer, progression to conferring of awards and transcripts provision. Mobility both within DkIT and across the Higher Education sector is facilitated through the use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credit system ([https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en)) and the National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ) ([https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)). In the case of international students, NARIC (<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/NARIC-Ireland.aspx>) and ENIC (<https://www.enic-naric.net/>) are used to facilitate access to programmes. Graduates are provided with transcripts of assessment results for each stage in addition to an award parchment and access to a European Diploma Supplement (EDS) ([https://ec.europa.eu/education/diploma-supplement\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/diploma-supplement_en)). The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/>) provide advice and information regarding transfer and progression opportunities both within DkIT and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

There are a number of policies under this category, the application of which ensures fair recognition of education qualifications and prior learning (both formal and non-formal):

Policy	Web Address
Admissions Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Transfer and Progression Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a> <b>Note:</b> There are specific progression policies for the Section of Midwifery.
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Equal Access and Participation Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Assessment and Standards	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Policy (previously the Posthumous Award Policy)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Exit Awards Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Prizes Policy (previously the President's Prizes for Conferring Policy)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>

The implementation of the policies above is the responsibility of the Registrar's Office and is facilitated through various administrative offices, all of which work in close collaboration with the Academic Schools:

Administrative Office	Web Address
Admissions Office	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration">https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration</a>
Access Office	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/diversity-and-access.html">https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/diversity-and-access.html</a>
International Office	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/international-students/">https://www.dkit.ie/international-students/</a>
Life-Long Learning Centre	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/parttime-courses/">https://www.dkit.ie/parttime-courses/</a>
Disability Office	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/access-and-disability.html">https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/access-and-disability.html</a>
Examinations Office	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office">https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office</a>
Awards Office	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/awards-office/graduation.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/awards-office/graduation.html</a>
Careers and Employability Centre	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/</a>

Relevant policies and procedures are communicated to students through the DkIT website, Department handbooks and student induction events. Extensive induction processes for new and advanced entry students are co-ordinated centrally by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with inputs from academic Schools and Student Services.

DkIT participates in collaborative arrangements to facilitate transfer and progression across the higher education system. The Institute is a member of the Dublin Leinster II Cluster (MEND) with DCU, NUIM and AIT. The cluster aims to share information regarding innovations in learning and teaching and to improve arrangements for access and transfer between institutions. DkIT is a founder member of the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) which is a regional higher and further education initiative comprising DkIT and further education institutions in the North-East and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the alliance is to strengthen progression opportunities for students in the region from further to higher education.

Progression Policies for undergraduate Nursing/Midwifery students and for students on the *Higher Diploma in Midwifery* in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 171S, Motion 171S.03, 11th December 2020). A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Practice and Garda/Police Vetting Procedures for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 172, Motion 172.06, 19th February 2021). This was part of a number of policy amendments made by the Department of Humanities required by the professional body CORU (<https://www.coru.ie/>), Ireland's multi-profession health regulator who is responsible for the statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

The Institute A-Level entry requirements for NFQ Level 8 awards was amended and included in the Admissions Policy. This followed a recommendation by the Institute's Northern Ireland Working Group



that a Double Award A-Level be scored as two distinct A-Level grades. The current position in the sector (as of 2020/2021) is that Double Awards are scored as one A-Level only. The change in scoring was recommended for two reasons: (1) Universities in Northern Ireland score a Double Award A-Level as two distinct A-Level grades and (2) DkIT score a BTEC Double Award Grade Merit as two distinct Merit grades (Academic Council Meeting No. 175, Motion 175.01, 28th May 2021).

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period:** Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 176S, Motion 176S.03, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021). The policy was amended further following discussions with the professional body for social care professionals (CORU) (Standing Committee, Meeting No. 70S, Motion 70S.01, 13th December 2021). Following further discussions and clarification from CORU the approval of the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* was then revoked (Standing Committee, Meeting No. 71S, Motion 71S.01, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022). A derogation from the Institute's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* was approved (Standing Committee, Meeting No. 71S, Motion 71S.02, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022).
- Admissions Policy and Procedures was updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 179, Motion 179.03, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022).
- Prizes Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.03, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022). The President's Prizes for Conferring Policy was amended to incorporate group nominations for the "Enterprising Student of the Year" and expanded to include School Prizes (policy was retitled as a result). All prizes will be included on an Institute Prizes Register, following consideration and approval, typically for five years, by the Academic Council. Schools prizes for inclusion on the Institute Prizes Register were considered and approved by the Academic Council:
  - School of Business and Humanities: Karl Mernagh Prize (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.03, 27th May 2022);
  - School of Business and Humanities: Irish Association for Social Care Educators (IASCE) Award for Academic Achievement in Social Care (Academic Council, Meeting No. 182, Motions 182.13, 20th June 2022);
  - Engineering: MOFFETT Female Engineering Graduate (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.04, 27th May 2022);
  - Health and Science: Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) Student of the Year (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.05, 06, 27th May 2022);

- Health and Science: ABP Award for Agri-Food Student of the Year. (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.05, 06, 27th May 2022).
  - Health and Science: Shane Dromgoole Prize (Academic Council, Meeting No. 182, Motions 182.14, 20th June 2022);
  - Health and Science: Duggan Veterinary Prize for Excellence in Anaesthesia (Academic Council, Meeting No. 182, Motions 182.13, 14, 20th June 2022);
  - Informatics and Creative Arts: John Moore Prize (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.06, 27th May 2022);
  - Informatics and Creative Arts: Fis Best in Show Prize (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.06, 27th May 2022).
- Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.06, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022). The Posthumous Awards Policy was expanded to include aegrotat awards.

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

As mentioned in Section 2.1 Programme Development and Approval, it is the policy of the Institute that all programmes are well designed and conform to the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) ([https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)). Programmes are developed and approved in accordance with the Programme Design and Approval Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

Programmes are developed in accordance with DkIT Award Standards. The Institute adopted the QQI Award Standards (<https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/qqi-awards/qqi-awards-standards>) as their own standards in the reporting period 2019/2020. Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) must be aligned to the relevant award standard(s), a requirement included in the Programme Design and Approval Policy. Programmes with professional accreditation are also aligned with the relevant standards for professional bodies, professional regulatory and/or statutory bodies (PSRBs) as appropriate.

Examinations and Assessment are carried out in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>; See Section 2.4 Teaching Learning and Assessment). Assessment and standards details the Institute's policy on the following:

- General Requirements for Examinations and Awards;
- Approved Programme Schedule (APS);
- Marks Allocation;
- Allocation of Marks to Assessment Elements;

- Pass by Compensation;
- Exemptions;
- Requirements for Progression;
- Internal and External Examiners;
- Return of Examination Marks/Grades by Internal Examiners;
- Meeting of Examination Board;
- The Granting of Awards;
- The Revocation of Awards;
- Award Classifications Systems;
- Post Award Achievements.

As part of the Institute policy enhancements relating to Designed Awarding Body (DAB) status (which commenced in January 2020) an Awarding Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.03, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021).

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period:** Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- The QQI “Joint Sectoral Protocol between DABs and QQI” was endorsed (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.07, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

The joint sectoral protocol allows for the inclusion of the awards of Designated Awarding Bodies (DABS) within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This is a requirement under Section 55 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Amendment Act (2012 and 2019 amended Acts). This sectoral protocol has been developed by QQI with input from the THEA and the IUA (QQI, in co-operation with THEA and the IUA, collaborate with the sector in relation to sectoral protocols. The protocols are agreed by QQI and providers).

It reflects existing practice and strengths around quality assurance and is designed to avoid putting in place any additional/burdensome process to meet the statutory requirement of including DABs’ awards in the NFQ. It is a regulatory requirement that requires formal endorsement by each Higher Education Institution (HEI) with DAB powers. General consensus and broadly shared meaning are sufficient to underpin the operation of the protocol.

The sectoral protocol does not promote a standardised approach to the determination of awards standards or the making of awards within designated awarding bodies, rather it reflects the generally accepted norms based on professional judgement and consensus. Participating institutions are encouraged to interpret and apply the protocol so that it works well with relevant institutional practice, policies and procedures.

Subject to the agreement of DABs, QQI will report on the status of the protocol and will promote it nationally and internationally as a reflection of transparent and trusted procedures within DABs for the inclusion of their awards within the NFQ. The protocol consolidates and confirms the existing practices articulated in institutional policies and procedures, sector led guidance and advice and in national and European guidelines on quality assurance.

The protocol may be used by designated awarding bodies to confirm that such procedures are in place and facilitate the listing of their awards on the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ). From the date that a DAB endorses the protocol, all qualifications offered by the DAB that are currently published on the IRQ shall be deemed to be included within the NFQ.

Once endorsed, the protocol is expected to be observed over time by designated awarding bodies and QQI. Reporting requirements will be proportionate to the strong record of NFQ implementation by designated awarding bodies. Part A of the Annual Institution Quality Report (AQR) will include a reference to this protocol and can be used to record confirmation by a designated awarding body that it continues to apply. Part B of the AQR will be used to report any changes or developments that may have impacted on the operation and implementation of the protocol for example, specific quality enhancement initiatives or updates to relevant policies and procedures.

## **2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

This section provides information on how the Institute quality assures teaching, learning and assessment.

Academic programmes are delivered in a student-centred manner that encourages learners to take an active role in their learning process. Learning, teaching and assessment at DkIT:

- Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- Uses a variety of delivery modes and pedagogical methods, which are regularly evaluated and adjusted;
- Encourages autonomy in the learner while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the lecturer and promotes mutual respect within the learner-lecturer relationship.

A number of academic policies ensure that teaching, learning and assessment remain student-centred. Training and support/guidance is provided to academic staff in relation to these policies and procedures.

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) sets out DkIT's strategic priorities in relation to learning, teaching and assessment and provides a framework for ensuring that these are used to promote student success in line with the vision and priorities set out in the DkIT Strategic Plan.

The Assessment and Learning Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) provides guidance on the development and maintenance of assessment strategies at the levels of both programme and module. It is based on five core principles (Figure 4)

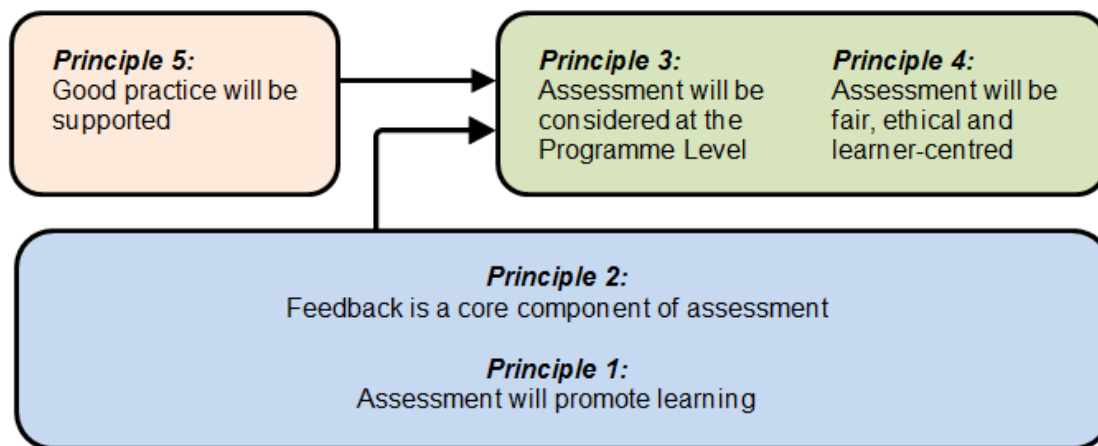


Figure 4: Assessment and Learning Core Principles

DkIT has developed a framework for the management and development of assessed group work (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>), the impact of which is formally monitored.

Examinations and assessment are carried out in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>), which is aligned to QQI's Assessment and Standards (revised 2022). DkIT operates a system of external moderation of assessed student work and examinations. The external examiners are appointed by Academic Council and serve a term of three years. External Examiners report annually to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar and copies of these reports are circulated to relevant academic managers for consideration and response by Programme Boards. The Institute's quality assurance policy and procedures can be found in DkIT's External Examiner Duties and Procedures (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>; see cross referencing in Section 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review). Students have the right to appeal examination or assessment results using the appeals process prescribed in Assessment and Standards and this document also outlines the procedures to be used in the case of students with mitigating circumstances.

The Continuous Assessment Procedures (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) outline the operational parameters associated with assessment of students. This policy, in conjunction with Assessment and Standards, ensures that procedures for assessment are valid, consistent and fair, that criteria are provided to students in advance, records are properly maintained and feedback opportunities are available.

The Blended and Online Learning Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) aims to provide guidance for individuals and programme teams to enable the development and delivery of blended and online programmes and modules. It is based on good practice principles which focus on the design, delivery, support and quality assurance of blended and online modules or programmes.

The DkIT Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) provides best practices and outlines the procedures used by the Institute for investigation of possible contraventions of Academic Integrity. The Student Voice Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) promotes student involvement in decision making and sets out how DkIT staff and students communicate and engage with each other, working in partnership to improve our students' experience.

DkIT aims to provide an environment which is collegial and respectful of all members. Students registered at DkIT are required to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) and the Social Networking Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). DkIT values the student voice and welcomes learner input to decision making across the Institute (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). In addition to being invited to participate in feedback surveys, students have representation on Programme and School/Faculty Boards, Academic Council and Governing Body.

The Institute's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/centre-for-excellence-in-learning-and-teaching/>) provides learning, teaching and assessment advice, guidance and support for both staff and students. The Centre also engages in a considerable level of scholarly activities in these areas, both through the delivery of Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching and through a number of enhancement projects funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>). The outcomes of these projects are informing policy and enhancing practice across the Institute.

### Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Guidelines for Remote Assessments- students	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm</a>
Academic Regulations for Masters (Taught and Structured) Research Projects	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm</a>
Recording of Online Classes: Guidelines and Code of Practice for DkIT Staff and Students (including Data Privacy notice)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm</a>
Social Networking Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm</a>
Student Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm</a>
Examination and Assessment Policy and Procedure	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Conduct of Examinations Guidelines (In-Class Assessments)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities- Policy, Guidelines and Procedures	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Work Placement Common Procedures (including Remote Working)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Policy on Student Practice Placement Attendance (requirements of CORU (Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals))	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Student Complaints Procedure	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Student Fitness to Practice Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>

### Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Assessment and Standards was amended to permit students to repeat for honours in specific circumstances, effective for the academic year 2022/2023 (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.15, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022).

A special meeting of the Academic Council (Meeting No 177S, 30th November 2021) was convened with the sole purpose of agreeing an Institute response to the QQI consultation on a proposed modification to ‘*Sectoral Convention 3 on Repeating for Honours*’ in QQI’s ‘Assessment and

Standards' (2013). QQI sought feedback from stakeholders on the proposal outlined in a white paper (<https://tinyurl.com/4vptvdmw>) by Friday 3rd December 2021. Following extensive discussions after a detailed briefing, which included consideration of the QQI whitepaper, the Academic Council was in agreement that the current Sectoral Convention 3 needed to be amended but was not in agreement with the proposed wording as articulated in the QQI whitepaper.

Council agreed to permit students to repeat a failed module(s) contributing to an award grade in order to achieve an honours classification subject to the following conditions: (1) Only one repeat attempt will be permitted which must be at the next available examination sitting; (2) A maximum of 10 ECTS credits can be repeated; (3) The calculation of the award classification will be based on the first attempt grades; (4) No capping of module marks will be applied to the repeat sitting) (Academic Council Meeting No 177S, Motion 177S, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021). DkIT submitted its response in relation to the Sectoral Convention 3 to QQI on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021. DkIT's Assessment and Standards was subsequently amended in June 2022 (as above).

- Work Placement for Social Care - Common Policies and Procedures (Academic Council Meeting No. 176S, Motion 176S.02, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021).
- Policy for Blended and Online Learning (Academic Council Meeting No. 176S, Motion 176S.04, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021). See cross reference in Section 2.1 Programme Development and Approval.
- Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures (Academic Council Meeting No. 178, Motion 178.07, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021). A role description for a Plagiarism Advisor and guidelines for staff on the conduct of oral verification interviews were included.
- DkIT Work Placement Common Procedures (specifically terms and conditions) (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.09, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022).
- Policies (Assessment and Standards, Continuous Assessment Procedures, External Examiner Duties and Procedures) were updated to facilitate a requirement that modules with continuous assessment components with a weighting of 40% or more will have to be reviewed by External Examiners in advance of distribution to students (similar to the current practice of External Examiners reviewing final examination papers in advance of the examination session) (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.10, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

See Section "Changes to Policies and Procedures", AQR Part B.



### 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

This section provides information on the resources, infrastructure and supports that are provided to students.

To the best of its resourcing ability, DkIT seeks to ensure that learning environments and resources are suitable for both individual and group learning and that learners have access to resources for effective study and to resources which increase educational opportunity. Full details of resources and supports are provided to students at induction when they first arrive to study at DkIT. Institute Open Days also inform prospective students of the supportive learning environment they will experience. Supporting learning is continually reviewed and upgraded despite budgetary constraints because it is seen as the central aspect of the functions of the Institute. Robust feedback channels are in operation to ensure that any deficiencies in service to learners are brought to the attention of the relevant manager in a timely manner and actioned accordingly.

The following student supports are available to students studying at DkIT:

**Student Services** (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/>): Students are provided with practical and pastoral support and guidance through various services including the Health Centre, Counselling Service, International Office, Access Office, Disability Office and Chaplaincy. Advice on accommodation and financial matters is also available.

An online Student Support Hub, which complements the face-to-face student supports, is available in the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and is part of the online student learning infrastructure (the Hub was launched in 2020/2021 having been funded from the Higher Education Authority's (HEA's) 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund). The Hub has made the provision of student supports more flexible and accessible to all our students, whether on-campus or off.

Student supports are an integral part of the Institute's Student Success Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). Support services are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and accessible and that students are aware of them. See Section Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System, Professional Service Areas (Student Services) for a full description of service providers that provide support to students.

**DkIT Library** (<https://www.dkit.ie/library/>): The library provides teaching, learning and research supports to a variety of learners as follows:

- Purchasing, collecting and categorisation of resources in various formats, for which a suite of search options is provided; including the development of collections to enable intellectual inquiry;
- Making material available to borrow for varying amounts of time;
- Providing physical learning spaces for study;
- Helping learners find resources through the Library Information Desk or Library Subject Support Team;
- Offering Research and Information Skills and scholarly communication training including one-to-one consultations with students;
- Providing guidance on how to avoid plagiarism by referencing. The library also offer an introduction to the Mendeley Reference Manager (among other guidance and support);
- Developing online library guides;

Most supports, including journal databases, e-books and support guides are available online to ensure learners can avail of what they need 24/7. Provision has shifted more recently to prioritising electronic resources. Print stock is managed through varying loan periods to ensure maximum sharing of resources.

Information on the library support services for postgraduate researchers can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/library/library-supports/support-for-research/>.

**Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC)** (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/student-learning-and-development-centre/>): The SLDC is part of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and was established in 2010 to offer support to students in basic IT skills, study skills and academic writing. The Centre also co-ordinates the student induction process and the services have expanded to include the provision of English language support to international students and pre-entry support to mature students. The Centre offers a schedule of workshops for students, 1:1 sessions, and drop-ins, both face-to-face and online. Tutors also collaborate with lecturers to deliver tailored support for class groups. The SLDC also develops and curates a wide range of learning development resources for students and these are available on the Student Support Hub.

**Mathematics Learning Centre (MLC)** (<https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/study-experience/maths-learning-centre.html>): The MLC is a free service open to all DkIT students which aims to provide additional

Mathematics support and offers a number of services including 'drop-in' sessions, small group workshops on specific topic and one-on-one support sessions.

**IT Learning Centre (ITLC)** (<https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/study-experience/it-learning-centre.html>): This Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded initiative in the Departments of Computing Science and Mathematics and Visual and Human-Centred Computing provides specific support to computing students in a range of computing related areas including programming languages, mathematics topics, networking, web development, etc.

**IT Infrastructure and Services: Computing Services** (<https://www.dkit.ie/computer-services>) provide information technology technical support to the Institute community. It provides network and Internet based services including email, web, wireless and printing services. It is also responsible for maintaining the PC laboratories which exist across the campus in academic schools, library and other central locations. A number of policies exist to guide and direct users (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/it-policies.html>). An online Institute helpdesk (<https://helpdesk.dkit.ie/>) support students and staff with technical queries or difficulties. Computer services also provides administrative and infrastructural support with the Institute Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). This support complements the supports provided by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

**International Office** (<https://www.dkit.ie/international-students/>): International students are additionally supported by the International Office with all services and supports being provided in accordance with the *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* (<https://tinyurl.com/2578s5ux>). The Code of Practice is a comprehensive set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners specifically relating to the pastoral care, including service support and information provision. Requirements are also included for the protection of enrolled learners; marketing, recruitment and admissions practices; and transparency of fees and refund processes which apply before and after enrolment. DkIT is also compliant with the London Statement, which is a code of ethics for the use of international education recruitment agents.

DkIT also implements the EU Erasmus+ Programme in accordance with the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, 2021 - 2027 (<https://eurireland.ie/erasmusplus/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education/>) and with the regulatory requirements prescribed by the National Agency for Erasmus in Ireland (HEA).

**Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:**

Policy	Web Address
International Refund Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Erasmus Policy Statement	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Scholarship Programme at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Support Units (Student Services) activities and developments during the reporting period.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

This section provides information on the quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research activities at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). It includes the quality assurance and enhancement framework for the governance, design, approval, delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of research activities across the institution.

The quality assurance and enhancement of research activities of the Institute are informed by the following:

- Topic-Specific QA Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes: <https://www.qqi.ie/node/632>.
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019): <https://tinyurl.com/679sw2tb>.
- HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education: <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/engagement-insights-and-knowledge-sharing/national-forum-for-doctoral-education>.
- Report of Expert Panel on the Quality Assurance of Research Degree Programmes in Irish Higher Education Institutions: <https://tinyurl.com/679sw2tb>
- National Framework for Doctoral Education Implementation Report: <https://tinyurl.com/679sw2tb>
- The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations: <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/615:salzburg-ii-%E2%80%93recommendations.html>.
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland: <https://www.iaa.ie/publications/national-policy-statement-on-ensuring-research-integrity-in-ireland/#>.
- Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019, <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/irelands-national-ip-protocol-2019.html>.

Research is managed by the Research and Graduate Studies Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/>) and with collaboration with the Registrar's Office has responsibility for research quality assurance and

enhancement. In the reporting period. It is envisaged the number and breadth of the research groups shall expand in the coming years to include staff currently emerging their research careers. At present the six research centres include (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-centres-and-groups/>):

- Smooth Muscle Research Centre (SMRC);
- Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies (CFES);
- Netwell/Casala;
- Regulated Software Research Centre;
- CREDIT (Centre for Renewable Energy at Dundalk IT);
- Creative Arts.

The period from 2017 up to 2019 for the last research strategy saw continued growth of the research agenda in the Institute. During this period the Institute has strengthened its position as one of the leading Institutes of Technology with international reputation in terms of its research performance within its prioritised research domains.

The current five-year Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2024):

- Sets out the recent developments in both National and European policy which has informed the strategic positioning of research and innovation within the Institute:
- Details the Institute's past performance in terms of its research and innovation agenda over the lifespan of the last strategy:
- Details the suite of strategic goals, specific objectives and associated key performance indicators which will enable the institute to deliver upon its research and innovation vision:
- Underpins the Institute's current Strategic Plan and builds upon previous research strategies.

The principle aim of research is both to answer key questions and to generate new knowledge in specific domains. The Institute prides itself on supporting and engaging in a broad range of research enquiry across a range of disciplines which are aligned to the research and innovation core principles. The Institute's approach to research has always been to invest in growth areas of strategic importance, which are aligned with our research strengths and which are informed by the external environment. Our research is founded upon excellence led by global needs with real-world societal and economic impacts.

**DkIT's Research Clusters and Teams:** The consolidation and concentration of our research into thematic areas of strength which are underpinned by internationally recognised research teams has been at the heart of our strategic development for the past decade. The Institute has always recognised the need to have a diversity of research centres and groups, including academic, industry facing and mission orientated which underpin our thematic areas. In view of the size of the Institute in terms of its research community, collaboration between existing research centres and groups and consolidation of

existing groups and centres has been encouraged and achieved over the lifecycle of the preceding research strategy (2017-2019). However, there is further scope to build upon this with further possible consolidation and development of collaborative synergies between existing teams of researchers. This allows a focus on building higher critical mass within our prioritised research themes. Since the previous research strategy (2017-2019) there have been significant developments in terms of the number of research groups and the alignment of all centres and groups within one of the three research themes. At present, the institute has six research centres and seven research groups. Outside of our established research centres and groups there are individual researchers across the four academic schools who are not formally aligned within existing research centres and groups but bring their own research expertise and outputs to the Institute's research vision in their individual fields of enquiry.

Through the National Research Prioritisation Exercise, the recent Horizon Europe programme, Innovation 2020 and a recent Institute self-assessment exercise, DkIT identified its current research strengths and has consolidated them into three defined research clusters of scale and impact. Over the life course of this research strategic plan, a review of the research governance structures of centres and groups operating across the Institute will be undertaken in order to ensure that the Institute continues to be well positioned to take advantage of national and international opportunities in the research and innovation space. A key action will be to revise and develop new governance structures around the strategic development of each of the research themes involving the research leaders, research office, academic schools and the technology transfer office.

**ICT, Health and Ageing Cluster:** This theme represents the highest number of associated research centres and groups spanning two academic schools, namely, Health & Science and Informatics & Creative Arts, with a critical mass of researchers comprising 39 academics, 4 Postdoctoral Fellows, 5 Research Fellows, 3 Support Staff and 32 postgraduate research students. There are three research centres, namely, Smooth Muscle, Regulated Software and Netwell/Casala, and three research groups, Interfaces & Electrochemistry (EIRG) and the newly established Nursing, Midwifery & Early Years (NMEY) and Applied Data Analytics groups (ADARG), aligned to this Institute. This theme accounts for over €40M of the institute's research income from sources such as the SFI Centre programme, EU FP7, Horizon 2020, Interreg IVA, Irish Research Council and direct industry funding. Several of the teams are involved in European wide networks of scale and have established strong linkages with university researchers both nationally and internationally

**Climate and Natural Resources Cluster:** This cluster spans two academic schools, Health & Science and Engineering and is composed of two research centres, Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) and its associated Technology gateway, Centre for Freshwater & Environmental Studies (CFES), and one research group, Electrochemistry and Interfaces (EIRG), with the latter also conducting research

underpinning the health domain. It is comprised of 15 academics, 2 Postdoctoral Fellows, 2 Senior Research Fellows, 1 Support Staff and 25 postgraduate researchers.

**Creative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Cluster:** Comprised of one research centre, Creative Arts (CARC) and five research groups, Humanities, Society, Tourism, Gender and Inclusion Academy (GIA) and Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Marketing and Management (ELMM), this cluster spans two academic schools, Business and Humanities and Informatics and Creative Arts. It is composed of 68 academics and 30 Postgraduate research students.

Research Theme	Academic Members	Postgraduate Researchers	Career Researchers
ICT, Health and Ageing	33	32	12
Climate & Natural Resources	15	25	5
Creative Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	68	30	0

Outside of these priority research themes and their associated centres and groups, the institute aims to establish a teaching and learning research group which will span the four academic schools and includes members from existing research centres and groups. The Teaching and Learning Research group will be strategically linked to the Institute's Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). It is a growing area of research interest for the Institute and is composed of leading academics from each of the four academic schools.

Society is currently facing real global challenges which affect people's quality of life, including finding renewable forms of alternative energy, finding cures for fatal diseases and addressing the societal issues around ageing populations. Within our cross disciplinary research teams, through both basic and translational research programmes, we are attempting to address these global issues and find solutions for industry and society. Ensuring our research has impact, whether it is contributing to the knowledge gap, aiding economic development, solving societal challenges, informing national and international policy and informing the teaching remit of the institute, has always been at the heart of our research endeavours. It is vitally important that the Institute increases the visibility of its research to external stakeholders, including research funders, private and public bodies, potential collaborators and society at large. This will, in itself, demonstrate the unique contribution the Institute's research outputs are making to the knowledge economy. Greater visibility will not only lead to strengthening the Institute's ability to secure external research income but it will also enable the development of strategic partnerships with public and private bodies. We recognise that it is the quality and expertise of our

researchers which underpins our research success to date. The Institute must strive to actively support its research community in their endeavours, both established and early career researchers. It is only through this that the Institute can attain its research vision to be a leader in its research themes. Research, is a critical and integral part of the overall learning environment of the Institute for its staff and student body.

**Core Principles:** The Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2024) is founded upon five core principles (CPs) from which the stated strategic goals and associated objectives flow. These core principles include:

**Institutional Research Culture:** Dundalk Institute of Technology was originally established as a Regional Technology College with a primary focus on education at levels 6 and 7. For the past decade the research and innovation agenda has significantly matured allowing the Institute to become an internationally recognised research-intensive institution in its key research areas. However, the careful balancing act required, and tension between the teaching and learning and research worlds to attain this has been beset with significant challenges and obstacles, both internally and externally. With the Institute approaching its 50-year anniversary it seems opportune to ensure that research and innovation is at the core of all its activities. An integral part of this will be to ensure that research and innovation is viewed by all internal stakeholders as of strategic importance and as mainstream activity of the Institute. The latter shall involve ensuring all functional areas and academic schools are equally supportive of research and innovation and that improved internal communication exists across the Institute so all can better understand research and innovation. To achieve this a detailed review of all governance structures in tandem with the development of policies that are fit for purpose will be required.

**Academic Freedom:** The cornerstone of any research intensive higher educational body should be the recognition of the principle of academic freedom for research endeavour irrespective of the research discipline. Dundalk Institute of Technology has encouraged this approach through its support of research across a wide spectrum of discipline areas and recognition of how the outputs of scholarly research differ across such disciplines. This approach should continue and be bolstered through greater recognition and reward for different forms of research output.

**Culture of Inclusivity and Gender Equality:** The Institute will continue to be committed, through the Athena Swan process and recent institutional strategic planning process to align with National and European best practice with respect to the principles enshrining gender equality and inclusivity within the Higher Education Sector. The European funding instrument, Horizon 2020, states three objectives which underpin its strategy on gender equality which the Institute has taken cognisance of and has become the implementation where necessary. These objectives include “fostering gender balance in



research teams so as to close the gaps in female participations”, “ensuring gender balance in decision making groups” and integrating a gender dimension in research and innovation content”. Specific measures at an institutional level which can be implemented include ensuring any perceived barriers for participation of females in research are highlighted and removed, a review of all governance structures around research and innovation and encouragement of underrepresented genders in certain research disciplines and research teams to proactively become research active.

**Public Outreach:** Dundalk Institute of Technology carries out translational research which has had significant societal and economic impact, whether that has been through addressing issues around ageing, the climate or health. This has cemented the institute’s research reputation with external stakeholders from funders to governmental bodies. The awareness however of what we do in research to private enterprise and what problems our research community may be able to solve for such enterprises needs improving. This can be achieved in ensuring the research community within the Institute engages proactively with the Regional Development Centre. In addition, the need to communicate what we do in research and innovation to the general public has never been as important due to the current challenges in the public finances and how research and innovation are funded. Efficient public outreach and awareness will form an important aspect of what we do in research moving forward. Engaging with our region across all sectors can be achieved through ensuring the communications office, the research office and research community work in unison and develop specific measures and policies around public outreach and engagement.

Positioning DKIT as a research leader in its sector: Dundalk Institute of Technology has cemented its position as one of the leading research-intensive Institutes of Technology over the past five years with some notable successes both on the National and European scene. The performance of the Institutes research community is one important facet through which reputational enhancement is achieved, however another is that the Institute’s management, through leadership from the Research Office, influences national research and innovation policy so the needs of the research community in the Institute are better served. This takes the form of ensuring the Institute plays key roles in national fora and communicates with external stakeholders of influence. As the national Higher Education Landscape goes through dramatic changes through the creation of the Technology Universities and the short to long terms challenges posed by Covid 19 it is vital the Institute is seen to be at the forefront of those challenges from within its own sector.

Since September 2014, registered DkIT postgraduate research students are studying for Dublin City University (DCU) awards through the DCU/DkIT Graduate School (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/postgraduate-studies/>). The regulations applying to these awards are aligned to DCU regulations for postgraduate research awards. The regulations are regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with DCU regulations (typically in May/June of each academic year). Prior

to 2014 postgraduate research students received awards from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and were governed by a separate regulations for QQI awards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

Admissions applications for postgraduate research are firstly considered by the relevant School Graduate Research Programme Board (GRPB). There is GRPB in each of the four Schools in the Institute. Once approved by the GRPB applications are considered by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (DkIT GRSB). Once approved by the DkIT GRSB applications are submitted to the DCU GRSB for approval. The GRPBs and GRSBs also process transfer applications, notification to submit applications and deferrals. Postgraduate research students must complete an Annual Progress Monitoring Report. Examination Boards take place as required to confirm postgraduate research awards. The Registrar's Office is responsible for making the request for a parchment to DCU and inviting the candidate to attend a conferring ceremony. An annual report is also submitted to DCU as part of the annual monitoring quality assurance processes.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office provide high-quality support for all researchers at Dundalk Institute of Technology. The Research Support Team work collaboratively and in partnership with staff, research centres and groups, the academic schools, Technology Transfer Office (TTO), Finance, Human Resource (HR) and Library to provide research support.

The following range of supports are provided:

- Identifying potential sources of research funding;
- Helping in the preparation and submission of research funding proposals covering all aspects of a typical proposal (e.g. finance);
- Provide training courses and information sessions on research related topics;
- Access and publicise the impact of the Institute's research activities;
- Work in partnership with the research centres and groups to drive their research performance;
- Provide and review all research agreements;
- Act as the primary point of contact for external funders;
- Provide career development advice for career researchers;
- Develop and implement all research-related policies and procedures;
- Provide institutional research funding support schemes.

DkIT has a successful track record in relevant metrics and peer review, especially in terms of research funding secured and the number and associated citations of peer reviewed publications. The primary benchmark employed for measuring the impact of the Institute's research was the Scopus database (<https://www.scopus.com>). The Institute is ranked 4th in the sector in terms of total citations.

Through the Graduate Studies Office, the Institute was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Logo in October 2015 in recognition of its commitment to be an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out research and which understands the importance of providing its researchers with the training and means to be competitive and mobile. The award was made in light of DkIT's commitment to aligning its HR policies and practices with the European Commission's European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. DkIT was one of only four Institutes of Technology to receive such an award.

#### Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Good Research Practice Guidelines	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Research Data Management	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Open Access Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Research Authorship and Publication	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Consultancy Policy Conflict of Interest Policies and Procedures	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Research Centre and Group Designation (including Annual Report template)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Research Ethics Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Postgraduate Teaching Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Postgraduate Research Agreement (Funded and Non-Funded)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
DkIT PGR Forms	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period:** Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies (under the category of QA of Research Activities and Programmes):

- Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DkIT Awards) (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.03, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022).
- Terms of Reference for the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.04, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022).

- Access to Research Infrastructure Policy (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.05, 20th June 2022).

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

This section provides information on published quality assurance policies and procedures that demonstrate how the institution takes responsibility for the quality of its staff, and how it provides staff with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. This includes recruitment, management and development of staff, as well as the institution's communication with staff.

DkIT is cognisant of the changing role of the lecturer due to the increasing diversity of the learner body and stronger focus on learning outcomes and a learner centred approach to educational provision. This informs the recruitment and training of staff.

Recruitment of staff is managed through the Institute's Human Resources Department (<https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource>) and is in line with relevant legislation, including the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 (and subsequent legislation), The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (OWTA 1997), The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (SHWWA 2005), Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2018, Terms of Employment (Information) Acts, 1994-2014. Scoring of candidates for lecturing positions gives due consideration to prior teaching qualifications and experience. All staff appointments are subject to a formal probationary period.

The Human Resources Office and the Registrar's Office manage staff training and development activities (Staff Training and Development Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures>) on a variety of pedagogical and academic administrative topics of relevance to higher education (e.g. academic integrity and data protection). New staff members undergo an extensive induction process, at both Institute and at Department level. In the case of academic staff, this includes introductory training in learning, teaching and assessment and in academic quality assurance and enhancement.

The Institute, through its Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (<https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching>), offers a Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching (via blended learning). Sub-awards (Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate) are also available, as are individual modules. CELT also provides regular short programmes and master classes in learning, teaching and assessment topics, including programme development, delivery, assessment and technology-enhanced learning. The use of innovation in learning, teaching and assessment is encouraged and facilitated. Staff members have opportunities to participate in learning and teaching enhancement projects and other scholarly activities.

Academic staff members have opportunities for professional development and scholarly activities in their discipline areas, mainly through linkages within one of the Institute's Research Centres. A number of schemes to facilitate staff engagement with research and supervision of research postgraduate students are administered by the Research and Graduate Studies Office, which also provides training programmes for staff involved in postgraduate student supervision. Academic staff members also have opportunities to participate in short term industry projects or consultancy through the Regional Development Centre (RDC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/rdc-supports.html> and <https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business.html>).

All staff members studying for higher awards are eligible for fees subsidies and at any time a significant number of academic staff members are working towards doctoral awards. DkIT exceeds the sector average for the proportion of fulltime academic staff with level 10 qualifications (43% during the reporting period).

#### Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Staff Manual	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures">https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures</a>
Dignity at Work (Bullying and Harassment) Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html</a>
Child Protection Policies and Procedures (Managed by the DkIT Child Protection Policy Committee)	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/child-protection.html">https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/child-protection.html</a>
Institute Garda / Police Vetting	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/garda-vetting">https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/garda-vetting</a>
Parental Leave Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures">https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures</a>
Remote Working Policy	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures">https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures</a>
Progression Procedures	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures">https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures</a>
Career Breaks Academic Staff Career Breaks Non-Academic Staff	<a href="https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures">https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures</a>

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

This section provides information on information systems and processes and the way data and information is used to inform practice and decision making. Information is also provided on records maintenance and retention, as well as data protection and freedom of information.

The Institute is a client of HEAnet Network Operations and uses the Banner Student Management System (academic records), CORE (Human Resources), Agresso (Finance) and Koha (library) as its core information management tools. Records of student academic history are stored on Banner and used for the production of results transcripts, parchments and European Diploma Supplements. This information is retained indefinitely and allows DkIT to verify graduate results and awards retrospectively.

Anonymised data relating to students and graduates is analysed with a view to informing decision making. For example, data on student applications, registration, progression and drop out, conferring of awards and graduate destinations is circulated internally and analysed annually and as part of five-yearly Programmatic Reviews.

EvaSys survey software (<https://evasys.co.uk/>) is used for quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities to obtain formal student feedback about their programme of study bi-annually. The Institute also participates annually in the HEA StudentSurvey.ie (formerly the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)). The data collected in the surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions.

Statistics on use of learning support and other student services are collated and used to inform decision making in relation to the management and resourcing of these units.

The curriculum management tool Akari Curriculum (<https://courses.dkit.ie/curriculum/>) is used to aid the design of programmes and modules. Proposed programme schedules, learning outcomes and module descriptors from the curriculum management tool are presented to programme validation panels and, following the approval process, this information is published (<http://courses.dkit.ie/>). Changes to modules and programmes as a result of ongoing or five-yearly reviews are updated in Akari Curriculum and re-published.

The research management system Smart Simple ([https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s\\_Login.jsp](https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp)) is used to track research proposals and the progress of postgraduate students.

All personal data is managed with due regard to legislative data protection requirements. The Institute has a designated Data Protection and Freedom of Information Officer to guide on such matters. Information on Data Protection can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/data-protection-policies-and-procedures.html>. Information on Records and Retention can be found at <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/legal/data-protection/records-and-retention.html>.

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period:** No

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

This section provides information on information provided to the general public (local, national and international levels). The Institute's approach to communicating with the public is also provided.

The DkIT Marketing and Communications office in conjunction with the appropriate Head of School/Department /Functional Area has overall responsibility for how public information is presented to external audiences via published promotional materials and the DkIT website. The Marketing and Communications office works with internal functional areas/Schools to ensure that information is correctly presented via the website to prospective and current students.

A variety of internal methods of communications are also used by individual functional areas and Schools to disseminate information to these audiences including email, Moodle VLE, noticeboards etc.

DkIT provides information to current and prospective students, staff, graduates, other stakeholders and the public through its website (<http://www.dkit.ie>). This information includes the following:

- Programmes of study (<https://www.dkit.ie/courses/>) including detailed programme and module descriptors (<http://courses.dkit.ie/>);
- Application processes and entry requirements (<https://www.dkit.ie/admissions-and-fees/how-to-apply.html>);
- Policies and procedures (grouped by functional area);
- Student support services (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/>);
- Academic calendar (<https://www.dkit.ie/study/current-students/academic-calendar.html>);
- Academic timetables (<https://timetables.dkit.ie/>);
- Examination timetables (<https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/examination-timetables>);
- Regional Development Centre Supports (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/rdc-supports.html>) and Innovation and Business Support (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business.html>);
- Student Life (<https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/>).

Reports from quality assurance events such as programme validations, Institutional and Programmatic reviews and annual reports to QQI (AQRs) are also available on the website (<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement>). Registers of Collaborative Partnerships and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are also made available publicly.

Registered students receive information about their programme within their Academic Department, including:

- Department Handbook;
- Continuous Assessment Schedule;
- Assessment Briefs.

DkIT is open to the public for various 'Open Day' events, which facilitate the provision of information on academic programmes and application processes to Secondary Schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Providers and the general public. These events include opportunities for School representatives (e.g. Guidance Counsellors) to provide feedback. The DkIT Schools Liaison Office also participates in Higher Education expos and other national and regional events. Visits to individual schools are carried out as part of the Institute's ongoing promotional activities. Programme information is also published in hard copy prospectus format. These documents are available at promotional events, school visits and at DkIT reception.

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period:** No.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

This section provides information on monitoring and periodic review quality assurance and enhancement activities.

### Monitoring

Academic programmes are managed and monitored on an ongoing basis by Programme Boards. These Boards consist of all the academic staff members who are involved in the delivery of a programme and student representatives from each stage. They are normally chaired by the Head of Department or Programme Director and meet at least three times during the academic year to discuss all aspects of programme delivery. They operate in accordance with the DkIT Monitoring of Programmes Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) and report annually to Academic Council. Follow up takes place at both Department level and centrally through an action plan agreed by Academic Council.

External Examiners act as independent and impartial advisors providing the Institute with informed comment on the standards set and learner achievement in relation to those standards. External examining is therefore an integral and important part of institutional quality assurance and enhancement. DkIT's External Examiner Duties and Procedures (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies->



[and-guidelines/academic-policies.html](#)) provides information on the following (cross reference in Section 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment):

- Nomination (including criteria);
- Approval;
- Appointment;
- Number of External Examiners;
- Role of External Examiner;
- Boards of Examiners;
- Reporting Arrangements.

Minor changes to validated programmes, as decided by Programme Boards, can be approved by the Academic Council Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC), in accordance with the Design and Approval of Programmes Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). See AQR Part B for activities during the reporting period 2021/2022.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office conducts quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities annually. DkIT submits a postgraduate research annual report to DCU's Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) as part of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal monitoring (see Figure 2). Annual Reporting for the collaborative partnership arrangement is through the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) and DCU Academic Council. DkIT completes the Annual Report template which is submitted for consideration annually at the October meeting of DCU GRSB. The Annual Report is also noted by the DkIT GRSB and the DkIT Academic Council. The Annual Report contains information on the following relating to postgraduate research activities at DkIT:

Annual Report Section	Description
<b>Recruitment</b>	Recruitment activities. Applications received and admissions approved.
<b>Students and Projects</b>	Information in respect of students registered on research programmes. Project information, including ethics applications. Supervision arrangements established.
<b>Progression, transfers and deferral / withdrawals</b>	Annual progression recommendations. Applications to transfer to the PhD register. Deferrals and withdrawals.

	The reports are created in an online management system (SmartSimple - <a href="https://dkit.smartsimple.ie">https://dkit.smartsimple.ie</a> ).
<b>Examinations and Awards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Examiners approved.</li> <li>• Examinations held, and Examination Board recommendations.</li> <li>• Awards approved and conferred.</li> </ul>
<b>Appeals and Grievances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases of conflict / grievance raised.</li> <li>• Appeals processes invoked</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation and induction activities.</li> <li>• Uptake of graduate training.</li> <li>• Supervisor training activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Finance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student scholarships and grants awarded.</li> <li>• Tuition fees received.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Assurance and Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Assurance review and recommendations.</li> <li>• Governance activities and representation.</li> </ul>
<b>Developments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to and/or developments in agreed standards and processes.</li> <li>• Development / accreditation of new modules.</li> <li>• Other new developments and activities.</li> </ul>

The Annual Report is informed by student feedback (Postgraduate Research Student Feedback and the PGR StudentSurvey.ie (<https://studentsurvey.ie/>)). The PGR StudentSurvey.ie survey was piloted in 2018 and fully implemented across 22 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2019. The feedback survey requests feedback on the following dimensions of the postgraduate research student experience: Research Infrastructure, Funding, Supervision, Research Culture, Progress, Development Opportunities, Research Skills, Personal Outlook, Transferable Skills, Responsibilities, Motivations, Career and Overall Experience.

DkIT employs the *SmartSimple* Management System (<https://dkit.smartsimple.ie>) to monitor the annual progression of each postgraduate research student. In addition, this system is employed to quality assure all external research and innovation proposals being submitted to external funding bodies. In summary:

- Oversight and formal sign off by the postgraduate research student, supervisory team and the academic school graduate research programme board concerning the annual progress monitoring of the student is managed through the on line SmartSimple system.

- Oversight and formal institutional sign off, by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies, of all external research and innovation funding applications prior to submission. This ensures that all submitted proposals are aligned with best practice and allows effective management of institutional resources.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office implements the quality assurance policy and procedures related to Research Centre designations. Research Centres and Groups are required to submit an annual report to the Research and Graduate Studies Office.

Professional Support Units (Student Services, International Office, etc.) complete quality assurance and enhancement monitoring of their services annually and produce annual report(s). See AQR Part B for monitoring activities during the reporting period 2021/2022.

## Periodic Review

All academic programmes are subject to a five-yearly review which is managed by the Registrar's Office.

The Programmatic Review is a School-based activity involving two stages:

- School self-study, involving a review and evaluation of all activities within the School (strategy, learning, teaching, assessment, resources, etc.) with reference to an extensive consultation exercise. This includes an external scan of the changing needs of society and industry, relevant internal statistics (e.g. student intake, progression, etc.) and feedback from both internal and external stakeholders (including students and graduates).
- Review and re-validation of all academic programmes.

A number of programmes of study within DkIT are accredited by external Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The programmes are required to undergo regular reviews to retain accreditation status (see cross reference to Section 2.1 Programme Development and Approval).

Policies and criteria for the review of programmes for School programmatic reviews are available at <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) (latest policy and criteria relates to the most recent Programmatic Review cycle in 2018/2019).

DkIT conducts periodic postgraduate research quality reviews in accordance with the DCU-DkIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal reviews (see Figure 2). The quality review focusses on the effectiveness of the partnership, and is an assurance of the quality of postgraduate research (PGR) provision for DCU accredited research programmes. The quality review is carried out by Dublin City University (DCU) as an internal cyclical review in line with existing procedures established for DCU

quality reviews and aligned to the QQI guidelines and policy where appropriate. Also, designated Research Centres within DkIT undergo an external review every three years to retain their designation status. These reviews are co-ordinated by Research and Graduate Studies Office.

Finally, Professional Support Units (Student Services, International Office, etc.) quality reviews take place every five years as indicated in the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal reviews (see Figure 2).

## Cyclical External Quality Assurance

As a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), DkIT is required to undergo a Cyclical Institutional Review (CINTE Review, <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Institutional-Reviews07.aspx>). The review evaluates the effectiveness of institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the education, training, research and related services provided by a Higher Education Institution (HEI). The review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the ESG (2015) and consists of the following elements:

- The publication of terms of reference by QQI;
- The preparation of an Institution Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);
- An external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers appointed by QQI;
- The publication of a panel review report including findings and recommendations;
- A follow-up procedure to review the actions taken.

DkIT completed an Institutional Review in the academic year 2018/2019 (<https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews>), the previous review having been carried out in 2008/2009.

See AQR Part B for periodic review activities during the reporting period 2021/2022 (if applicable).

**Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period:** No.

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	13
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	3

#### School of Business and Humanities

<b>1. Type of arrangement</b>	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU (Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care
Date of accreditation or last review	02/03/2022 (Date of Last Review: Not applicable)
Date of next review	2027

<b>2. Type of arrangement</b>	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	22/05/2022 (Date of Last Review: 2016)
Date of next review	2027

<b>3. Type of arrangement</b>	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Analytics ( <a href="https://ioaglobal.org/">https://ioaglobal.org/</a> )
Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Data Analytics for Business

Date of accreditation or last review	18/03/2022 (Date of Last Review: Not applicable)
Date of next review	2027

## School of Health and Science

<b>4. Type of arrangement</b>	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery, Higher Diploma in Midwifery, Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Management of Aggression and Violence.
Date of accreditation or last review	20/06/2022 (Date of Last Review: 2021)
Date of next review	2026

<b>5. Type of arrangement</b>	PRSB
Name of body:	Department of Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies.
Date of accreditation or last review	23/05/2022 (Date of Last Review: 2022)
Date of next review	Not applicable; resubmission required if significant changes made to the curriculum.

<b>6. Type of arrangement</b>	PRSB
Name of body:	IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health) ( <a href="https://iosh.com/">https://iosh.com/</a> )
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Health and Safety (Manufacturing industry)
Date of accreditation or last review	17/05/2022 (Date of Last Review: Not applicable)
Date of next review	17/05/2027

## School of Engineering

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering Mechanical Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Systems Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	January 2022 (Date of Last Review: )
Date of next review	2 Year extension granted to January 2024.

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

### Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines **collaborative provision** as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**joint award**' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**linked provider**' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

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

1. Collaborative provision	Not applicable for the reporting period 2021/2022, no new collaborations, or updates to existing collaborations.
Name of body (/bodies):	
Programme titles and links to publications	

Date of last review	
Date of next review	

### 9.3 Articulation Agreements

**Definition:**

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an **articulation agreement** may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	31
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<b>1. Articulation agreement:</b>	
Name of body (/bodies):	University of The Mayab, Mexico
Programme titles and links to publications	Not available
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	20/06/2022
Date of next review	20/06/2027
Detail of the agreement	Articulation arrangement (MOU).



[Higher Education Institution]

2023

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**Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

## PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

### Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement advices, or to Cinnte review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact<sup>2</sup> of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

**Section 1** pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

**Section 2** considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

**Section 3** relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

**Section 4** provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

#### Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

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<sup>2</sup> The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

# 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

## 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) (see AQR Part A) continues to support the Institute's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan 2020-2023 (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>) was in effect during the reporting period 2021/2022. The current strategic plan was informed by the AMBITION Planning Framework (see AQR 2018/2019). The strategic plan is aligned to the Institute's Mission-Based Performance Compact 2018-2021 between Dundalk Institute of Technology and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (<https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/dundalk-institute-of-technology/performance/>).

### 1.1.1 QQI Periodic Quality Dialogue

As part of the external quality assurance framework in Ireland, QQI engages in periodic Quality Dialogue Meetings (QDMs) with Ireland's publicly-regulated higher education institutions. Dialogue meetings form part of the external quality assurance (QA) framework in Ireland and provide an opportunity for QQI to discuss with each institution internal and strategic developments in relation to quality assurance and enhancement. The QQI Annual Periodic Dialogue (part of the Institute's Quality Framework) Meeting took place on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Strategic Updates from Dundalk IT**
3. **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**
  - a. Summary update and discussion on the AQR, 2020/21
  - b. Linked providers, articulation agreements, collaborations
4. **Strategic Updates and activities from QQI:**
  - a. QQI's Statement of Strategy, 2022-24.
  - b. Review of Consortia-led Apprenticeship - Action Plan, 2021-25
  - c. Evaluation of the comparability of the Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate qualifications
  - d. International Education (i.e. IEM)
  - e. QQI/HEA Interim MOU (to include update on NFDE, NStEP)
  - f. Regulatory framework for Academic Integrity
  - g. Qualifications:

- Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ)
  - Non-major awards
  - Listed Awarding Bodies (LABs)
- h. QQI 10 Year Anniversary: series of events planned:
- Anniversary Conference 2022 October 18 & 19 2022 Croke Park
  - A Focus on the Programme - HEIs and PSRBs Event
- i. Commence the establishment of the Irish Quality and Qualifications Forum (IQQF) to support system level strategic discussions and engagements.

## 5. Any Other Business

The following sections provide an update on quality assurance developments that occurred during the reporting period 2021/2022 which are aligned with the Institute's strategic objectives. This includes:

- Changes to Academic Quality Governance;
- Changes to Policies and Procedures;
- Programme Development and Approval;
- Programme Changes;
- Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Activities and Developments;
- Professional Support Unit (Library) Activities and Developments;
- Research Activities and Development;
- Athena Swan Activities and Developments;
- Entrepreneurship and External Engagement Activities and Developments;
- Professional Support Unit (International Office) Activities and Developments.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose some difficulties, albeit much reduced, to the normal operation of the Institute's activities and the quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) system. The QAE system was again robust enough to allow the Institute to continue to provide a quality service to all students. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic (taught and research) and professional support units (student services, etc.) are included, if applicable, in the sections below.

### 1.1.2 Changes to Academic Quality Governance

The Academic Development and Planning (ADP) sub-committee of the Academic Council was established during the reporting period 2021/2022 (Academic Council Meeting No. 179, Motion 179.02, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022). The purpose of the sub-committee is to bring a strategic focus and oversight to the development of the Institute's academic portfolio, leading to awards permissible in DkIT as a Designated Awarding Body (DAB). The sub-committee was established in the context of the Academic Council being appointed by the Governing Body to inter alia "*assist it in the planning, development and overseeing of the educational work of the college*". In particular, it has a key function "*to design, develop*

*and assist in implementing courses of study consistent with the functions of the college*” (cross reference to Part A, Section 1.1.3 Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System).

The terms of reference of the sub-committee is as follows:

1. To bring an Institute-wide strategic focus to the design and development of the academic portfolio of programmes, in the full range of delivery modes (full-time, part-time, blended and on-line).
2. To oversee new programme development by evaluating and making recommendations on Stage 1 proposals (as defined in the Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes).
3. To keep under review, advise and make recommendations to the Academic Council on the development, monitoring and enhancement of collaborative provision in line with the Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards.
4. To make proposals regarding programme structures.
5. To plan and make policy recommendations for programmatic reviews.

The Terms of Reference of the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) of the Academic Council were amended (cross reference to Section 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes).

### **1.1.3 Changes to Policies and Procedures**

Changes to policies and procedures in the reporting period 2021/2022 were described in the AQR Part A (Internal QA System). See AQR Part B, Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule for meeting schedules and a summary of items that were addressed by the Institute’s various governance structures (in addition to amendments to policies and procedures included in AQR Part A).

### **1.1.4 Programme Development and Approval**

DKIT carried out an exercise in Programmatic Portfolio Planning for the period 2018 to 2028. The programme portfolio planning for the period 2018 to 2028 was reported in the AQR for the reporting period 2018/2019. The Institute continued with its programme portfolio implementation during the reporting period 2021/2022 (with amendments being made as appropriate). The ongoing development of the programme portfolio supports the delivery of the DkIT strategic goals of providing a career-oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise.

Programme validations/reviews continued to operate effectively remotely, using web conferencing software (Microsoft Teams (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ie/microsoft-teams/log-in>) and/or Zoom

(<https://zoom.us/>)) during the reporting period 2021/2022. Schools continued to innovate using technology to support programme proposals. For example, video was employed to provide virtual tours of programme resources (campus locations and equipment). The Registrar's Office continued to observe an increase in the availability of Panel members, both academic and industry representatives, particularly international Panel members, when web conferencing platforms continued to be utilised.

## New Programme Validations

The following new programme validations were completed during the reporting period 2021/2022:

Validation Type	Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS
New Programme	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work</i>	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240
New Programme	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Applied Youth Work (Exit Award)</i>	7	Major	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	180
New Programme	<i>Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Youth Studies (Exit Award)</i>	6	Major	Higher Certificate	120
New Programme	<i>Diploma in Operational Excellence for Supply Chain Management</i>	7	Special-Purpose	Diploma	60
New Programme	<i>Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering</i>	9	Major	Masters Degree	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (Exit Award)</i>	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Mechanical Engineering (Exit Award)</i>	9	Minor	Postgraduate Certificate	30
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Agri-Analytics</i>	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Advanced Comprehensive Health Assessment for Midwives</i>	9	Special-Purpose	Certificate	10
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Newborn Clinical Examination (VALIDATION EVENT TOOK PLACE, PROCESS COMPLETED IN 2022/2023)</i>	9	Special-Purpose	Certificate	10

New Programme	<i>Higher Diploma in Arts in Teaching in Early Learning and Care for the FET Sector (VALIDATION EVENT TOOK PLACE, PROCESS COMPLETED IN 2022/2023)</i>	8	Major	Higher Diploma	60
New Programme	<i>Certificate in School Age Childcare (VALIDATION EVENT TOOK PLACE, PROCESS COMPLETED IN 2022/2023)</i>	7	Special-Purpose	Certificate	20
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Audio-Visual Production for Online Platforms</i>	6	Minor	Certificate	30
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Fundamentals of Blockchain</i>	6	Special Purpose	Certificate	10
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Data Analytics (Structured)</i>	9	Major	Masters Degree	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Science in Data Analytics (Exit Award), (Entry Award)</i>	9	Minor	Postgraduate Certificate	30
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Computing in Medical Device Software Engineering</i>	9	Major	Masters Degree	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Science in Medical Device Software Engineering</i>	9	Minor	Postgraduate Certificate	30
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Games and Extended Reality</i>	9	Major	Masters Degree	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Games and Extended Reality (Exit Award)</i>	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Computer Animation</i>	9	Major	Masters Degree	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Computer Animation (Exit Award)</i>	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60

### Differential Validation(s)

A differential validation refers to the validation of a programme that is based on, or a modification or extension of, an existing DkIT validated programme. The validation of the original programme can inform the validation of the derived programme and this can simplify the validation process for the derived programme.

The Registrar's Office observed an increase in the number of differential validations extending existing programme provision to incorporate blended and/or online delivery modes (indicated with a \* in the table below), in accordance with DkIT Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (where programme development teams were required to specifically address the additional requirements of blended and online learning, an approach which is aligned to that adopted by QQI (i.e. programme validation pilots for online delivery and the augmentation of the extension of the statutory QA Guidelines for Blended Learning to include fully online programmes).

The following differential validations were completed during the reporting period 2021/2022:

Validation Type	Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS
Differential	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies (VALIDATION EVENT TOOK PLACE, PROCESS COMPLETED IN 2022/2023)</i>	7	Major	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	180
Differential	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Leadership and Management for the Early Years Sector (VALIDATION EVENT TOOK PLACE, PROCESS COMPLETED IN 2022/2023)</i>	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	60
Differential	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies (VALIDATION EVENT TOOK PLACE, PROCESS COMPLETED IN 2022/2023)</i>	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240
Differential	<i>Certificate in Sound Design and Implementation for Interactive Media</i>	7	Minor	Certificate	40
Differential	<i>Higher Diploma in Science in Computing</i>	8	Major	Higher Diploma	60
Differential	<i>Certificate in Programming</i>	6	Minor	Certificate	20
Differential	<i>Certificate in Networking and System Administration</i>	6	Minor	Certificate	20
Differential	<i>Certificate in 2D/3D Animation Production</i>	7	Minor	Certificate	40

### Module Validation(s)

Where validation of an individual module is required, the module descriptor is sent to an External Expert for review (in accordance with DkIT's Design and Approval of Programmes). The following module validations were completed during the reporting period 2021/2022:



Module Title	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits	External Expert
Secure Systems	8	5	Mr Gary Clynych, Senior Lecturer in Computing, Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin).
<b>Note(s)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) proposed a change to a Year 4 module, Secure Systems (COMP I8029), on the programme Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Software Development. The proposed change was considered by the Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) of the Academic Council (13th January 2022) and it was determined that the module be reviewed by an External Expert (in accordance with the DkIT's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes). When the module was initially developed as part of the Programmatic Review in 2018/20219 it included Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs) which could not be achieved due to students not having the required pre-requisite knowledge. The module was amended with two key changes to the Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs). Module indicative content was also updated as appropriate.</li> </ul>			

## Programme Accreditations

**Note:** Cross reference with Section 9.0: Details of Arrangements with Third Parties)

Programme(s)	Body	Description
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care	CORU (Regulating Health & Social Care Professionals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accreditation confirmed to DkIT on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022.</li> <li>Going forward, graduates of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care will be able to apply directly, via their programme of education, for direct entry onto the register of Social Care workers in Ireland.</li> </ul>
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance	Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants (ACCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-accreditation confirmed to DkIT on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022.</li> <li>The re-accreditation by the ACCA, a global body for professional accountants, comes with exemptions for up to nine</li> </ul>

		papers - the maximum available for any undergraduate degree internationally. The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance also receives exemptions from other major Accounting Bodies, ACA, CPA AND CIMA.
Certificate in Health and Safety (Manufacturing industry)	IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health)- <a href="https://iosh.com/">https://iosh.com/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IOSH accreditation agreement, following confirmation of approval by the IOSH, was signed by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022.</li> </ul>
(update from previous reporting period) Undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes (Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery, Higher Diploma in Midwifery, Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Management of Aggression and Violence).	NMBI (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NMBI carried out its five yearly site inspection of the undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes in the reporting period 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. Continued approval was confirmed on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.</li> </ul>
(update from previous reporting period) Early Childhood Studies programmes. (Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies).	Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional accreditation (Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines (PACG) for Initial Professional Education (Level 7 and Level 8) Degree Programmes for the Early Learning and Care (ELC) Sector in Ireland) was confirmed for the programmes by the Qualifications Advisory Board (Department of Education and Skills) on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022.</li> </ul>

Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Data Analytics for Business	Institute of Analytics ( <a href="https://ioaglobal.org/">https://ioaglobal.org/</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accreditation confirmed to DkIT on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022.</li> </ul>
NFQ Level 7 programmes in Electronic, Mechanical and Civil Engineering.	Engineers Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accreditation confirmed to DkIT in 2021/2022.</li> </ul>

## Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery

The Institute approved a number of venues for off-campus programme delivery (in line with Institute strategic objectives):

Off-Site Location	Delivery Of	Date of Site Visit	Approval
COMBILIFT ( <a href="https://combilift.com/">https://combilift.com/</a> ) Annahagh, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan, H18 VP65.	<i>Certificate in Lean Six Sigma (Green Belt)</i>	14th October 2021	Academic Council (Meeting No. 178), 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2021.
Grant Engineering Ireland ULC ( <a href="https://grantengineering.ie/">https://grantengineering.ie/</a> ) Crinkle, Birr, Co Offaly, R42 D788.	<i>Heat Pump Installer</i>  (Note: Module, 5 ECTS credits)	21st March 2022	Academic Council (Meeting No. 180), 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Programme Validation Panel Reports with School responses for each validation can be viewed at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/approval-programmes>.

Changes to entry requirements for the following programmes were approved (specific requests to Academic Council separate from programme validations):

- Certificate in Adult Respiratory Nursing Practice (DK\_NNARN\_9) and Certificate in Contemporary Palliative Care Practice (DK\_NNCPC\_8) in the School of Health and Science (Academic Council Meeting No. 178, Motion 178.05, 10th December 2021).

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Advanced Veterinary Nursing in the School of Health and Science (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.08, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022). The Department of Agriculture, Food and Animal Health has established an articulation with Cork College of FET for the progression of their graduates DkIT's add-on NFQ Level 8 programme. This change provided an additional pathway for prospective student into this programme.
- All NFQ Level 8 programme. Removal of the minimum points score of 300 for programme entry effective for the commencement of the academic year 2022/2023 (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.07, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022). A review to be carried out after pilot period of five years.

The undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes were validated during the 2017/2018 academic year in DkIT and also by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI; regulatory body for nursing and midwifery programmes) due to new Standards and Requirements (NMBI 2016) that applied at that time. The other programmes in the School of Health and Science were validated as part of the Programmatic Review in 2018/2019. In May 2021, the undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes were approved for five years by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland following a site inspection (part of the accreditation process). Approval was sought by the school and granted by Council to extend the programme validations for one year for the undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes in the School of Health and Science (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.08, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

### 1.1.5 Programme Changes

Programme changes are considered by the Programme Evaluation Sub-committee of the Academic Council as part of the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement annual monitoring activities. There were seven meetings of the Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) of the Academic Council in the reporting period 2021/2022, five normal meetings and two special meetings (See AQR Part B, Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule). Submissions were assessed by PEC during the reporting period 2021/2022 and were classified as "Minor", "Structural" or "Major" changes in accordance with DkIT's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes. Minor changes did not affect the programme learning outcomes of a programme and were approved by PEC. Structural changes that do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes are required to undergo a differential validation. Major changes that change a programmes learning outcomes must undergo a full (re) validation.

PEC also further reviewed exceptional changes that were made to programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic (see AQR 2022 for further historical perspective). Departments made changes to programmes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the academic year 2020/2021 and changes were approved for the academic year 2020/2021 only (alternative assessments were approved during semester 2 2019/2020 when the pandemic commenced, an emergency exceptional situation). It was

agreed that the changes to programmes would revert back as per the programme validation Approved Programme Schedule (APS) for 2021/2022. As a result of an ever changing environment at that time, and in an effort to better support students, it was agreed that Departments would be given the option of retaining previously approved programme change(s) for the academic year 2021/2022. PEC considered, as a single submission by Departments (on a module by module basis, “Yes” to revert the change made (the default) and “No” to retain the change), and approved any such changes on the 17th September 2021 (with the item having been tabled initially and discussed at the PEC meeting of the 11th June 2021).

### **1.1.6 Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Activities and Developments**

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in Student Services for the reporting period 2021-2022.

#### **Access Service**

##### **HEAR Scheme**

The Access Office has signed an MOU with Inspire Mentoring and will be the liaison between this social enterprise and HEAR students. This offers an opportunity for DkIT HEAR students to avail of professional one-to-one mentoring opportunities at no cost to the student. This opportunity will be offered to all students who were HEAR eligible (i.e. not just those who required the reduced points offered by HEAR to get an offer of a place in DkIT).

##### **We Are Here HEAR Launch and Exhibition (WAHH)**

The WAHH exhibition was hosted on the DkIT campus for a week in May 2022. The exhibition launch was an opportunity for relevant organisations to meet on campus and to discuss future supports for those who are refugees, migrants and in the protection system. This dialogue is ongoing.

##### **Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme**

The first sanctuary scholarship was awarded in academic year 2021/2022 and following promotion of the scheme there was an increase in the number of applications to the scheme over the summer of 2022.

##### **Development of the Bernard Duffy Scholarship**

The Access Officer dealt with legal and financial aspects of transferring the bequest in the will of Ms Arabella Jane Duffy into the Bernard Duffy Scholarship.

### **Launch of Kickstart Scholarship**

This is a MEND initiative in cooperation with the Probation Service and supported by the Irish Prison Service, to support persons with a criminal justice history who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to access Higher Education (HE). For 2022/23, the scheme will be open to new undergraduates who have either commenced third level education in September 2022 for the first time OR are currently third level students in one of these four MEND Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It is intended that the scholarship will fund the entire duration of a student's programme of study or the remaining years of their programme of study, whichever one applies.

### **PATH 2 (1916 Bursary Programme)**

The Access Officer is the DkIT representative on the MEND group that has responsibility for rolling out the scholarship in the four higher education institutions. This year the move to a three-tier bursary system has significantly increased the number of bursary recipients. These students face multiple facets of disadvantage and the Access Office is their first point of contact for support. The Access Officer meets with each bursary recipient at least once per semester however in the case of many of these students there is an ongoing dialogue and interaction around supporting their needs. Many of these students are dealing with difficult life situations external to DkIT and it is a challenge for some of them to maintain their academic studies.

### **PATH 3 (College Connect)**

A Community Connector was recruited in February. This has enabled the development of outreach work with new partners and organisations. Work over the past academic year has included: involvement in community needs analysis, extensive reporting on mentoring, pathways, different funding streams within the project, collaboration on reports to the HEA,

### **Once-Off COVID-19 Contingency Fund**

The HEA made this funding available again and DkIT received a substantial level of funding. The Access Office managed this Fund and used it as follows:

- Online tutorials for 5th and 6th year students in 12 DEIS schools in the region;
- Covid-19 Contingency Scholarships for a number of DkIT students;
- Interactive screens on campus, connected to the Student Hub;
- Autism-friendly acoustic pods ("Hush Pods").

### **Travellers in Education**

The Dormant Accounts -Travellers in Education funding stream was also renewed by the HEA. The Access Office has used the funding as follows:

IT equipment for students from the Traveller community in many second level schools in the region Whidden Workshops (in cooperation with our MEND partners).

## Disability Service

### Autism Friendly Institute

The Autism Friendly pilot progressed to include the development of the DkIT Autism and Uni website. The Institute committed to begin the process of gaining ASD Friendly university badge from AsIAM. A Service Level Agreement has been signed and will be progressed over the next 3 years.

### Assistive Technology

The Assistive Technology Room is fully operational and students can avail of training and access to the space to study in a quiet environment.

### Campus Facility Audits

The Sensory Audit is complete and the Accessibility Audit is underway and will be completed by year-end.

In the reporting period 2021/2022 the following types of disability were supported (previous periods provided for comparison):

<b>Breakdown of Types of Disability Supported</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
ADD/ADHD	19	12	6
Autism Spectrum Disorder (Including Asperger's Syndrome)	32	23	24
Blind/Visual Imp	4	3	3
Deaf/Hearing	4	4	4
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) Dyspraxia	31	33	26
Mental Health Condition	22	28	24
Neurological Condition including Speech and Language Dif.	22	20	14
Physical Disability	14	13	16
Significant On-going Illness	25	31	33
Specific Learning Difficulty	120	107	111
Other incl. General / Mild / Borderline Learning Difficulty	7	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>261</b>

## Careers and Employability Service

DkIT's Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) works to ensure that graduates of DkIT are self-aware, self-resourceful and work ready. To achieve this, the Centre work with students from first year through to graduation in the area of Career Development support and Student Work Placement. The Centre provides support and informs the employability agenda of DkIT through their work in industry partnerships, research, resource development and participating in local and national employability networks.

Whilst the virtual approach to employer engagement events remained in Semester 1 of the reporting period, there was more on-campus activity in Semester 2 of the reporting period, resulting in "Meet the Employer" sessions and the Informatics and Creative Arts "Tech Pitch and Meet" event which was hosted onsite in May 2022. One-to one appointments remained consistently strong, with a total of 430 careers and 399 placement 1-to-1 appointments facilitated (a slight increase on 2020/21 - 412, 349 respectively). Engagement with our DkIT Careers Connect platform (<https://careersconnect.dkit.ie/>) particularly for accessing live jobs and graduate programmes remains a major challenge. Increasing student engagement and awareness is a continued priority for our operational plan and our employability objectives.

## Moodle VLE

The Student Support Hub on Moodle was further embedded as the primary platform to host all careers information and resources. This was the first full academic year (the reporting period 2021/2022) where the Hub was fully operational and accessible. In addition to an extensive career toolkit new resources were added including: recordings of Employer Presentations, Quick Link to the Shortlist Me Video Interviewing practice platform. Between September 2021 and June 2022, the Careers Hub received a total of 10,282 logs, of which 7,524 were students. The peak months for usage were November 2021 (2006 total, 1039 students), February 2022 (2006 total, 1039 students) and March 2022 (2054 total, 1312 students). These figures illustrate that the Moodle VLE continues to be used as the main platform to manage the work placement process - hosting all relevant documentation, class notes and resources, advertising placement opportunities, uploading of student administrative and academic documentation. Student Appointments - all student appointments were offered in person, using conferencing software (Microsoft Teams) or phone. In total the Centre facilitated 430 appointments, a slight increase on the 412 of the previous year.



## **Job Opportunities / Graduate Programmes**

A total of 873 positions were advertised in the academic year 2021/2022 on DkIT Careers Connect, by separate 431 companies, this is an increase of 31% on the previous year's 604 positions advertised by 337 companies. Whilst the number of opportunities are very strong, student engagement on jobs portal is low.

## **Social Media and Communications**

The Centre has been increasingly proactive in using both the wider Student Services and the Centre's own pages. The Centre saw most student engagement on our Instagram page and dedicated LinkedIn page.

## **Virtual Careers Series October 2021**

Eight separate sector specific employability events (virtual online series) were hosted over 2021 with Fifty one companies engaged, one hundred and thirty two guest speakers and 1,192 student registrations. Eight Industry Themes included: Business & Finance, Business & Retail, Hospitality & Tourism, Engineering, Built Environment, Health & Social Science, Science & Agriculture, IT & Technology.

## **Specialist Panel Discussion - for Creative Media**

An event, for the second consecutive year, our creative students who tend to be under-represented at the Careers Fair were provided with a dedicated employability event. "Carving your Careers in Creative Industry with Panel of 5 Speakers including 4 Alumni and Artist in Residence with Creative Spark (DkIT Corporate Partner). The event was well received by employers with 100% rating the event as a whole as either excellent (31%) or good (69%). The Centre asked employers preference for the type of Careers Fair in the coming academic year and the top two preferences were - On Campus Industry Wide Fair (58%), Themed Industry Event per discipline (69%).

## **Meet the Employer Series**

Building on the pilot year in the previous reporting period, the Centre saw an increase in employer engagement, with fourteen companies between November 2020 to May 2021 engaged with DkIT staff and student on virtual "meet the employer" events including Control Soft, KLA, GrantThornton, ER&M, Trailstone, ScottMurphy, Norbrook, Bright SP, Peter McVerry, Sabis, BarOne Racing, BearingPoint.

The majority of these presentations took place via web conferencing (MS Teams), and the recording was made available to students on demand via the Moodle VLE.

### **Technology Pitch and Meet Event May 2022**

Hosted by Careers and Employability in conjunction with School of Informatics and Creative Arts. DkIT's "Pitch and Meet Tech Event" is an interactive, on-campus opportunity for Tech employers and DkIT students to showcase their graduate potential. Eight companies in total including Boston Scientific, Intact, Prometric, First Derivatives, AWS, Google, Microsoft and Regional Development Centre (RDC) companies. The event has 3 main elements:

- **Students and Staff Pitch:** Final year students from our programmes in Informatics & Creative Arts School showcase their degree programme and it's key features to employers, and staff update on programme developments.
- **Employers Pitch:** Employers showcase their companies and graduate opportunities to DkIT IT & Computing students
- **Networking:** Opportunity for employers and students meet each at Employer Stands, and discuss opportunities further.

### **Targeted Suite of Career Readiness Workshops (Penultimate Year and Final Year Students).**

The Centre circulated a survey (using MS Forms) to Programme Directors across all the four Schools asking them to indicate their interest and class availability. Eighteen sessions across all schools ran in Semester 2 of the reporting period from February to April 2022.

### **Graduate Outcomes Survey for the 2020 Cohort**

The Careers and Employability Centre conducted their Annual Survey between June and July 2021. Below are the key data points:

- Response rate of 51.2%, up slightly from 50.4% in 2019
- Principal Economic Status:
  - Working full-time 66.36 % (359) a 4% decrease on 2019 figures 70.06% (358);
  - Working part-time 9.61% (52) a 2% increase on 2019 figures 7.44% (38);
  - Due to start a job in the next 3 months 3.51% (19) compared to 1.17% (6) in 2019;
  - Engaged in full-time further study or training 6.65% (36), which is a 3% growth from 3.91% (20) in 2019;

- Engaged in part-time further study or training 1.29% (7), a small increase from 2019 graduates - 0.39% (2);
- Other Activity 1.85% (10) v's 2.74% (14)
- Average Salary €29,001, an upwards trend from €28, 132, this trend which was all experienced nationally.
- 88.2% of graduates employed within the region, similar to the 2019 figure of 87.5%.

The decrease in full-time employment and increase in full time study in the 2020 graduate cohort could be connected to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market in COVID vulnerable industry areas, and the level of graduate confidence in enhancing their qualifications with further post graduate study. Securing employment within the region is a sustained preference for the of the DKIT graduate.

### **Student Work Placement**

The academic year 2021-2022 saw 804 students across thirty four undergraduate programmes of study prepared for work placement. This is an increase on the numbers prepared in 2020-2021 (716) and the first time DkIT has reached over 800 placements. This is due to the fact that the numbers of programmes with undergraduate placement has increased. A minimum of 31 additional students due to go on placement either withdrew from their programme or deferred their placement.

- The School of Health and Science supplies the largest number of student placements, with 39.4% (316 students) of total student placements at DkIT. This is followed by the School of Business & Humanities with 28.3% (227 students) of total student placements at DkIT.
- The School of Informatics and Creative Arts saw 137 student placements representing 17.1% of total DkIT student placements. This is an increase on 2020-2021 where 69 students were placed. This is due to new programmes in BSc in Music and Audio Production Level 7 and Level 8 and the fact that the Bachelor of Arts in Film and TV production changed the timing of their placement from Year 4 to Year 3 meaning there were double the number of students from the programme on placement. Placements in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts will continue to increase in the next two years with several new placement programmes coming on board including and Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Immersive Technologies and Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mathematics and Data Science. These new programmes reflect business needs of the workplace as it becomes more tech-driven and fast paced, and skills needed for data analysis are going to play an increasing role in business.
- The School of Engineering saw 123 students prepared for placement, making up 15.3% of the total DkIT placement numbers.

## **Counselling Service**

The main focus of the service in the reporting period 2021/2022 was in supporting students on their return to campus after almost two years (after the COVID-19 pandemic). This was considered a priority given the extent of online fatigue that was evident amongst the student population. While the counselling service continued to offer a hybrid model in relation to sessions only 16% of sessions were delivered online in 2021/2022 compared with 93% in 2020/2021. There was a significant increase in demand with significant presentations of post pandemic anxiety and social anxiety as a result of prolonged periods of lock down. As predicted there was an increased representation from second years who were on campus for the first time.

As Chair of PCHEI the counselling service were successful in negotiating Mental Health and Well-being funding totalling €113,000 which allowed the Service to maintain Educational Psychology provision as well as increasing counsellor availability. The Service were thus able to deal with the increased demand without a waiting list except for a few weeks at the end of first semester.

## **Appointment of Educational Psychologist**

Using the HEA funding allocation DkIT appointed an Educational Psychologist and it was so successful and the demand was such that this post was maintained. Many students particularly mature students have undiagnosed learning difficulties which means they struggle to cope with academic work, which leads to increased levels of stress and a risk of dropping out. Psychological assessment is difficult and very expensive to access. Having this service available on campus and with the capacity to provide ongoing support as well as assessment it is anticipated that this will have a significant impact on academic outcomes and retention.

This year saw a further increase in those students querying whether they had ADHD, some of this generated by Tik Tok videos on self-diagnosis but there is also a greater recognition of this in adults. To address the misinformation in relation to ADHD a workshop was held for students and staff. 26 students were seen in all and had a total of 62 sessions because as well as providing assessments the Educational Psychologist also helps advise on interventions which has been hugely beneficial to our students.

## **Promoting Consent and Ending Sexual Violence**

The Student Counselling Service coordinated the following:

- Bystander 15 minutes as part of Induction;
- Trinity College Disclosure Training for Staff;

- Social Media Campaign around Bystander;
- Bystander Training - Four Modules offered to all staff and students with 38 signing up to training;
- Bi-monthly Framework Meetings;
- Social Media campaign by Student Services and Marketing around Speak out Tool;
- Information to Staff - 4 sessions provided in Semester 2 of the report period;
- Cultural Change - Began the process of meetings with Schools around Consent and Bystander;
- Attendance at Academic Heads Forum, to begin to embed the concepts of ESV;
- Launch of Speak Out Tool;

DKIT has lead in the development of the “Speak Out” tool which was officially launched on the 19th October 2021. This is an anonymous reporting tool for staff and students to speak out about harassment sexual bullying and discrimination and to receive guidance as to the appropriate supports. As well as involvement in the recording of promotional videos the Head of Service in DkIT also chaired the Speak Out Reps Group with representatives from all the colleges involved.

### **Mentoring**

There was a further recruitment for pilot peer mentoring programme on return to campus but engagement was poor and only a small number attended. However there was a panel formed and the offer of a mentor was circulated to first years. There was very limited take-up, symptomatic of the general reduced level of engagement this year. The plan for next year is to roll it out across one complete department - Hospitality. Recruitment and training to begin as soon as students return in September

### **Bibliotherapy**

Some years ago the service developed access to a range of mental health and well-being resources which is maintained on a live link with the DKIT Library. A review of these resources was carried out this year and a number of resources added to address areas that had been neglected in the past

### **Counselling Services Statistics**

A new bespoke CMS system was developed which should be complete by the beginning of the academic year which will streamline reporting and allow more efficient planning and for the first time gather detail on the non-client facing work of the service e.g. staff consultation, dealing with parents, families, meetings, workshops and seminars, case notes and onward referrals. It will also allow us to manage our calendar and booking system more efficiently.

In the reporting period the service moved to a national standardised data set which means that all services are gathering the same information making it easily comparable and from next year (2022/2023) the gathering of national statistics for all counselling services will commence. This will enable DkIT to monitor trends and guide interventions. DkIT prepared a data sharing agreement with WP1 and are part of the first pilot upload of data to the National database.

## Our Clients

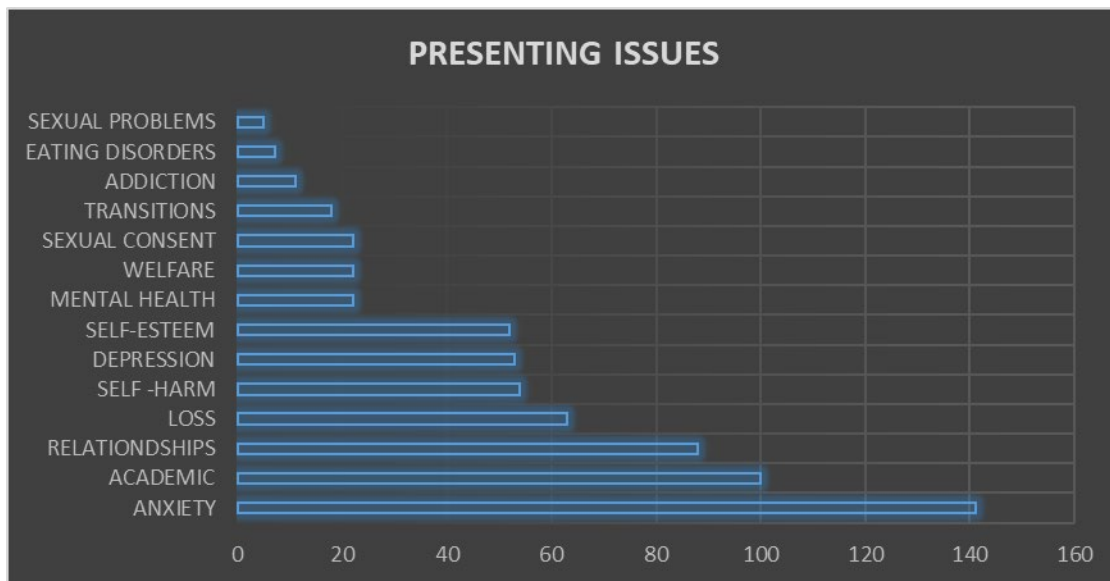
No of clients accessing counselling for the reporting period was 451. As can be seen from the below below this is the highest number of clients DkIT have ever seen and is in line with the expected increase in presentations in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase of 69% mirrors what DkIT are observing nationally with services reporting increases in the range of 50-100%.

17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
345	407	425	312	451

DkIT offered 2066 sessions of counselling in the reporting period 2021/2022 as well as 62 sessions of Ed Psychology meaning that this was the busiest the service has been since its inception. One of the contributors to this increase was a change in practice to offering short 20-30 screening sessions to deal with the increasing numbers presenting to the service with fairly minor issues. These could then be referred to psychoeducation or bibliotherapy and those with more serious issues referred to ongoing therapy. Despite the increase in sessions our DNA rate remains gratifyingly low at 5.7% amongst ongoing clients. However, there were also 14% who did not attend their assessment as well as cancellations running at 11%. Both of these figures are likely to be affected by high rates of COVID-19 infection during the reporting period.

Representation of non-traditional students continues to be quite high and DkIT know from international trends that they were most impacted by the pandemic:

<b>Mature Students</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>21%</b>
International	66	15%
Disabled	76	17%



In line with expectations and international trends anxiety was by far the most common presenting issue during the reporting period. Of concern is the self-harm moving up to the fifth most common presenting issue (the highest position since records began).

The figures above are what clients indicated on their registration forms but at assessment a total of 78 students were assessed as having mild to severe Suicidal Ideation with 15 in the moderate - severe range and 37 were assessed as engaging in self-harm. This demonstrates the importance of the team all having training in the Collaborative Assessment of Suicidality to help address these issues.

In relation to sexual harassment / sexual assault which is of special relevance given the Framework For Consent there were 41 clients in total, 4 indicated they had been raped, 19 were victims of sexual assault, 7 who indicated they had been abused as children and 7 indicated there were issues around consent. This is at considerable variance with the small numbers of reports on Speak Out and indicates there is a lot of work to be done in building trust and visibility.

## Pastoral Care

### International and Erasmus Meet Up

On the 16th of December 2021 Pastoral Care organized a Meet Up for students from the International and Erasmus community. This event was a great success with 45 students in attendance. Free pizza, tea, coffee and snacks were provided for the students along with some festive music and board games. The feedback was very positive and a great way to make new connections.

On the 18th of February 2022 there was a follow up meeting for the International and Erasmus students which was attended by over 50 students. Again free pizza, tea, coffee and snacks were provided to all students. Sports and Societies generously donated a DkIT jumper as a prize for our Last Person Standing Basketball challenge. This was a very successful event once again and provided a space for student's to relax, have fun and make new connection.

### **Day Trips**

**Newgrange:** Pastoral Care supported by Sports and Societies organized a group trip to Newgrange in Co Meath. 22 students joined Pastoral Care and the International Office as they were taken on a guided tour of one of Irelands best known tourist attractions. The weather was fantastic and there was a great energy in the group as they learned about the history of Ireland.

**Glendalough:** On the 20th of June 2022 Pastoral Care organized a group trip to Glendalough for 54 students. The weather was fantastic and there was great excitement for the day ahead. It didn't disappoint. The weather was amazing and the students got to enjoy all Glendalough at to offer. The group then made its way to Johnny Foxes Pub in Glencullen, Co Dublin for a refreshing drink and delicious hearty food. Everybody enjoyed the day. The event was a great success.

**Group Trail Walk The Lumpers:** On the 8th July Pastoral Care organized a group trip to The Lumpers in Ravensdale. 20 students trekked a 10km loop in the mountains. The weather was fantastic accompanied by the enthusiastic of students who were trail walking for the first time.

### **Fundraisers**

#### **Walk for Ukraine**

On the 23rd of March in Pastoral Care in collaboration with Sports and Societies along with the Czech Society organized a "Walk for Ukraine". The aim of this event was to raise funds to support the Red Cross's humanitarian efforts in Ukraine. Over 50 students and staff gathered together outside the canteen and proceeded to walk the perimeter of the football pitches and back into the Main Building where there was Tea/Coffee and treats were for sale. It was a successful event and a total of €1506.21 was raised.

#### **Student Hardship Fund Fundraiser**

On the 7th of April Pastoral Care organized a Student Hardship Fund Fundraiser with particular focus on International Students who don't have access to EU funding. A raffle was organized with some



fantastic prizes including a signed Dundalk jersey. There was some delicious baked goods made by some of the staff of Student Services for sale along with tea and coffee. The event was a great success. Pastoral Care was greatly assisted by placement students in the Sports and Societies office. There was a great buzz around and managed to raise €1067.14 on the day. Catherine Staunton, Ann Marie McHugh and Kate Johnson also raised a superb €727 for the Hardship Fund by taking part in the Ride Dingle event.

### **Food Press**

Pastoral Care created the “Food Press” for the students of DkIT who experience financial difficulties. It provides essential nonperishable food items and essential hygiene products. Donations were received from SuperValu, Fairways, Dundalk and also Lidl kindly donated €100 in food vouchers to contribute to the Food Press. Donations were also received from some students and staff. The Food Press was a relative success and moving forward the plan is to develop it further incorporating assistance from the Student’s Union and Volunteer Society. There is also plans to sign up to Food Cloud which is a system of collecting perishable items from Tesco and Aldi at certain times and distributing the items to student accommodation.

### **End of Year Meet Up**

Pastoral Care organized an End of Year Meet Up for all students in the Snack Box. Free pizza, Tea, Coffee and snacks were provided. Students enjoyed games of pool and table tennis. Good fun was had by all and a great turn out.

### **Health Unit**

This reporting period 2021/2022 saw the welcome return on campus of all students and staff. The Health Unit team played a crucial role during this challenging time in protecting and preventing the spread of COVID-19. In addition to supporting the safe return to campus the Service organized a number of events to increase awareness of the service amongst student with a direct emphasis on health awareness and promotion.

### **Safe Return to Campus**

The service continued to face challenges from COVID-19 such as:

- Adapting to ever-changing guidelines, protocols and algorithms as per HPSC recommendations

- Ongoing prompt communication of updates to our on-campus community.
- Management of each COVID-19 positive student which involved:
  - referral to college doctor when required
  - liaising with each department yet maintaining protection of student identity
  - following advice on current guidelines and symptom control
  - liaising with the international office and addressing issues with student accommodation for this more vulnerable group.
- Organisation of safe staff rostering
- Maintaining our isolation room
- Adjustments to the layout to aid flow when students attending for appointments.
- Effectively responding to outbreaks and liaising with public Health as necessary
- Referral for PCR testing when required and arranging transport to testing centre then providing antigen tests kits guidance on usage and fair distribution of same.
- Inviting students to the walk-in vaccination clinics at various times and arranging transport to venue.

#### **Health Awareness:**

- Student Health unit with the support of Student services team worked on developing the outdoor space near the student services offices at the glass corridor for World Mental Health Day in October. Highlighting the HSE campaign GetPastGrand and painting the four outdoor benches in the colours that represent each department.
- The Health Unit nurses were involved in SHAG and SHIFT weeks along with our student Union members in getting that positive sexual health awareness message to our student group. We had face to face interactions with the students providing them with goodie packs that contained free condoms, information on STI prevention, symptoms, testing and treatment.
- SHU also organised “Body and Soul” week to replace of our annual “Health Fair” due to high numbers of Covid infection within the community and to prevent the invitation of external organisations onto campus. The week began with a walk and talk at the outdoor pitches where Healthy Ireland provided free merchandise. We also provided health bites & recipes from our Hospitality Department for all participants. We tried to focus in on all the various aspects of health and wellbeing including mental & physical health, nutrition & healthy eating tips, fitness exercises &

HIT classes, promoting the HSE QUIT smoking campaigns. The success of the week was greatly enhanced by the assistance from Lorraine Savage, Louth Health Promotion officer and by other student services colleagues particularly the Sports and Societies Officer, the Student Counselling Team, the Pastoral Care Coordinator, the Student Union team & personnel from the Hospitality Department.

- The SHU took part in online video student induction, “Pop Up” induction awareness weeks, the meet and greet at the unit, along with the new signage certainly went a long way in helping our students on campus to locate the Health unit and to become familiar with our service.

## **Health Promotion**

Social media communication strategy was established for student services and the Instagram page was very successful with currently 647 followers. The page was a useful platform for advertising SHU health and wellbeing initiatives and engaging with the students online.

Following our Canva training, we designed posters/social media posts for the calendar of events & the various National Health awareness campaigns. All key events were also posted on the Civic square screen which proved to be another excellent SS resource initiated this academic year.

The display cabinet in our waiting room served to highlight issues such as sugar content in foods and drinks, alcohol drink measurements.

DkIT continued to populate the online Moodle Student support Hub with reliable Health information and resources to help our students with any health concerns.

DkIT’s Students Union put together a short video with direction from the SHU nurses to help ease the anxiety around STI testing for the male and female. This is played in the health promotion screen in the health unit waiting area. Asymptomatic STI screening continued with a great increase in the numbers of students attending. We aim to ensure equitable access in familiar surroundings to our students, which in turn promotes patient comfort and ultimately prevents and reduces the burden of sexually transmitted infections. The SHU were kept very busy keeping our condom dispenser units in stock this academic year.

In addition to HPM digital recording system we invested in phone text facility which really helped communicate with our students that had difficulty getting in touch due to language barriers and hearing difficulties.

## **Sports and Societies**

The 2021/2022 academic year singled a return to normality with students back on campus for the full year. Although some minor restrictions were in place we were still able to return to close to normal level of sporting and society activities.

### **Promoting Wellbeing and Positive Mental Health**

Promoting and supporting wellbeing and mental health is a cornerstone of everything we do in Sports and Societies:

- DkIT returned to in person classes and provided Yoga and Pilates at a minimal cost to staff and students.
- DkIT also linked in strongly with the Pastoral Care Service to organise various walks and activities.
- DkIT organised a body and soul week in partnership with Students Union and members of the Student Services team.
- Organised 'Social on the Square' for first year Induction in partnership with various stakeholders in college.

### **Co-Ordinating and Hosting Events**

- DkIT Dundalk 10k run- We returned to in person event with over 1000 registering. We made donations of €3,500 to Rape Crisis North East and North Louth Hospice. The DkIT Dundalk 10k proved to be very successful.
- Lennon Cup All Stars- Sponsor and host the U-18 GAA schools All Star team- December 2021
- Rugby Future Stars- Sponsor and hosted U-18 Rugby All-star team for boys and girls. March 2022- hosted in conjunction with Leinster Rugby
- Hub for Leinster Rugby North East Squads
- Summer Camp in Partnership with Access Office and Tusla
- Tackling the Classroom Rugby summer camp
- Hosted Leinster Rugby Team session in DkIT Sport

## Enhancing Student Engagement

Increasing student engagement is something we are continually working on. Due to some restrictions in place we organised a Sign up Week instead of a Sign Up Day. This was to ensure we complied with guidelines around indoor gatherings. We increased the number of students signed up by 70 from previous year.

<i>Sign up 2020</i>	<i>Sign Up 2021</i>
1506	1575

As part of the Student Services Communications group, the Service was involved in providing Canva training to staff. This has proven very successful with individual services able to produce content for posters and social media.

Achievements:

- Ladies GAA team winning Division 4 HEC League
- Men's Senior GAA team reaching Trench Cup final.
- Men's football team qualifying for Premier Division of Third Level Football
- Men's Basketball team winning Intervarsity Division 2
- Lucas Walford and Jubril Alade making the Colleges All Star team

## Sports Scholarships

We continued with the online application process and numbers were very similar to previous years. We had 130 applications, of which 80 were interviewed in DKIT Sport. We also interviewed a number of applicants online who couldn't attend in person.

Our scholarship students remained integral to the success of our sports teams .One such example was our American Basketball Scholarship students who helped the team win Intervarsity competition for first time in our history.

Regular meetings were held with Sports Scholarship students to ensure both academic progression and sporting commitment.

## Rugby Development Officer

DkIT appointed a part-time Rugby Development Officer who commenced in October 2021. This new position has enhanced the standing of the Rugby Club within the college and has also linked effectively with local community and improved our relationship with Leinster rugby.

### 1.1.7 Professional Support Unit (Library) Activities and Developments

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in DkIT Library for the reporting period 2021-2022:

- The library continued to provide a service throughout the academic year and catered for all users, developing a blended approach during the COVID-19 pandemic by adapting services.
- Introduced a click and collect service, a digital on demand service, a postal service and introduced online information literacy training.
- Developed targeted information literacy training classes for all Schools and general classes on navigating the information landscape.
- Launched an Academic Integrity online resource in the Moodle VLE and introduced a Digital Badge on completion of the module to support Academic Integrity Week and delivered Harvard Referencing lunchtime classes throughout the year to support students.
- Simplified using the library, allowing students to book study spaces and computers themselves.
- Highlighted our collections, actively promoting within library through “Quick Pick” book stands, digital screens and on social media platforms.
- Developed classes and training materials to promote and actively engage users of the library with the vast array of electronic content available on Library databases and electronic journals.
- Involvement with other THEA Libraries to bring IReL publishing deals into the Institute to support Research and Innovation.
- Promoted Open Access Week informing the academic and research community of the benefits of Open Access, using it to share what has been learned with their colleagues and to help initiate a wider participation in academia to make research available free to all.
- Administered Elsevier Read and Publish Agreement Article Processing Charges to enable researchers to use Open Access Publishing routes for Elsevier journals.
- Launched the DKIT Library App allowing users to check books out themselves, search the library catalogue and read library e-books.
- Brought the Library staff out to ‘*Meet and Greet*’ sessions around the Institute campus delivering advice and support about library resources and support for learning and research.

- Ms Nancy Smyth, the Canadian ambassador to Ireland visited the De Chastelain Library to launch *The Thomas D'Arcy McGee Exhibition*. A library guide was created to supplement the exhibition to a wider audience.
- As part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations at DkIT, the De Chastelain Library sourced historical donations to include in the 50 years of RTC and DkIT archives.
- Continued the Library Book Club to promote inclusion among all staff and students and hosted cultural events.
- Continued to offer a space within the library, the Táin Room, to Disability Services for reconfiguration as a low sensory input space for use by students on the autism spectrum.
- Promoted use of Self-Service Kiosk for borrowing and returning.
- Continued to work within the national framework for the supply of all books/journals and e-books.
- Continued to maintain the Library's electronic guides - Libguides - to reflect changes to studying methods, new resources, new programmes and general information. (<https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/homepage>)
- Reviewed and updated Library policies and procedures.
- Continued annual introductory meeting with Student Union (SU) leadership and followed up with regular meetings.
- Library COVID-19 working group ensured that processes and procedures were aligned with government and Institute recommendations.
- Returns Box available at main Whitaker Building entrance when campus was open.
- Free Postal loans/returns introduced.
- Renewed and promoted the online chat service - "Ask A Librarian".
- Extended the range of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) available online (using Springshare LibAnswers software) as a support service in conjunction with the chat service.
- Continued to use the Moodle VLE Library Hub for Library news and delivery of support, including self-paced lessons on Academic Integrity, Referencing and Mendeley.
- Daily monitoring of all e-resources to ensure all working as expected to ensure continuity of access / service.
- Daily monitoring of turn-aways from all e-resources to identify any supply issues and opportunities to access new material.
- Continued to create videos on 'How to ...' to assist readers working remotely and made these available via LibGuides and Moodle VLE sites.
- Hosting online drop-ins for staff and students on topics/supports/issues.
- Wellness zone developed and made available to students during assignments and examination phases.

- De Chastelain Library and Louth County Libraries have a unique agreement which provides reciprocal borrowing and access to their libraries for members. Reciprocal borrowing and access were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. This popular service was resumed and promoted in the community in the reporting period 2021/2022.

### **1.1.8 Research Activities and Developments**

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in postgraduate research for the reporting period 2021-2022.

Further enhancement of the Institute's reputation as one of the leading research-intensive Institutes of Technology. Significant challenges remained in terms of access to research facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However the Institute's research and support community showed their ability to manage the impact of the pandemic on its research activities. The Research and Graduate Studies Office ensured that regular, both formal and informal, contact was maintained with the research community through online discussion groups and formalised meetings. At a high level during this academic year the following key highlights were achieved

- Roll out of COVID-19 Research Relief Fund across institute to the amount of €319,000 secured by the Higher Education Authority.
- Just over €4M in external income received from both national and international funding sources.
- Further enhancement of the DCU DKIT Graduate through increased registrations and research graduations.
- Roll out of structured training programme for all researchers and staff through the Epigeum platform.
- Allocation of Year 1 Technological University Transformation Funding (TUTF) to the tune of €760,000 for further recruitment of 10 PhD researchers and support of 4-6 academic staff members in the completion of their PhD programmes of study.
- Enhanced suite of both online and face to face researcher training modules for both staff and postgraduate research students to develop their transferable skills base.
- Establishment of new research groups in Health and Science and Informatics and Creative Arts.
- 160 peer reviewed research publications (SCOPUS) during the calendar years 2020 and 2021 with an associated citation count of just over 3500 for that two year period.



### 1.1.9 Athena Swan Activities and Developments

DKIT signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter in May 2018 and was awarded an Institutional Bronze award in March 2021 (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/athena-swan-charter.html>). The Athena SWAN Charter (<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/>) recognises commitment to eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff. The assessment process included:

- An assessment of gender equality in the Institute including quantitative and qualitative evidence - identifying both challenges and good practice;
- Preparation of a four-year gender action plan and development of an organisational structure to carry proposed actions forward.

See Section 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR and Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period for actions related to Athena Swan.

### 1.1.10 Entrepreneurship and External Engagement Activities and Developments

#### Regional Development Centre (RDC)

Established in 1989, the RDC was one of the first on-campus business incubator units established on the island and has become a pro-active engine of innovation in the region, building strong relationships and interactions with the community, with entrepreneurs, with SME's and with the various local and State developmental agencies.

As well as supporting indigenous enterprise development the RDC has also been an important vehicle in attracting inward investment to the region. It has achieved this by making available the expertise, facilities and resources of the Institute for the wider benefit of the regional economy through the following range of programmes and activities:

- Research and Development and Technology Transfer;
- Entrepreneurial Development Programmes, generic, and stage and sectoral focused, face to face, hybrid and online delivery experience;
- Student Enterprise support, entrepreneur development programmes and innovation day facilitation;

- Incubation Facilities for Knowledge and Technology-Based Enterprises;
- Managing Applied Research with industry, from small <€5k projects to large scale;
- Sectoral and Regional Development Initiatives in the areas of innovation for SMEs (Small-Medium Sized Enterprises), female entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship, connected health and wellbeing, energy and renewables, clustering, etc.;
- Spearheading and Supporting EU and Cross Border Development Initiatives;
- Networking with Agencies and Organisations at Regional, National and International Level.

The success of the activity emanating out of the RDC has been such that that the original 500m2 facility has been extended on three occasions, 500m2 added in 1992 800m2 in 1997 and a further 750 m2 in 2005 to total 2550 m2 inclusive of meeting and common areas. Office and lab space totals 1330 m2. The RDC currently sits at design stage completion for an additional circa 1110m2 extension to its facility (as of September 2022).

The RDC works closely with the Local Enterprise Offices of Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan supporting them as members of their respective project Evaluation Committees and partnering across national and international projects were appropriate.

DkIT were also a founding member of various industry networks and clustering initiatives in the region and continue to play an active role in the North East Lean Network, the North East Focused Engineering Network (funded through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund 2019), the Fintech Corridor Initiative funded through the Cross Border Intertrade Ireland programme, and the Dundalk Chamber Skillnet currently playing an active role on steering /advisory committees. These networks are key avenues and pipelines of engagement for DkIT.

Staff of the RDC currently hold a number of voluntary directorships supporting economic development in the region from innovation hubs to financial support entities for businesses. The RDC has also ensured DkIT are represented as an active member of the North-East Enterprise Plan to 2020 and currently holding a key membership of the steering and implementation committee in the development of the North East Regional Enterprise Plan 2021- 2024.

## **Incubation**

The academic year 2021/2022 commenced amid a slightly more positive outlook as the economy continued to open up following the COVID-19 pandemic. Occupancy of the Centre continued to grow from the 2020/2021 academic year reaching 100% in March 2022 with over 100 employed by our incubation tenant companies.

In the 2020/2021 academic year the RDC was successful in securing funding from Enterprise Ireland of €146,170 (80% of €182,713 total project costs) for a number of COVID-19 recovery actions during the period such as:

- Updating the Centre Wi-fi;
- Updating the Access Control system;
- Fitting out a Co-Working Room;
- Purchasing equipment for a mobile Zoom Room;
- Purchasing 2 Meeting Pods;
- Providing an Entrepreneur Resilience Programme to Centre clients;
- Providing a Business Resilience Programme for centre clients;
- ICM Salary Support;
- Marketing of the RDC and its activities.

Due to the pandemic work continued during the 2021/2022 academic year and the following aspects of the work programme were completed:

- Marketing of the RDC and its activities, including the development of Louth Meath Hubs (<https://www.louthmeathhubs.ie/>), a collaboration with Creative Spark, The Mill and Ardee Business Park in Louth and Kells and Navan Enterprise Centres in Meath.
- Tender and Installation of New Access Control System throughout the RDC.
- The Business Resilience Programme for centre clients continued during the period.

The Centre offers hot-desking space to start-ups on the New Frontiers Programme (NFP) (<https://www.newfrontiers.ie/>) and also to Spin Ins. This provides a mechanism to create and maintain a pipeline into incubation proper. Over the past few years a number of NFP businesses have also used hot-desking to house DkIT students on placement who have been assigned to work with them. This has proven very beneficial to the start-ups and also animates the unit and Centre.

The RDC provides a range of soft support activities for its clients (internal and external) including:

- Developmental Workshops;
- Networking events;
- Seminars;
- Informational events (to support external agencies);

- Promotional events (promoting the work of the RDC and DkIT);
- Judging Panel members for iBYE competitions, student pitches, etc.

The RDC participated on the judging panel for the Louth Student Enterprise Awards competition for Louth LEO and helped promote Enterprise Ireland's Student entrepreneurship awards with support from some of the schools.

### **Technology Transfer Office**

The RDC also manages the DkIT Technology Transfer Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/rdc-supports/technology-transfer-supports.html>) activities where it works with the various research centres, academic Schools and Departments to develop, review and negotiate various agreements and commercialisation and intellectual property interests of the Institute with external parties.

Twenty one Innovation Voucher projects have been initiated in the reporting period 2021/2022 with twelve claims to Enterprise Ireland. Five applications to the Intertrade Innovation Boost Programme were made during the period and three were successful. However overall this programme has encountered difficulties in attracting candidates for the research roles within the companies. Two consultancy contracts were awarded in the period, one with Freshwater Studies Research Centre and the Regulated Software Research Centre (RSRC).

### **Athena STEM Programme**

The Athena STEM programme was developed to support female entrepreneurs, work returners and career changers to develop leadership and management careers and businesses in the STEM fields. The programme is funded by Enterprise Ireland, LEOs Cavan, Louth, and Monaghan and Allied Irish Bank under the Border Enterprise Development Fund (BEDF). Shortly after launch of the programme, it was recognised that a network for female entrepreneurs and managers was required in the North-East and the programme was extended to accommodate this.

Both the Athena STEM Programme and the Network were rebranded as THRIVE during the period, reflecting the objectives of enabling women to thrive in leadership roles and especially in male dominated STEM industries and businesses. The website (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/thrive.html>) and social media accounts were created to effectively communicate, promote and recruit for the programme using the sub text Connections, Capabilities and Confidence in response to common barriers identified to STEM careers for women - to provide STEM education, confidence to succeed in male dominated sectors, and reduce isolation within the sector. Delivered in two strands over sixteen weeks *Thrive Innovate* brings women through the New Product Development (NPD) cycle

typical in STEM industry and start-ups and *Thrive Execute*, which prepares women to Lead and Manage businesses in a STEM field. During the 2021/2022 academic year the THRIVE pilot programme successfully recruited for and completed one full programme cycle. It has supported five STEM entrepreneurs, two STEM career changers and seven STEM leaders.

THRIVE has established close relationships with existing women in local STEM industry within STEM start-ups, SMES and multinationals. These industry connections allows THRIVE to offer female STEM mentoring and industry connections over a broad range of STEM areas for individual career development and progression. THRIVE has created a female STEM network meeting every ten weeks to facilitate a platform for networking in the sector. Research shows that female STEM roles are difficult to see and follow so the network event also focuses on profiling local female STEM roles to spread awareness of the opportunities and careers out there. This event also serves to respond to isolation for women in these sectors that are showing low female participation.

### **CREDIT Technology Gateway**

The role of CREDIT Technology Gateway Manager was filled on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021, subsequently due to exceeding targets a second resource in the Business Development Engineer was appointed in March 2022. Dr Paul Mac Artain and Dr Fergal O'Rourke are academic PIs and co academic directors of CREDIT Technology Gateway. The CREDIT Technical Gateway (TG) provides a range of applied research and innovative solutions to industry under the following themes: Energy optimization, Energy Storage and Renewables.

The TG is overseen by a mandatory industry steering committee who meet quarterly, initially chaired by Head of Innovation and Business Development at DkIT, the committee is now chaired by an industry representative following a consultation process. The make-up of the committee and is also overseen by an internal Executive Steering committee which meets quarterly. In terms of performance the TG has targets and KPIs as per its grant agreement with Enterprise Ireland, the table below outlines achievements in the reporting period:

<b>Category</b>	<b>EI Targets: Jan - Dec 2022</b>	<b>Achieved Sept 21-Aug 22</b>
Projects > €1.5k < €5K	7	3
Projects >€5k <€10K	10	7
Projects >€10k -	1	3
<b>Total Projects</b>	18	13
<b>Project Value</b>	€100,000	€123,358
<b>Industry Contribution</b>	€37,600	€88,358

Three capital grants were also won during the reporting period 2021/2022, LiDAR, HASS/HALT and a Mobile Heat Recovery System with a total value of circa €750k. The LiDAR and HASS/HALT procurement process commenced during the reporting period. The mobile heat recovery unit project is currently under review due to industry requirements changing and ability to source suppliers of technology.

## **DkIT Connect DAC**

Trading as *dConnect*, dConnect Digital Health Innovation Hub launched in May 2021 and is 80% funded by Enterprise Ireland through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund with the remaining funding provided by Louth County Council, Dundalk Enterprise Development Company, Servisource Healthcare, Dundalk CREDIT Union, the Louth Enterprise Fund and the Dundalk Institute of Technology.

During the 2021/2022 academic year, dConnect supported twenty-two external collaborations, held twenty nine seminars/workshops with over three hundred participants and held over one hundred and twenty start-up mentor sessions. The external collaboration parties included start-ups, SMEs, multinational companies and European digital health stakeholders and funding bodies. In collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and the DkIT based Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster, dConnect created and ran a new start-up programme, called *eHealth Embark* (<https://www.ehealth-embark.ie/>), for early stage digital health start-ups. Given the success of the programme the collaboration is in the process of signing a new multi-year agreement to run the programme in 2023 and beyond. Also in collaboration with the Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster, dConnect successfully secured funding to run the EIT Health Innovation Days at DkIT (events ran in the next reporting period, 2022/2022 with sixty to eighty DkIT students participating).

## **Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster (Regional Technology Cluster Fund)**

In 2019/2020, DkIT successfully applied to the Regional Technology Clustering Fund, and was awarded €350,072, focusing on a Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster. The Education and Outreach Manager, Breannán Casey, was appointed in June 2021, and the Cluster was formally launched on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 with circa fifty attendees.

Based on feedback from the sixteen founding members of the CHW Cluster, a Stream 2 Operational Workplan was created in early 2022 with a stronger focus on six aligned 'Strategic Pillars' which will also support collaboration and learning across the six Pillars. The pillars are:

1. Innovation, Promotion & Collaboration
2. Internationalisation
3. Education, Skills, Training & Development

4. Regulatory, Cybersecurity & Interoperability
5. Sustainable HealthTech
6. Personalised Health Monitoring including SportsTech & Wearables

Cluster members doubled to thirty-two from the launch to August 2022. 'Industry' members of the Cluster currently included: Wellola, Zendra Health, STATSports Group, Nova Leah. BD. Hey Mylo. Taoglas, CliffRunMedia, Isaac Care. acGT Vector, Salaso. AWS, Heart Rhythym Ireland, Metrifit, Soothing Solutions, OpaMind, Oriel Sea Salt and EVB Sports.

Public bodies (academia / research, and enterprise support) members include Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Lourdes Hospital Drogheda, RCSI, Regulated Software Research Centre, Netwell Casala Research centre, Smooth Muscle Research Centre, HSE, and dConnect Digital Health Innovation Hub. The Cluster manager received specialist training from Enterprise Ireland on founding and progressing Clusters which highlighted that Clusters have to take a medium to long-term perspective to build trust amongst members, and that support from relevant authorities is crucial in the early stages. DkIT has made significant progress and created a strong base for developing an internationally recognised Cluster by the end of the RTCF Stream 2 (year three of funding) which will help to develop innovation and productivity in the digital health sector.

Progress during the 2021 /2022 academic year included:

- Created the [www.ehealth-embark.ie](http://www.ehealth-embark.ie) nine week-business support programme which was launched in March 2022. DkIT partnered with Amazon Web Services (AWS) who contributed €100,000 AWS Credits to the winning company from the nine participating companies. The programme was a collaboration with dConnect and included support from AWS, HIHI, HSE Digital Transformation unit, and RCSI. Three of the nine companies have trialed in HSE Living Labs since participating in the programme. DkIT expect to repeat the programme on an annual basis for the next three years.
- Successfully applied to EIT Health for funding (€11,900) to create a Dundalk Innovation Day in October 2022, in partnership with dConnect and members of the Cluster. i-Days promote health innovation among university students through dozens of one-day and two-day programmes held in academic institutions around Europe. Students from all academic areas received an introduction to practical health innovation tools and competed in teams to tackle real-life health challenges posed by EIT Health, local organisations, private corporations or start-ups. The winning team of each i-Day attend the Winners' Event, a final competition that unites students from around Europe.
- Commenced the process of collaborating with other EU Digital Health Clusters by registering on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) (<https://clustercollaboration.eu/community-news/launch-connected-health-wellbeing-cluster>). DkIT participated in two EU Matchmaking events

- circa eighteen meetings to seek partners on potential collaborative projects, and also became an Ambassador for the EU project, Ambassadors Network - DIGI-B-CUBE (<https://digibcube.eu/>) “*Digital Innovations Disrupting Medical Diagnostics Value Chair*” which has previously supplied funding to support three Irish SMEs.

- Lead an application with the HSE and Cluster members to become an EU Reference Site for “*Active and Healthy Ageing*” (AHA) (application currently being evaluated). Reference Sites bring together a coalition of stakeholders based on a “Quadruple Helix” model that includes representatives from government, health and care providers, policy makers, academia, researcher institutions, industry, civil society and patients at a regional and local level. These collaborations have facilitated and driven structural change far beyond the scope any one particular organisation could achieve on its own, helping to create an environment for other regions across Europe to learn, transfer and adapt knowledge and good practices to local realities, with regional and social and economic development as the long-term objective thereby creating opportunities to support economic development.
- DkIT’s monthly ezine is distributed to over one hundred and fifty subscribers, the <https://www.chwcluster.ie/> website was launched, and its LinkedIn profile has three hundred and fifty followers. DkIT has a Digital Health stand at Future Health Summit in Dublin alongside dConnect and the relevant research centres, and participated in a virtual panel at London ‘Genesis’ Medtech talk.
- A core pillar is ‘Internationalisation’, and Dkit have had “*Cluster to Cluster*” Huddles with the UK Northwest Healthtec Cluster in March 2022, and with Scottish Enterprise in June 2022 where our members were able to discuss collaborative opportunities with members from other Clusters.
- Organised upskilling and training Events included focused webinars and workshops on topical areas such as Traceability, Scaling Digital Health and developing Digital Health Apps.

### **DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme**

Funded through the HEA Performance Funding 2019 the project was extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic to end of December 2022. DkIT’s Corporate Partnership Programme (CPP) provides a strategic and structured framework for the development of sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships with external organisations in such areas as new Continuous Professional Development programme development, student placements, research, sponsorship, staff placement, student/staff mentoring and advisory boards. The project facilitated the development of engagement by DkIT with a focus on sectors and sectoral clusters of strategic importance to the region including Identify and respond to future skills needs within prioritised sectors, support for increased research and innovation engagement and projects and support to the Careers and Employability Centre to enhance engagement with sectors and cluster that helps the student learning experience.



A DkIT Corporate Partnership Framework has been developed and the development of the CPP has been acknowledged as a strategic objective in the DkIT Strategic Plan 2020-2023. Two MOUs have been developed with industry network clusters, the Fintech Corridor Initiative and the North East Focused Engineering Network while MoUs have been developed with the following single organisations to date through the CPP:

ABP	Constructive Intervention
Cargotech	The Film School Network
Walls Construction	McDonald Surveys
NDRC (org wound up Dec 2020)	Meath Co Co
STATSports	Dundalk Credit Union
Creative Spark	Kaseya
The FUTURUM Group	Blackmagic Design Academic
Energy Trading Ireland	

Significant progress has been made in developing a cluster network in Connected Health and Wellbeing including innovation centre infrastructure and programme support funding received through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund that has commenced in late 2020 and the Regional Technology Clustering Fund with over €5,000,000 committed over three years from both. DkIT are also a partner in the ATU led BORMAC border based manufacturing companies cluster. DkITs Head of Innovation and Business Development has also been co-opted onto the North East Enterprise plan 2021-2024 development led by the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation that is developing strategic objectives to focus on industry clustering.

## Engagement – External and Community Outreach

DkIT continued to enhance its engagement activities locally, nationally and internationally. Collaborations were enhanced with industry, the community and with professional organisations. External and community outreach activities for the reporting period 2021/2022 include:

- The first face to face School of Health and Science Research Day took place in May 2022. This was an opportunity to share the vast range of research activities ongoing in the School.
- Lucy Bolger, General Nursing Graduate, published 'Unmasked - Experiences of nursing students during COVID-19'. This was a collaboration between the Department of Nursing , Midwifery & Early Years and CELT and contained a powerful account of the experiences of student nurses during COVID-19 (<https://eprints.dkit.ie/786/>).

- Agriculture undergraduate students took part in the 7th Annual Great Agri-Food debate, organised by Dawn Meats and McDonald's in April 2022. Seven third level colleges and one industry group took part in the event. The debates took place virtually, as they did in 2021. DkIT were successful in their debate against Munster Technological University on the subject of 'Red meat is essential as part of a nutritionally balanced diet'. Sarah Armstrong, DkIT student was awarded one of the best speaker awards.
- Caitlyn Murphy, DkIT Midwifery Student won the national Midwifery Student Debate. This is an annual event which takes place and is a competition between all of the HEIs who provide midwifery programmes.
- The challenge of supporting students in the development of their professional practice skills and assist in the integration of theoretical knowledge to their practice is achieved through the novel and creative development of a Parent and Toddler group in Stage 4, Semester 1 of the Early Childhood Studies programme each academic year. Providing a unique learning opportunity, this approach requires the student group to set up and run their own service in the form of a parent and toddler group, within the supportive confines of the college campus, where the lecturing staff are always present to guide (and assess) the students in the integration of theory into their practice. It provides an opportunity for students to link learning and plan, carry out, monitor and evaluate a programme of activities for young children while working in collaboration with their parents /carers. Participating families (up to 20 each year, consisting of local parents /carers and their young children) gain insight into the value of working with early years professionals. For parents / carers, the resulting impact on their relationship with their children, their understanding of the value of play and their confidence in engaging in play with their young children is generally very positive. This took place in Semester 1 2021/2022.
- Cell EXPLORERS is a successful science education and public engagement (E&PE) programme delivering STEM activities regionally and nationally ([www.cellexplorers.com](http://www.cellexplorers.com)). Dr Suzanne Linnane and Dr Caroline Gilleran Stephens are the regional coordinators of the SFI funded Cell Explorers: Fantastic DNA programme (SFI Discover Programme 2020 - €267,636 over 2 years). For Science Week 2021, due to COVID-19 we adapted our outreach activities to run online, packed up boxes and successfully delivered 'Fantastic DNA in a Box' workshops to 13 schools and 670 children in the North-East region.
- Dr Suzanne Linnane and Dr Caroline Gilleran Stephens co-ordinate an Environmental Education (EE) programme called 'H2O Heroes', which uses a catchment-based framework to explore collaborative approaches to water management. In 2021, the H2O Heroes programme received funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as an educational partner for the delivery of a Water Resource Management Programme for the Ring of Gullion AONB Rivers in the Carlingford and Newry Local Management Area. H2O Heroes adapted to an online platform, delivered kick samples directly to 10 schools to facilitate live workshops via Zoom and reached 300 children.

- SciFest@DkIT2022 regional competition was held in May 2022. Schools from across the North East Region came together with hundreds of their second-level student peers to compete. Almost 100 projects exhibited at SciFest@DkIT 2022. Bush Post Primary School won the award DkIT Best Intermediate Life Science Award for their fantastic project 'How growing up with sisters affects the male brain in how they view women'. A workshop with Science teachers present at the event showcased the career pathways of a range of DkIT graduates.
- The Genesis Programme is a consortium of over fifty Partner Organisations that is delivering the Incredible Years® suite of programmes and other evidence-informed interventions to children, families and communities in Dundalk and Drogheda in County Louth as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme. The ABC Programme is a cross-departmental initiative co-funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies. It is jointly managed by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) and Pobal. The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It aims to break “the cycle of child poverty within areas where it is most deeply entrenched and where children are most disadvantaged, through integrated and effective services and interventions” in the following areas: child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage. The Partner Organisations of The Genesis Programme are made up of Early Years Settings, Schools, Community Groups, Louth Children’s and Young People’s Services Committee, Louth County Childcare Committee, Dundalk Institute of Technology, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Educational Disadvantage Centre at St. Patrick’s College, Irish Primary Principals’ Network (IPPN) as well as a range of departments within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Tusla - the Child and Family Agency. Louth Leader Partnership is the lead agency. The Head of School of Health and Science is the vice-chair of the Management Committee of this project and Mary McSkeane the Programme Director in Early Childhood Studies is a member of the Management Committee.
- A number of students in the School of Health and Science received awards under the Elevate scheme for their contribution to engagement activities both within DkIT and the wider community.
- The School of Health and Science is a partner in an innovative project (<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/mu/chemistry/virtual-labs-hci-p3-initiative>) that will use virtual laboratories as a teaching tool for the experimental sciences, one that has been awarded almost €3 million funding by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under their Human Capital Initiative programme. The School will work alongside academics in the chemical sciences sphere at Maynooth University (project lead), Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin City University and University College Cork (UCC). This ambitious and timely project will develop innovative approaches to teaching students aspects of experimental sciences using virtual laboratories. The five partnering Institutions are working with education technology providers to develop courses in which a real laboratory experience is complemented with a virtual laboratory experience, through a blended approach. The project also will give students the opportunity to experience a real-work

environment through virtual training and engagement with enterprise partners, and to help reinforce practical techniques and concepts, as well as management and project work.

- A number of staff members represent DkIT on a number of national committees. The following is a selection of such external committees:
  - Member of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education Íontas Alliance.
  - Committee member of the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE)
  - Member of the Palliative Care Needs Assessment Facilitators Group Dublin NE (new Group set up to deliver the National Palliative Care Needs Assessment workshop.
  - Member of the steering group of FACiLiTATE the national problem and enquiry based learning network in Ireland.
  - Member of Midwifery Leadership Group.
  - Member of Midwifery National Competency Development Group.
  - Member of SJOG Human Rights Committee.
  - Member of National Critical Care Forum Committee.
  - Member of Louth Children and Young Persons Service Committee.
  - Vice-chair and Member of Genesis Programme Management Committee.
  - Member of National Steering committee for AMAU & ED programmes.
  - Member of Louth Healthy Ireland Consultation Group.
  - Member of National forum for students with an intellectual disability in third level education.
  - Member of Plé (Pedagogy, Learning and Education).
  - Member of National Water Forum.
  - Member of Public Water Forum.
  - Committee member of All Ireland Society of Higher Education.
  - HSE expert midwife for the development of Home birth services.
  - Member of St John of God North East Human Rights Committee member 2017.
  - Member of VCI veterinary nursing educators group.
  - Board member of the National Childhood Network.

- The Midwifery section in the School of Health and Science won a prestigious DELTA (Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment) award (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/2022/10/26/teams-from-dkit-and-atu-celebrated-at-national-delta-award-ceremony/>). The DkIT team was one of only three national discipline teams from the Irish higher education institutions that achieved the National Forum's Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) Award. This esteemed national award is granted to discipline groups who demonstrate a record of excellence in teaching and learning enhancement and who commit to an ongoing, clearly articulated, shared process of continued development.
- The School of Business and Humanities Department of Hospitality Studies was again awarded the Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) Award in August 2022. This prestigious national award, coordinated through the National Forum, is granted to discipline groups who demonstrate a record of excellence in teaching and learning enhancement and who commit to an ongoing, clearly articulated, shared process of sustained achievements and continued enhancement in teaching and learning. Applications were considered by an international review panel of experts and a student representative.
- A team of fourth year Hospitality and Event Management students from the School of Business and Humanities reached third place at the 37th IHI Business Management Game 2022. The team had to undertake several challenges over the week with their final challenge being a presentation to a panel of industry experts.
- A second year student in the School of Business and Humanities took second place in the Knorr Student Chef of the year competition (March 2022), competing against twelve of their peers from institutions around the country.
- The School of Business and Humanities Master of Business Studies (MBS) class of 2021, in their Applied Strategic Management module, worked on consultancy assignments with four high potential clients including an existing business in the hospitality sector, a start-up organisation in the charity sector, a rapidly developing media company and an innovative technology training program for women. Assignments undertaken included business planning, financial projections, market research and market development. The work was completed to a very high standard with the clients complimenting the teams on their high level of professionalism.
- Two lecturers from the School of Business and Humanities led a group of lecturers from the four School departments who reached out to Ukrainian refugees in Dundalk through contacts in Louth-Meath ETB. Through the Carlingford Heritage Trust Committee, they organised a trip to the Heritage Trust Sibeál Ní Chásaide concert in Carlingford. They also linked with these groups next semester to engage with our Intercultural Studies module and students in order to facilitate and foster greater cultural understanding, exchange and integration for both the refugees, especially those in long term provision, and our students.

- Outreach with local schools continued in the School of Engineering and included regular school visits by staff and events on campus:
  - STEPS Engineering Week took place in March 2022. A number of events for primary and secondary school students was held which were sponsored by Engineers Ireland. STEPS TY Taster Days took place in May 2022).
  - An EI-sponsored programme called 'Engineering Your Future' was attended by 20 TY students.
- A Careers in Computing event, was hosted by the School in conjunction with the Careers and Employability Centre on Wednesday May 4th 2022. At this Pitch-and-Meet event students from the three Departments (Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (DCAMM), Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing (DVHCC) and the Department of Computing Science and Maths (DCSM)) successfully pitched to industry representatives and graduates from companies, including Amazon, First Derivatives, Boston Scientific, Google, Intact, Prometric and Microsoft. The event tied in with final year exhibition and poster events.
- An innovative Blockchain course with Dundalk Chamber, Skillnet and Industry links including the Fintech Corridor was launched.
- DCAMM continued their Visiting Guest Series. The Series included practical workshops and lectures from a range of industry professionals across the Creative Industries.
- DCAMM were partners in The Louth International Film Festival which took place in DkIT on Friday 30th September 2021 and in the An Tain Arts Centre on Oct 1st-2nd. This year's festival had 50 hours of shorts and features over three days. The Festival is presented by the Louth Filmmakers Society in association with DCAMM. Established in 2019, and patrons include Hollywood director, John Moore, and acclaimed cinematographer, Seamus McGarvey (ASC, BSC).
- DCAMM hosted a concert in Droichead Arts Centre on Saturday 14th May 2022. This event showcased the work of music students and lecturers in celebration of DkIT's 50th anniversary. The event featured performances by students from BA (Hons) Music, and was supported by the Audio & Music Production students and guest performances by Porto-based Curso de Musica Silva Monteiro.
- DCSM hosted a special CoderDojo event on Saturday May 28th which celebrated 50 years of DkIT and the 10-year anniversary of CoderDojo. CoderDojo is a movement orientated around running free not-for-profit coding clubs and regular sessions for young people aged between 7-17 years old. CoderDojo makes development and learning to code a fun & sociable experience. Approximately 60 ninjas participated in the event and DkIT also welcomed back a number of past mentors for the occasion. DkIT were delighted and honoured to be joined by mentors from the Monaghan CoderDojo and David Hodge from MTU, who is the lead on the national DojoMor event in which DkIT is a partner. Additional, CoderDojo events involving our chief mentor Peter Gosling and students from

the school who volunteered were held on 12th March 2022 and the 2nd of April 2022 in the Carroll's Building in DkIT.

- DCSM hosted a number of summer computing camp in August 2022. The camp was targeted at secondary school students, aged 12-17 years. This camp was staffed by Niall Dowd, Retention & Recruitment Officer and 3 current computing students, Gracie Chaudhary, Margaret Buckley and Ryan Habis. The aim was to provide students with a taste of computing subjects.
- A workshop with Creative Spark was held on campus in October for all Creative Media students introducing them to the pedal press and printing on a tote bag.
- A collaborative concert 'The Monday Mix' involving RehabCare and our Music Students took place on Monday 4th April 2022 in the Recital Room in the PJ Carroll's building. Participants from DCAMM included: Dr Daithi Kearney, Gavin Gribben, Jessica Mudrew, Faye Morgan McArdle, Angel Chen Jia Ng and Aoife Higgins.
- Fourth year students from the Drama and Performance Add On Programme produced a performance art exhibition 'Dissonance', which took place in the MacAnna Theatre on the 4th May 2022. 'Dissonance' was the culmination of two semesters work for final year students as they explored the topic of Performance Studies. The exhibit focused on performance, moving beyond the screen and the stage to look at new perspectives and angles. The students covered topics including Gender, Protest, Race, The Body, The Abject, Space and The Liminal.
- BA (Hons) Music students provided a Spring concert on the 7th April 2022 in the MacAnna Theatre.
- BA in Theatre & Film Practice / BA (Hons) in Drama and Performance performed their "Eight" Show on March 29th, 30th and 31st 2022 in the MacAnna Theatre.

### **1.1.11 Professional Support Unit (International Office) Activities and Developments**

This section provides an update on the activities and developments in the International Office for the reporting period 2021/2022.

The academic year 2021/2022 marked a return to campus for international and Erasmus students, following an 18-month hiatus, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. DkIT International Office was a member of the Institute's COVID-19 Taskforce in 2021/2022. Weekly meetings were convened throughout the academic year to support students and staff with return-to-campus. Emphasis was placed in the early part of the new academic year by DkIT International Office on circulating pre-departure and arrival updates to agents and to new international and Erasmus students, in light of continually changing travel, vaccination and self-isolation requirements. During that period, DkIT International Office was also a

member of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) International Group, which met regularly in 2021/2022 to troubleshoot on issues arising relating to the support of international students post-Pandemic.

### **International Student Supports**

The resumption of supports offered to international students was particularly important for the International Office, as students returned to campus after a long gap. The International Office arranged for new arriving students to be collected from Dublin Airport upon arrival and provided support to students with accommodation. International Welcome Days were conducted online in September 2021 and January 2022, as it was deemed to be safer not to convene large in-person gatherings during the initial period of return-to-campus.

Learner supports provided by the International Office upon student arrivals included guidance on a range of key items including: online-registration, immigration appointments, bank-account-opening, settling-in support and accommodation support queries. These range of supports form part of the Institute's commitment to fostering a positive international student experience in accordance with QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. Additional supports provided to International students in the reporting period 2021/2022 included:

- Support to students experiencing visa-delays as a consequence of the pandemic, who needed supports with late-joining and late-registration at the Institute.
- In-person check-ins with international and Erasmus students in DkIT International Office to identify and support any student experiencing difficulties adjusting to life on-campus;
- Provision of loan of laptops (assisted by DkIT Library Service) to international students in need;
- Guided Greenway walk from Omeath to Carlingford - December 2021;
- Christmas gathering for Foundation class-group;
- Guided excursion to Carlingford (January 2022 new arrivals);
- Chinese New Year event (online) coordinated by Malaysia society - February 2022;
- Trip to Newgrange with International students (DkIT International Office & Pastoral Care) - April 2022.

### **Recruitment and Collaborations**

- DkIT recruited 139 new International (non-EU) Students in September 2021 and 7 new International (non-EU) students in January 2022. An additional 50 EU students were recruited in September 2021. All new students were registered on a range of full-time, taught programmes from Level 6 to Level 10.



- Recruitment activities and developments in the reporting period 2021/2022 included:
  - Direct student recruitment through agents and attendance at virtual and physical fairs in international markets;
  - Development and growth of non-EU markets in India, Africa, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh;
  - Targeted recruitment in Eastern Europe (50 undergraduate students recruited);
  - Development of recruitment in Latin America and in Turkey;
  - Scoping of advanced entry pathways with universities in target markets;
  - Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the Mayab, Mexico;
  - Development of a European regional office for DkIT to enhance EU recruitment;
  - Expansion of agent networks in Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines.
  - **CRM Development:** Academic year 2021/2022 was the first full year of deploying the bespoke international CRM developed by DkIT International Office for applications-processing. Feedback from agents on the new International CRM was very positive.

Additionally, DkIT International Office contributed to the creation of a separate standalone Institute CRM, on which development work started in the Institute in the academic year 21/22. A significant amount of time was invested by the International Office in working with IT Services on the creation of the International requirements of the new CRM during the academic year 2021/2022.

- **Student Video Interviews:** The International Office coordinated international students for video interviews, conducted by the Institute's Marketing and Communications Office, for the purpose of supporting Recruitment in key markets.
- **Annual Business Report (ABR) - Enterprise Ireland:** The International Office returned an annual report on Recruitment Income for academic year 2021/2022 (February 2021).
- **Teaching Collaboration with the University of Zhengzhou Shengda, China:** The Institute's Department of Business Studies developed its collaboration with the University of Zhengzhou Shengda (ZSDU) China in 2021/2022, with 3 Business Studies Lecturers assigned to teach a series of Business modules online to ZSDU over the course of two semesters.

## ERASMUS+

- **Erasmus+ Inbound and Outbound:** The Institute received 80 Incoming Erasmus Students in the academic year 2021/2022 across the 4 Schools. A total of 32 students went on Erasmus in the academic year 2021/2022; 19 on Erasmus Study Abroad (for one semester, or for an academic year) and 13 on Work-Placement. This was a marked increase on the academic year 2020/2021, when outbound Erasmus was largely curtailed, due to the Pandemic. Additionally, 5 Staff were supported by Erasmus+ with conducting staff mobility visits to partner universities, for the purpose of developing student exchange links.
- **Erasmus+ Class Visits:** The International Office conducted class-visits in the academic year 2021/2022 to raise awareness of the Erasmus programme among students and staff and to encourage participation in the programme. Students who were authorised by the Head of Department to participate in Erasmus in September 2021 met at intervals with the Erasmus Institutional Coordinator throughout the academic year to prepare for study abroad. DkIT International Office organised facilitation of an Erasmus+ Pre-Departure Workshop by the School of Business and Humanities in December 2021.
- **Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Mobilities (BIP).** A new feature of the Erasmus+ programme introduced by the EU Commission in the academic year 2021/2022 was the inception of short blended-intensive mobilities for students, to encourage students and staff to engage in Erasmus+ through participation in a short, intensive study project at an EU partner university . 10 students and 2 staff from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts travelled to IUT Lens, France to conduct a one-week, informatics project with participating students from other Erasmus EU partner universities.

The Institute's Creative Arts Department hosted a collaborative Erasmus+ project with participating students and staff from Belgium, Portugal, Netherlands and Norway on the theme of Arts and Mindfulness in Education (AMiE) for early years and primary schools (May 2022).

The Institute's Department of Life and Health Sciences participated in an Erasmus+ Summer School called **NEXT STEP** (in Greece) on the theme of enhancing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) educational methods in teaching (July 2022). The outputs of the Summer School contributed to the Institute's research into STEAM education and collaborations with primary and secondary schools in the northeast region to develop STEAM education in the classroom.

- **Digitisation of the Erasmus+ Programme.** The academic year 2021/2022 marked the beginnings of a large-scale, ambitious programme of Digitisation of the Erasmus+ programme EU-wide. The Institute adopted a new portal called Erasmus Without Paper (Dashboard) for the creation of online learning agreements. The Institute also adopted a new reporting tool called Beneficiary Module for the purpose of documenting Erasmus student and staff mobilities and grant-funding. The project roll-out is on a large scale and the goal of Digitisation of the Erasmus+ programme is still in progress at EU level.

### Hosting of International Visits

DkIT International Office hosted the following visits from European universities during 2021/2022 for the purpose of developing student and staff exchange in particular areas:

- Avans UAS, The Netherlands (visit to DkIT in November 2021) for the purpose of developing Built Environment exchange with DkIT and with developing a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) in Creative Arts;
- University of Granada, Spain: (visit to DkIT in November 2021) - development of Nursing exchange;
- University College South Denmark (visit to DkIT in May 2022) - development of Midwifery Placements;
- Polytechnic Institute of Setubal, Portugal (visit to DkIT in May 2022) - Health and Nursing Placement visit;
- Visit of the German Ambassador to DkIT (April 2022) - The Institute hosted the German Ambassador to DkIT to learn about the Institute's bilateral exchanges with German higher education institutions and learn about Erasmus+ engagement for students and staff. The Embassy also visited the CREDIT Centre at DkIT to learn about research being undertaken with the Enterprise Ireland CREDIT Technology gateway;
- Meeting with the French Ministry for Agriculture with the Applied Sciences Department and DkIT International Office, for the purpose of developing collaborations in Agri-Education and providing Placement and Research opportunities to DkIT Students and Staff from the Applied Sciences Dept. (January 2022);
- Visit of Hong Kong Agent (Irish International Education Centre) to DkIT - October 2021 - for the purpose of developing agent recruitment from Hong Kong.

## Other Developments

Other international activities and developments in the reporting period 2020/2021 included the following:

- **Accommodation Support for International Students:** DkIT International Office met with Management to seek assistance with additional resourcing of accommodation supports to international and Erasmus students. DkIT International Office also met with the DkIT Students Union regarding quality and capacity of international student accommodation and to seek to improve capacity in accommodation supports.
- **Internationalisation Register (ILEP):** The Institute made two submissions to INIS regarding updated accredited programmes for inclusion in the Internationalisation Register (October 2021). The Institute also appealed the decision by INIS to exclude its PSE programme from the ILEP Register (December 2021).
- **Financial Reviews:** DkIT participated in the following financial review in the reporting period 2021/2022:
  - **International Student Fees:** The International Office reviewed updated changes to International Students Fees and Scholarships (December 2021);
  - Fees-Income Analysis of 4 academic years (18/19, 19/20, 20/21, 21/22).
- **Audits:** The International Office responded to Deloitte audit queries (August 2022).
- **Recording of International Student Attendance:** The International Office, in collaboration with the four Schools, collated International Student Class-Attendance records in January 2022 and May 2022, for the purpose of visa-renewal applications in September 2022.
- **Promotional Materials and Engagement:** The International Guide was reviewed and updated in August 2022 in collaboration with the Institute's Marketing and Communications Office.

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This section provides an update on objectives/planned actions for the reporting period 2021/2022 as outlined in the previous AQR (reporting period 2020/2021, pg. 160 onwards).

No.	<p align="center"><b>Planned objectives (Previous AQR)</b></p> <p align="center">Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</p>	<p align="center"><b>Update on Status</b></p> <p>Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.</p> <p>If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.</p>
1	<p><b>Policies and Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Institute policy management system, policies and procedures and quality framework to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose. This is related to Institutional Review actions.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
2	<p><b>Policies and Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p> <p>(Related to ongoing work with the National RPL Project in Higher Education project under the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) initiative; funding secured in 2019/2020).</p>
3	<p><b>Policies and Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop quality assurance policies and procedure relating to collaborative partnerships (specifically articulation agreements).</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>

4	<p><b>Policies and Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Equal Access and Participation Policy.</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
5	<p><b>Policies and Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop quality assurance Guidelines for the Preparation, Drafting and Transmission of Examination Papers and Solutions. (recommendation from an external investigator following an examination paper breach).</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
6	<p><b>Policies and Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attain QQI International Educational Mark (IEM).</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed as DkIT is awaiting on QQI to provide guidance to the Higher Education sector.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
7	<p><b>Teaching and Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop quality assurance policy and procedures for blended learning (to augment current programme approval policies and procedures; incorporate QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed in the reporting period 2020/2021.</p>
8	<p><b>Teaching and Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop capacity to use data to inform decision-making.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>A draft framework to inform the use of data to support student success was developed and an initiative, '<i>Make the most of your Moodle Data</i>' was rolled out' (see Section 2.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment).</p>

		See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).
9	<p><b>Teaching and Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Assessed Group-work: A Framework and Guidelines.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
10	<p><b>Teaching and Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to prioritise work to enhance good practice in assessment and feedback and promote assessment literacy among students.</li> </ul>	<p>Considerable work was completed as part of the 'Focus on Feedback' project (see Section 2.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment).</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
11	<p><b>Teaching and Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance digital accessibility and raise awareness of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.</li> </ul>	<p>This work commenced in 2021/2022. It is ongoing and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
12	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Research Integrity Policy.</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
13	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>

14	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to build research capacity with a view to achieving the metrics required for Technological University (TU) status.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. However the only outstanding metric is the 4% TU target in relation to postgraduate research students registrations</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
15	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the National Researcher Career Framework (continued action) (<a href="https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/">https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/</a>).</li> <li>Implement the full researcher career framework across all Research Centres and groups.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
16	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance research supervisory development and professional training programme together with other supports for staff and students.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p>
17	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review collaborative partnership arrangements with Dublin City University (DCU) (DCU-DKIT Graduate School).</li> </ul>	<p>Initial discussions regarding the collaborative partnership agreement took place in the reporting period but the agreement was not finalised. To be completed in the reporting period 2022/2023.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
18	<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the action plan detailed in the Institute's recent Athena Swan Bronze award application.</li> </ul>	<p>Work is ongoing in this area and will continue into the next reporting period.</p>



	<p><b>Note:</b> This action was previously categorized under “Research” as EDI activities came under the remit of the Head of Research and Graduate Studies. The Vice President for Finance, Resources and Diversity was given responsibility for EDI in the reporting period (2021/2022).</p>	See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).
19	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversify and increase research and innovation funding.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete but this is an ongoing action as this is a strategic aim annually to diversify income.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
20	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access Intellectual Property Portfolio across research community.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed but ongoing action annually as new research outputs evolve through funded research projects</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
21	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase TUTF funding to approach TU 4% Target.</li> </ul>	Completed.
22	<p><b>Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out online Professional Training Platform for researchers.</li> </ul>	Completed.
23	<p><b>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current policy and procedure on collaborative provision in light of DABS and permission for linked provider status.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>

24	<p><b>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current Quality Manual to remove reference to QQI with the exception of external cyclical review and Level 10 provision.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
25	<p><b>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Educational/Awareness programme for various stakeholders on what a DAB means (Governing Body, Academic Council, Academic Staff, Students).</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
26	<p><b>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current award standards and determine if new award standards are required (sectoral approach).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p>
27	<p><b>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of QA processes to ensure that they are sufficiently comprehensive and robust in the context of being a DAB.</li> <li>Review current programme validation processes in the context of DAB.</li> </ul> <p>Review QA processes relating to postgraduate research provision.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
28	<p><b>Academic Integrity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to plan, implement and enhance Academic Integrity initiatives at Institute level for students and staff, specifically to develop an Academic Integrity Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>

29	<p><b>Academic Integrity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a pilot of the Epigueum Academic Integrity modules with students and staff (<a href="https://www.epigueum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/">https://www.epigueum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/</a>).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The support modules were launched during QQI Academic Integrity Week (18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021) (cross reference with section 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity).</p> <p>Work in the area of Academic Integrity will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
30	<p><b>Academic Integrity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures to cater for Contract Cheating.</li> </ul>	<p>Not Completed.</p> <p>Work in the area of Academic Integrity will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
31	<p><b>Academic Integrity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance Academic Integrity supports, specifically Plagiarism Advisor Training for academic Schools (focus on building Academic Integrity Culture).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>(cross reference with section 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity).</p>
32	<p><b>Academic Integrity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch the Academic Integrity Digital Badge for Students.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The badge was launched as part of QQI Academic Integrity Week (18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021) (cross reference with section 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity).</p>

33	<p><b>Academic Integrity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Institute Register for Academic Misconduct (mixed model between Schools and Registrar’s Office currently in operation).</li> <li>Review and ensure that new forms of academic misconduct (e.g. contract cheating) are recorded as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Not Completed.</p> <p>Work in the area of Academic Integrity will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
34	<p><b>Institutional Review:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Institutional Review Action plan and identify priorities as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Not Completed.</p> <p>Work in the area of Academic Integrity will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
36	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the Disability Service by providing an assistive technology training room.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The Assistive Technology Room is fully operational and students can avail of training and access to the space to study in a quiet environment</p>
37	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a structured mentoring system for Sports Scholarship students and provide specialised training for committee members for societies and clubs.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Changes to staffing delayed development of the mentoring system.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
38(a)	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services):</b></p>	<p>A peer mentoring panel was formed and the offer of a mentor was circulated to first years. There was very limited take-up, symptomatic of the general reduced</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued development of a peer-mentoring programme for first year student which will be coordinated by the Counselling Service.</li> </ul>	<p>level of engagement in the reporting period. This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
38(b)	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and provide targeted supports for 'at risk' groups particularly through completion of CAMS training which addresses the needs of the most at risk group on campus</li> <li>Build campus knowledge and skills on mental health and suicide prevention.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Mental Health and Well-being funding was successfully negotiated which allowed DkIT to maintain Educational Psychology provision as well as increasing counsellor availability.</p> <p>Two of the Student Counselling Service completed CAMS training which was implemented within routine practice. Three new members to the team are booked to complete this training in March 2023.</p> <p>DKIT lead in the development of the 'Speak Out' online Anonymous Reporting Tool and participated in the launch in October 2021. This is an anonymous reporting tool for staff and students to speak out about harassment sexual bullying and discrimination and to receive guidance as to the appropriate supports. The recruitment process was signed off and commenced for the appointment of a frameworks manager to support the implementation of the Consent Framework and the action plan commenced. Disclosure training was provided for staff in spring 2022, two bystander training sessions were offered to students and staff and an in person 'Active Consent' workshop</p>

		<p>provided to students. Work also commenced on the development of policy to support the implementation of the framework.</p> <p>Recovery College  <a href="https://recoverycollege.ie/">https://recoverycollege.ie/</a>) (facilitated a series of workshops on understanding and managing mental health issues for staff and students on DkIT campus (stress, anxiety, self-esteem, men's health and self-care).</p>
38(c)	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop additional supports for students considering withdrawing from their programme.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>A roadmap was developed for staff to support the implementation of the 'Talk before you walk' initiative. Student Services worked with the Marketing and Communications Office to develop a brochure for students. A webpage was developed and implemented to assist students to make informed decisions when considering withdrawing from their programme of study.</p>
39	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create meaningful access partnerships with local partners (schools and FET colleges).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Online tutorials were provided for 5th and 6th year students in twelve DEIS schools in the region.</p> <p>IT equipment was provided for students from the Traveller community in many second level schools in the region.</p> <p>Through PATH 3 (College Connect) (<a href="https://collegeconnect.ie/path-funding/">https://collegeconnect.ie/path-funding/</a>) a Community Connector was recruited in February 2022 which has enabled the development of outreach work with new partners and organisations. Work over the past academic year has included:</p>

		<p>involvement in community needs analysis, extensive reporting on mentoring, pathways, different funding streams within the project, collaboration on reports to the HEA,</p> <p>Visits to FET colleges took place to advise students on entry routes to DkIT.</p>
40	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch the Autism&amp;Uni (<a href="https://www.autism-uni.org/">https://www.autism-uni.org/</a>) website, progress the 'pilot' of the autism friendly department.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The Autism Friendly pilot progressed to include the development of the DkIT Autism &amp; Uni website. DkIT committed to begin the process of gaining ASD Friendly university badge from ASIAM (<a href="https://asiam.ie/">https://asiam.ie/</a>). A Service Level Agreement (SLA) was signed and will be progressed over the next three years.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>
41	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging a proactive approach to Health with emphasis on Health Awareness and promotion.</li> </ul>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p> <p>Developed an outdoor space for World Mental Health Day in October 2021. Highlighted the Health Service Executive (HSE) campaign <i>GetPastGrand</i> and painted the four</p>

		<p>outdoor benches in the colours that represent each department.</p> <p>Worked with the Student Union during SHAG and SHIFT weeks in getting a positive sexual health awareness message to our student group.</p> <p>Organised “Body and Soul” week to replace of our annual “Health Fair” focusing on health and wellbeing including mental and physical health, nutrition and healthy eating tips, fitness exercises, HIT classes and promoting the HSE QUIT smoking campaigns.</p> <p>Participated in online video student induction, “Pop Up” induction awareness weeks.</p> <p>Continued to update the online Moodle Student Support Hub with reliable Health information and resources to assist students with health concerns/issues.</p> <p>Worked with SU to produce a short video to help ease the anxiety around STI testing for males and females.</p> <p>Invested in phone text facility which enhanced communication with students who had difficulty getting in touch due to language barriers and hearing difficulties.</p>
42	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve DkIT Employability Statement and PCs Graduate Attribute Framework for adoption into programme development (outputs of Phase 1 of the Embedding Employability Project).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>See Section 2.0 IQA System - Enhancement and Impacts.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance curriculum development supports to academic Schools, specifically to assist with the embedding of the DkIT Employability Statement and PCs Graduate Attribute Framework (outputs of the DkIT Embedding Employability Project).</li> <li>• Development of the following as part of Phase 2 of the Embedding Employability Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online Toolkit to support embedding Employability/ Graduate Attributes in the curriculum:</li> <li>○ Graduate Attribute Tracker - to support programme development and review.</li> <li>○ Student Online Toolkit and Resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
43	<p><b>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the Student Support Hub in the Moodle VLE.</li> </ul>	<p>Not completed.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).</p>

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

The section provides the meeting schedules for all significant academic governance bodies for the reporting period 2021/2022 (See Academic Quality Governance in AQR Part A for DkIT governance structures). Institute governance meetings were conducted in blended mode (face-to-face and/or remotely using web conferencing software (Microsoft Teams)) during the reporting period 2021/2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A summary of items/issues discussed at the meetings (cross referenced with other sections of the AQR, if appropriate) is provided in support of the meeting schedule listings.

Body	Meeting Dates
Academic Council (AC)	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 (Meeting No. 176S - Special Meeting)
Academic Council (AC)	8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2021 (Meeting No. 177)
Academic Council (AC)	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2021 (Meeting No. 177S - Special Meeting)
Academic Council (AC)	13 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021 (Meeting No. 178)
Academic Council (AC)	25 <sup>th</sup> February, 2022 (Meeting No. 179)
Academic Council (AC)	29 <sup>th</sup> April, 2022 (Meeting No. 180)
Academic Council (AC)	27 <sup>th</sup> May, 2022 (Meeting No. 181)
Academic Council (AC)	2 <sup>th</sup> June, 2022 (Meeting No. 182)
Standing Committee (SC)	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2021 (Meeting No. 70)
Standing Committee (SC)	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 (Meeting No. 70S - Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 (Meeting No. 71)
Standing Committee (SC)	7 <sup>th</sup> February (Meeting No. 71S - Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	15 <sup>th</sup> February (Meeting No. 71S (B) - Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 (Meeting No. 72)
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2021

Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	18 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2021
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	17 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 - Special Meeting
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 - - Special Meeting
Research and Innovation Sub-committee (RISC)	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Research and Innovation Sub-committee (RISC)	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Research and Innovation Sub-committee (RISC)	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Research and Innovation Sub-committee (RISC)	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Research and Innovation Sub-committee (RISC)	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2022
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Academic Development and Planning (ADP)	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Academic Development and Planning (ADP)	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2022

Academic Development and Planning (ADP)	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Academic Development and Planning (ADP)	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Leadership Team	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Leadership Team	9 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 (reconvened)
Leadership Team	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2021
Leadership Team	6 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Leadership Team	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Leadership Team	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021
Leadership Team	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Leadership Team	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
Leadership Team	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Leadership Team	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Leadership Team	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Leadership Team	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2022
Leadership Team	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Leadership Team	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022
Leadership Team	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Leadership Team	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Leadership Team	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Leadership Team	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 (reconvened)
Leadership Team	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2022
Leadership Team	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Leadership Team	29 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Leadership Team	13 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
Governing Body	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Governing Body	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Governing Body	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2021

Governing Body	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Governing Body	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
Governing Body	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
Governing Body	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Governing Body	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Governing Body	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2022
Governing Body	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Governing Body	3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022
Governing Body	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2022
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2022
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 (Special Meeting)
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 (Special Meeting)
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2022

## Academic Council

There were eight meetings of Academic Council and six meetings of the Standing Committee held during the reporting period 2021/2022. Of the Academic Council meetings six were regular scheduled meetings and two were special meetings.

Regular items for Academic Council meetings include: Policy approvals (new and amended; see AQR Part A), consideration of reports and approval of minutes from sub-committees; Ratification of programme validation reports; Approval of off-site venues for delivery of specific programmes; Approval of External Examiners; Ratification of student assessment results; Approval of prizes (president's prizes for conferring and school prizes).

Registrar Reports for the QQI Annual Quality Report (AQR) for the reporting period (2020/2021), outputs from annual monitoring activities (External Examiners Reports Summary (2020/2021), Programme Board Report Summary (2020/2021), Student Feedback Summary and Action Plans (Meeting No. 177 and Meeting No. 179), the postgraduate research Annual Report to DCU's GRSB (including postgraduate research student feedback), outputs from periodic review activities (school (including PCSBs accreditations), postgraduate research reviews, functional support unit reviews), the Academic Council and sub-committees schedule of meetings for the next academic year (Meeting 181) and the Student Voice are standing items on the Academic Council agenda. Also, sub-strategies of the Institute Strategic Plan are also considered as appropriate. Updates are also provided on Institute projects (DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative, Meeting No 177). Results of elections for Academic Council and associated sub-committees and Council nominations for the Governing Body are items on the agenda as appropriate. In the reporting period 2021/2022 vacant seat(s) and co-options to sub-committees were dealt with (Meeting 181 for Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC), Meeting No. 181 for Academic Development and Planning (ADP), Meeting No. 180 and 181 for Governing Body nomination(s)).

As indicated previously, the quality system continued to be impacted, albeit significantly reduced, by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Academic Council considered the following:

- Approval of students for Exceptional Progression (Schools of Business and Humanities, Health and Science) in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (Academic Council Meeting No. 177, Motions 177.02 and 177.03, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021).
- Alternative assessments for 2020/2021 noted (Academic Council Meeting No. 177, Motions 177.02 and 177.03, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021).
- Ongoing contingency regarding Assessment approved (Standing Committee Meeting No. 71, Motion 71.6, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (reconvened on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022):

Given the continuing surge in COVID-19 infections, that the Academic Council accepts the following contingencies regarding final examinations for semester 1 of the academic year 2021/2022:

- Institute on campus final examinations will be moved online for the January 2022 examination session.
  - Each School will review the final examination papers (closed-book) and if required make amendments to accommodate online assessment. The minimum necessary amendments to final examination papers, currently approved by External Examiners as closed-book examinations, can be made in consultation with Programme Boards (if possible), in order to ensure / promote academic integrity.
  - Each School will provide a record of the amendments to final examination papers (closed-book) to the Registrar's Office using the Final Examination Paper Amendment Log in order to satisfy quality assurance requirements.
- Protocols Examination Boards, including format (online and/or face-to-face) and mode of provision of assessment material to External Examiners, were considered and agreed (Standing Committee Meeting No. 70, 22nd October 2021), (Standing Committee Meeting No. 72, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022). This related to retaining best practice as appropriate following the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Regular updates were provided to Council on the DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Review which took place during the reporting period 2021/2022 (Academic Council, Meeting No. 177, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021; Meeting No. 179, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022; Meeting No. 180, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022) (see Section 1.4.2.2 Internal Periodic Reviews for Reporting Period). The DCU/DKIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement was also discussed (Academic Council, Meeting No. 178, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021).
    - The aim of the quality review was to determine the effectiveness of both the Collaborative Partnership between Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) and Dublin City University (DCU) and the quality assurance and enhancement of the postgraduate research provision at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) in the context of the DCU-DKIT Graduate School. The review of the Collaborative Partnership was carried out by Dublin City University (DCU) as an internal cyclical review in line with existing procedures established for DCU quality reviews, and aligned to the QQI Guidelines and policy, where appropriate. The Registrar's Office and Research and Graduate Studies Office at DkIT were supported throughout the quality review by the DCU Quality Promotion Office.
    - The quality review, which was conducted by an external Peer Review Group (PRG) made key findings, identified areas of good practice (commendations) and identified areas of improvement (recommendations). The following was stated in the "Summary of Key Findings and Identified Areas for Improvement" section of the PRG Report: *"The PRG welcomed the opportunity to conduct the quality review of the DCU-DKIT Graduate School. The establishment of the DCU-DKIT Graduate School built upon a well-established tradition of research and scholarship at DkIT, and the commitment of DkIT staff to research and*

*postgraduate supervision. It is clear that the Graduate School has been a key enabler of the trajectory of growth in the quality and effectiveness of postgraduate research supervision and provision at DkIT. The PRG felt that the review was timely given the stated ambition on the part of DkIT to continue the relationship with DCU in a changing higher education landscape and in the context of limited resources within the higher education institutions nationally.”*

- The outcome of the quality review is an endorsement of the ongoing commitment by all those involved in postgraduate research in both Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) (DCU and DkIT) to the provision of a quality postgraduate research environment. The recommendations made by the PRG will enable DkIT and DCU to ensure it continues to provide an exemplary postgraduate research experience to all postgraduate research stakeholders.

## **Academic Council Sub-committees**

A total of 31 sub-committee meetings took place during the reporting period 2021/2022. Four to five meetings of each of the five Academic Council Sub-Committees (Standing Committee, Learning and Teaching sub-committee (LTSC), Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC), Research and Innovation Sub-committee (RISC), DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)) were held during the reporting period 2021/2022. The Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) met on seven occasions (five normal meetings and two special meetings). The new established Academic Development and Planning (ADP) sub-committee met four times in the reporting period.

## **Leadership Team**

Meetings of the Leadership Team were held approximately once every two weeks. Twenty scheduled meetings of the Leadership Team and two reconvened meetings were held during the reporting period 2021/2022 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

**Topics discussed:** Finance; Pathway to Effect Surplus; Space Audit; Covid-19 Update; Student Numbers; IT Infrastructure; Student Fees; TU scheme for NRRP; 50th Anniversary Event; Examination halls costings; TSSRF Capital Call; HEA Compact SER 2018-2021; Honorary Professorships; DCU Research Review and Current Agreement; DkIT Child Protection Policy Committee; Healthy Campus Steering Committee; Institute EDI Committee; IMPC Committee.



## Governing Body

Fifteen scheduled meetings of the Institute Governing Body and two special meetings were held during the reporting period of 2021/2022 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

**Topics discussed:** Personnel; Governing Body Strategy (TU) Project Governance and Oversight Committee; Use of Institute Seal; Finance Audit and Risk Committee; Strategic Plan Committee; Student Numbers; Land and Buildings Committee; Academic Council Minutes; Leases; THEA Code of Governance; Student Recruitment; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

## Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)

Four meetings of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC) were held during 2021/2022 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

**Topics discussed:** Update on CRM System; Athena Swan; Conferring; Evening Catering Service; Access to buildings for researchers; Provision of Part-time programmes; 'Talk before you walk' Initiative. Equipment policies; Academic Calendar; Academic Fees.

## Academic Heads Forum (AHF)

Five scheduled meetings of the Institute Academic Heads Forum (AHF) and two special meetings were held during 2021/2022 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

**Topics discussed:** Update from IMPC; CA Schedule Template; Poor Student Engagement (First Year Results); Potential Collaborations for TU; Part-time Programme Funding - Operations and Management; Update from Covid-19 Task Force; Academic Integrity; Evening Examinations; Student Survey.ie; Facilities and Supports for Part-Time Learners; Update from VP for Finance, Resources & Diversity; CRM System; 'Repeat for Honours' issue; Zoom Licences; Plagiarism Training for Students; Data-enabled student success: A framework for DkIT; Deadline for Timetables.

## 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

This section details changes to units of governance, and to leadership/management (e.g. members of senior management; heads of schools; heads of professional support units) that occurred, including new roles established, during the reporting period 2019/2020.

The Academic Development and Planning sub-committee of the Academic Council was established (See Section 1.1.2 Changes to Academic Quality Governance). An Educational Psychologist was

appointed in Student Services using funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (see Section 1.1.6 Professional Support Units (Student Services) Activities and Developments).

## **1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review**

This section discusses internal monitoring activities and periodic reviews including reviews that have been completed or are in progress during the reporting period 2021/2022.

### **1.4.1 Monitoring**

Internal monitoring is a core part of the Institute's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (see AQR Part A). The following internal monitoring activities are completed on an annual basis (with other monitoring for particular purposes being completed as relevant):

- Annual Programme Monitoring (Programme Board Reporting, External Examining, Student Feedback).
- Annual Postgraduate Research Monitoring.
- Annual Professional Service Unit Monitoring (Student Services).

#### **1.4.1.1 Annual Programme Monitoring**

Programme Board reports are the primary output of the academic programme monitoring activities that take place annually across all schools and are integral part of the Institute's academic quality assurance and enhancement system. In the reporting period, taught programmes were reviewed by the Programme Boards in each school and reported in the Annual Programme Board reports for 2020/2021. Schools were required to submit reports to the Registrar's Office in December 2021 (for 2020/2021). Reports are submitted using a standard template which has been adopted by Academic Council. The Registrar's Office support the schools and provide sources of evidence for consideration by Programme Boards and subsequent inclusion as appropriate in the reports (admissions data, student feedback data, progression data, external examiner reports, Graduate Outcome Survey data (if available for the period) and other relevant information). A summary of the reports for 2020/2021 was reviewed by the Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC) before the end of the 2021/2022 academic year and was presented, with recommendation(s) and action(s), to the May/June meeting of the Academic Council.

A total of eighty-four Programme Board Reports from across the four Schools (Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts) for the academic year 2020/2021 (considered during the reporting period) were reviewed and actions formulated.

One of the sources of evidence used to compile Programme Board Reports are the annual reports submitted by External Examiners. An External Examiner Summary Report (Registrar's Report) for a particular academic year is presented to the Academic Council in the subsequent academic year (for example the summary for 2020/2021 will be presented in 2021/2022). The report, which is an indicator of how the External Examining system is operating generally, provides a qualitative analysis of External Examiner reports submitted to the Registrar's Office for a particular academic year. The purpose of the analysis is to determine if the External Examining system as a whole is enabling the Institute to assure the standard of assessments and thus contribute to the maintenance of the integrity of DkIT's awards. This analysis compliments the External Examiner Report analysis conducted by Heads of Department and Programme Boards at Department level within Schools.

The External Examiner Report summary for 2020/2021 was as follows:

- A total of ninety-five External Examiner reports from across the four Schools (Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts) for the academic year 2020/2021 were reviewed.
- Feedback received by External Examiners under all categories was satisfactory as evidenced by the number of positive comments in each category. This is particularly notable given the challenging COVID-19 environment that students, staff and external examiners were operating in.
- Qualitative comments provided as feedback in External Examiner reports were categorised manually in accordance with a coding scheme derived from the sections contained in the External Examiner Report template for 2020/2021.

The School of Health and Science submitted its Annual Report to the Veterinary Council of Ireland (PSRB) for the *Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing* programme.

## **Student Feedback**

Students participated in the StudentSurvey.ie survey (<https://studentsurvey.ie/>), which included programme feedback (QA3) questions, during the reporting period 2021/2022. As mentioned, student feedback is one of the sources of evidence provided by the Registrar's Office (in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching) to schools for consideration and action by Programme Boards.

## **StudentSurvey.ie Feedback Survey**

StudentSurvey.ie 2022 ran from 14th February to the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (three weeks). Significant efforts on the part of the Registrar's Office, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT),

academic Departments and the Students' Union (SU) allowed DkIT to achieve a response rate of 31%. Unsurprisingly, the findings indicated greater levels of engagement and satisfaction in 2022 compared to the 2021 findings, most likely reflecting the impact of the return to campus after the COVID-19 pandemic. 80% of respondents rated their experience as 'good' or 'excellent' and 4% as 'poor' in contrast to 70% and 5% respectively in 2021. This is in line with the StudentSurvey.ie average of 79% responding 'excellent or good' and slightly higher than the Technological Higher Education (THES) sector average of 76%.

In terms of engagement indices, 'Student-Faculty Interaction' and 'Effective Teaching Practices', unsurprisingly, showed marked increase on 2021. The engagement indices were comparable to the averages for StudentSurvey.ie and the THES averages, benchmarking favourably for 'Student-Faculty Interaction' and 'Supportive Environment. As in previous years, the responses also indicated a strong emphasis on student support in relative terms.

<i>Quite a bit / Very much</i>	44%	56%	42%	34%
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\*THEI - Technological Higher Education Institutes

### Responses to Questions on Feedback

In order to focus on 'closing the gap' with respect to the feedback from StudentSurvey.ie, the Learning and Teaching Sub-committee of the Academic Council set up a working group (StudentSurvey.ie Working Group) to examine the survey findings annually and identify potential priorities for action/enhancement to be discussed with class representatives and priorities for action agreed. This action plan is approved by Academic Council. For example, the 2021 action plan (in response to the 2020 survey) included the development of a strategy and structured process to support students who are considering withdrawing, the '*Talk Before You Walk*' initiative. This includes a student facing campaign (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/talk-before-you-walk/>) and a structured process for staff to identify incoming students who may be in need of support during the first semester.

The priorities for academic year 2021/2022 were based on the 2021 survey findings. The responses to questions on assessment and feedback and working effectively with others were less positive than in previous years. In response, the action plan priorities were:

- Provision of feedback on assignments.
- Assessment of group work.

The action plan included the review of guidelines on assessed group work, training and professional development, development of resources for staff and students and enhancement activity as part of the National Forum SATLE 2020 (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/funding/strategic-alignment-of->

[teaching-and-learning-enhancement-funding-in-higher-education-2020/](#)) funded project 'Focus on Feedback'.

The table below shows the 2022 responses to the questions on feedback. They are considerably more favourable than those in 2021 and also benchmark favourably. Similarly, the responses to the question on working effectively with others were also more positive. 72% indicated that their experience at DkIT had contributed 'quite a bit' or 'very much' to this skill, an increase on the 2021 rate of 64% and greater than the THES and StudentSurvey.ie averages of 67% and 66% respectively. It is likely that the return to campus (after the COVID-19 pandemic) has played a considerable part in these improvements, however, the benchmarking may indicate that the enhancement activity made some contribution.

<b>During the current academic year to what extent have lecturers provided prompt and detailed feedback on a test of assignment? (% 'quite a bit' or 'very much')</b>				
<b>DkIT 2022</b>	<b>DkIT 2021</b>	<b>TES 2022</b>	<b>TES 2021</b>	<b>StudentSurvey.ie 2022</b>
52%	40%	44%	44%	43%
<b>During the current academic year to what extent have lecturers provided feedback on a draft or work-in progress (% 'quite a bit' or 'very much')</b>				
53%	44%	43%	42%	38%

Responses to the Studentsurvey.ie Feedback Questions

The responses to the open-ended question "*What could your institution do to improve student engagement?*" indicated a strong preference for more active, practical approaches to learning and teaching with plenty of interaction and support and use of a wide range of different approaches to meet the needs of all learners. In response, the StudentSurvey.ie Working Group has proposed that inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment as the action plan priority.

#### **1.4.1.2 Annual Postgraduate Research Monitoring**

The Research and Graduate Studies Office conducts quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities annually. DkIT submits an Annual Postgraduate Research Report to Dublin City University's (DCU's) Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) as part of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal monitoring. Annual Reporting for the collaborative partnership arrangement is through the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) and DCU Academic Council. DkIT submitted the Annual Postgraduate Research Report to DCU on <date>. The Annual Report is informed by student feedback (Postgraduate Research Student Feedback Survey and the national PGR StudentSurvey.ie Feedback

Survey (<https://studentsurvey.ie/>) which are core quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms for postgraduate research provision (See AQR Part A, Section 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review).

### Postgraduate Research Student Feedback Survey

Postgraduate research students were surveyed as part of a postgraduate research quality review (DCU/DKIT Graduate School Quality Review; see Section 1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews) which took place during the reporting period. This feedback survey substituted for the annual postgraduate research feedback survey for the reporting period.

The survey requested student feedback on various dimensions of the postgraduate research student experience: Induction and Training, Supervisory Contact and Support, Research Culture and Community, Resources, Quality Assurance, Completion Times and Overall Postgraduate Research Experience. The response rate was 54.5% (42 out of 77 students responded; 78% of respondents were from Research Centres and Groups).

A review of the postgraduate student feedback indicated that DkIT continues to provide a quality postgraduate research student experience during the reporting period 2020/2021:

Postgraduate Research Dimension	Results
<i>Overall Postgraduate Research Experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% rate their overall research experience within the Institute as of low quality.</li> <li>• 67% rate it as either very high or high.</li> <li>• 90% say they feel supported by Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> <li>• 73% say they feel the Institute values their contribution.</li> </ul>
<i>Induction and Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 90% feel their research skills have been developed during their time at the Institute.</li> <li>• 70% state they have been provided with the required transferable skills training.</li> <li>• 63% feel they have been provided with specialist training aligned with their research programme.</li> </ul>
<i>Supervisory Contact and Support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 97% of postgraduate researchers state they have regular formal/informal contact with their</li> </ul>

	<p>supervisory team and they have appropriate level of support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% feel their supervisory team gives them formal feedback on their progress regularly.</li> <li>• 72% state their training needs have been identified by their supervisory team.</li> <li>• 85% state they know what they can expect from their supervisor(s)</li> </ul>
<i>Research Culture and Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% feel the research culture stimulates their research work.</li> <li>• 41% feel connected to the research community within the Institute</li> </ul>
<i>Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 64% have suitable office space.</li> <li>• 66% feel they have adequate library resources.</li> <li>• 55% agree they have adequate specialist facilities.</li> </ul>
<i>Quality Assurance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 88% understand the formal annual monitoring process.</li> <li>• 80% are familiar with the PhD transfer process.</li> <li>• 66% understand the processes around examination of their thesis.</li> <li>• 40% say they don't have a working knowledge of research degree regulations.</li> </ul>
<i>Completion Times</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% are not confident of completing their research degree within the specified timeline.</li> </ul>

Actions from the Postgraduate Research Student Feedback Survey were included in the quality review enhancement plan which will be implemented and monitored in the reporting period 2022/2023 onwards.

### **PGR StudentSurvey.ie Feedback Survey**

The PGR StudentSurvey.ie feedback survey was not administered nationally in the reporting period 2021/2022.

### 1.4.1.3 Annual Professional Support Unit Monitoring (Student Services)

Student services request feedback from service users as part of their annual monitoring activities. Feedback is reviewed on an ongoing basis with service providers and annually as part of the Service Annual Report (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/student-services-annual-reports/student-services-annual-reports.html>). Service Providers participate on national committees and review their service in line with national standards and best practice. Work plans and resources are reviewed in line with feedback, best practice and the Institute's strategic plan.

The following is a summary of the monitoring activities for the reporting period 2021/2022 from service users:

#### Careers and Employability Centre (CEC)

Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) uses annual GOS, feedback from employer events (via Microsoft Forms surveys), and feedback from students on careers appointments, workshops and events to inform career engagement action plans. The Placement Office also uses feedback from surveys with students and employers to inform placement support and development. Placement Officers are invited to sit on Programme Boards / Placement Working Groups within academic departments in schools.

The following is a summary of the analysis of feedback received for the CEC:

Category	Results
<i>Careers 1-to-1 Appointments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% agreed scheduling their appointment was easy, compared to 92% in 2020/2021.</li> <li>• 100% agreed their Careers Advisor paid attention to their query and were knowledgeable, an increase of 8% (92% in 2020/2021).</li> <li>• 75% agreed they were able to identify their next steps would be, which is 7% lower than previous year. However, 100% took action based on the conversation with their careers advisor.</li> <li>• 100% agreed that talking to Careers Advisor was valuable they would return if further assistance was required, an increase of 8%).</li> </ul>



<p><i>Student Work Placement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2021/2022 the Placement Office carried out an annual survey to obtain feedback from both host sites and students regarding their work placement experience.</li> <li>• 100% of host site respondents said that DkIT placement student's added value to their service, citing motivated and enthusiastic undergraduates who are willing and eager to learn and that students are an extra resource to start/complete specialised projects as the main added value. This feedback is significant as it boosts confidence for students going on work placement who have had no previous work experience and feel they have nothing to offer.</li> <li>• According to our host sites, teamwork and work ready were the two most important student attributes.</li> <li>• Feedback from students was also useful citing their greatest learnings as professional confidence and enhancing transferable skills.</li> </ul>
<p><i>National Student and Graduate Survey of Higher Education Careers Services (CIBYL Survey)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIBYL (<a href="https://www.cibyl.com/">https://www.cibyl.com/</a>) is a national Student and Graduate Survey of all Higher Education Careers Services in Ireland and the UK. In 2021/2022 30+ HEI's participated, with 18,994 total responses. The online survey took place between October 2021 and January 2022. DKIT participate in the survey, with 788 respondents from DkIT, as part of national benchmarking and as a student feedback mechanism specific to the careers and employability service.</li> <li>• The key findings of the survey for DkIT were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Career Service satisfaction increased by 10% since 2020/2021 (but has returned to pre-pandemic levels; 2022: 54%, 2021:44%, 2020:74%).</li> <li>○ 55% of students are using the careers service.</li> <li>○ Students want more employer events, particularly careers fairs and guest talks.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students are most satisfied with email communication (60% of students were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”), specific to their interests.</li> <li>○ Fewer students are prioritising looking for graduate schemes compared with previous years.</li> <li>○ Students need more support with interviews, particularly recorded video interviews.</li> <li>○ Students are utilising virtual career events but still have a preference for face-to-face interactions.</li> <li>○ Students are using the social media platform Instagram to access career information.</li> </ul>
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### Disability Service

- A student survey (using Microsoft Forms) was circulated to all students registered with the disability service (There were 300 student registrations and 1,159 learning support sessions provided during the reporting period 2021/2022). Thirty-seven students completed the survey, 81% of whom were either very or somewhat satisfied and 5% were very dissatisfied with the disability service.

### Student Counselling Service

Benchmarked data from Ciao, a standardized measure of counselling impact on academic outcomes used across colleges in the UK is representative of feedback received from DkIT students in relation to the Counselling Service:

- 77% said that counselling helped them stay in college.
- 51% said it [counselling service] was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in college.
- 88% said it [counselling service] helped them do better in their academic work.
- 50% said it [counselling service] was an important or most significant factor in doing better at their academic work.
- 91% said it [counselling service] had improved their overall experience of college/university.
- 68% said it [counselling service] was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in improving their college experience.
- 90% said counselling had helped them develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment.

- 53% said it [counselling service] was an important or most significant factor.
- 85% said that counselling has improved their self-esteem.
- 63% said it [counselling service] was an important or most significant factor in improving their self-esteem.
- 78% said that counselling had helped them feel more positive about the future.
- 52% said that counselling was an important or most significant factor in feeling more positive about the future.

The feedback demonstrates the impact of counselling not just on well-being and self-esteem but also on student retention and their performance in college.

### **Pastoral Care Service**

- In the academic year of 2021/2022, 121 interactions were recorded of students who interacted with the Pastoral Care Service. Moving forward there is scope to record more specific information to get a better break down of data (e.g. gender, age, school etc).

### **Health Unit**

Students completed an online anonymous survey (Microsoft Forms) to evaluate their overall experience of the Health Unit service:

- 93% expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the overall treatment received in the Health Unit.
- 94% had a positive experience with the nurse.
- 93% had a positive experience with the doctors.
- 92% would recommend the Health Unit service to a friend.
- 79% satisfaction with online virtual appointments.
- 89% of students were satisfied with the location of the Health Unit. However its location on the first floor in its location caused difficulties for students with mobility issues.

### **Sports and Societies**

DkIT ranked eleventh out of thirty-one Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Student Sport Ireland grading system for college competitions called 'Student Sport Ireland Sports College of the Year'. The system awards points for participation and performance at third level sporting competitions.

The Moodle VLE and sports and societies specific social media channels continued to play a significant role in communications with students:

	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Instagram</b>
<b>Number of likes</b>	<b>Number of followers</b>	<b>Number of followers</b>
2013 - 170	2013 - 190	2015 - 120
2019 - 6000	2019 - 2047	2019 - 1256
2020 - 6210	2020 - 2088	2020 - 1494
2021 - 6175	2021 - 2048	2021 - 1950
2022 - 6172	2022 - 2057	2022 - 2161

## 1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews

This section includes reviews completed or in progress during the reporting period 2021/2022. As indicated in the Institute’s quality assurance and enhancement framework (AQR Part A), internal periodic reviews can be School Programmatic Reviews (including PSRB accreditation reviews), Postgraduate Research Reviews and Professional Support Unit Reviews. The Institute’s review schedule from the previous AQR is provided in Section 1.4.2.1 (covering a period since the last Institutional Review). The review cycle typically runs over a five to seven year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

### 1.4.2.1 Internal Periodic Review Schedule

Year	2017/18 and 2018/19
Areas/Units	Institutional Review
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	<p>Final Report  <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews?sector=23&amp;provider_type=22&amp;document_type=16&amp;year=All&amp;provider_name=">https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews?sector=23&amp;provider_type=22&amp;document_type=16&amp;year=All&amp;provider_name=;</a>  Feb 2023)</p> <p>Implementation Plan (Follow-up actions)  <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews?sector=23&amp;provider_type=22&amp;document_type=31&amp;year=All&amp;provider_name=">https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews?sector=23&amp;provider_type=22&amp;document_type=31&amp;year=All&amp;provider_name=;</a>  Feb, 2023)</p>

<b>Year</b>	2018/19
<b>Areas/Units</b>	Programmatic Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School of Health and Science;</li><li>• School of Engineering;</li><li>• School of Informatics and Creative Arts;</li><li>• School of Business and Humanities;</li><li>• Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	5
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	N/A

<b>Year</b>	2019/2020
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None.</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	N/A

<b>Year</b>	2019/2020
<b>Areas/Units</b>	Graduate Studies Office: Research Centre Designation of Research Institutes.
<b>Number</b>	6
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	N/A

<b>Year</b>	2019/2020
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None.</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	N/A

<b>Year</b>	2020/2021
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<b>Areas/Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>
<b>Number</b>	N/A
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	N/A

<b>Year</b>	2021/2022
<b>Areas/Units</b>	Research and Graduate Studies (DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Review)
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	N/A

<b>Year</b>	2022/2023
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<p>Professional Service Areas (Registrars):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library.</li> <li>• International Office.</li> <li>• Admissions.</li> <li>• Access Office.</li> <li>• Schools Liaison.</li> <li>• Examinations Office.</li> <li>• Careers and Employability;</li> <li>• Disability Service;</li> <li>• Health Unit;</li> <li>• Counselling Service;</li> <li>• Pastoral Care;</li> <li>• Sports and Societies;</li> </ul> <p>Graduate Studies Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Excellence in Research Award to be externally reviewed.</li> </ul>
<b>Number</b>	12
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	

<b>Year</b>	2023/2024
<b>Areas/Units</b>	Programmatic Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School of Health and Science;</li><li>• School of Engineering;</li><li>• School of Informatics and Creative Arts;</li><li>• School of Business and Humanities;</li><li>• Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li></ul> Professional Service Areas (Registrars): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Computer Services.</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	
<b>Year</b>	2024/2025
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be determined.</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	
<b>Year</b>	2025/2026
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be determined.</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	



### 1.4.2.2 Internal Periodic Reviews for Reporting Period

**Note:** see Section 3.2: Reviews Planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods for updated review schedule.

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Research and Graduate Studies (DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Status:</b> Completed.</li> <li>• <b>Date of Completion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ratification at DkIT Academic Council - 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.</li> <li>○ Noting at DCU's Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) - 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022.</li> <li>○ Self-assessment, PRG site visit and subsequent follow-up was completed during the report period 2021/2022.</li> <li>○ See detailed timelines below for further information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DCU:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports">https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports</a> (under "Area Review- DCU-DKIT Graduate School").</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>DKIT:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Website currently being redeveloped.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Unit of Review - Research and Graduate Studies (DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Review) - Timelines

Date	Activity
30 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification of quality review received from Dublin City University (DCU)</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2021 - 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assessment completed by DKIT, supported by the DCU Quality Promotion Office.</li> </ul>
31 <sup>st</sup> January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Assessment Report (SAR) submitted to the DCU Quality Promotion Office.</li> </ul>
23 <sup>rd</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Review Group (PRG) site visits took place on the DCU and DkIT campuses.</li> </ul>
24 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DkIT Registrar's Office received Peer Review Group (PRG) Report (draft initially for factual accuracy and then final) from the DCU Quality Promotion and Institutional Research Office.</li> </ul>
30 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Response and Enhancement Plan was submitted to DCU Quality Promotion Office (QPO).</li> </ul>
31 <sup>st</sup> August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Response and Enhancement Plan was circulated to representatives of the Peer Review Group (PRG) (Chair and Rapporteur) for review and feedback.</li> </ul>

2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Response and Enhancement Plan was circulated to DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB).</li> </ul>
9 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	<p><b>DCU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadline for feedback from representatives of the PRG to DCU Quality Promotion Office (QPO).</li> </ul> <p><b>DkIT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response and Enhancement Plan was noted at the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB).</li> <li>DkIT finalised the Response and Enhancement Plan to include feedback from the PRG representatives / DCU Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadline for submission of PRG Report, Response and Enhancement Plan for the DkIT Academic Council.</li> </ul>
10 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG Report, Response and Enhancement Plan noted by the DkIT Leadership Team (with any resource implications to be considered by the appropriate DkIT budget/resources sub-committee/group).</li> </ul>
13 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Response and Enhancement Plan was submitted to DCU for the DCU GRSB.</li> </ul>
14 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG Report, Response and Enhancement Plan was ratified at the DkIT Academic Council.</li> </ul>
20 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response and Enhancement Plan was noted at the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB).</li> </ul>
15 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG report and DkIT Response and Enhancement Plan was at the DCU Senior Management Group (SMG) and DCU Executive.</li> </ul>
16 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG report and DkIT Response and Enhancement Plan was noted at the DCU Quality Promotion Committee (QPC).</li> </ul>
18 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG report and DkIT Response and Enhancement Plan was noted at the DCU Governing Authority.</li> </ul>
13 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG Report, Response and Enhancement Plan was noted at the DkIT Governing Body.</li> </ul>
November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final PRG Report, Response and Enhancement Plan was published by DkIT and DCU.</li> </ul>
November 2022 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement Plan will be implemented and monitored by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB).</li> <li>Enhancement Plan implementation and monitoring will be reported in the DkIT Annual Report to DCU GRSB.</li> </ul>

### 1.4.3 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>3</sup> involved in IQA

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

The table below provides information of review/evaluation processes that were concluded during the reporting period 2021/2022:

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
<b>Number of review/ evaluation processes</b>	32	0	0	1  (DkIT is a collaborative partner of Dublin City University (DCU) with the DCU-DkIT Graduate School; previously a linked provider arrangement)	30	0	2
<i>of those:</i>							
<b>On-site processes</b>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Desk reviews</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Virtual processes</b>	30	0	0	0	30	0	0
<b>Average panel size for each process type*</b>	4	0	0	0	4	0	0

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

**Note(s):**

- Under “Number of review/evaluation processes”, “Programme Approvals” refer to either new programme validations or differential programme validations. Exit or Embedded Awards are treated as separate approval processes.
- Under Number of review/evaluation processes, “Other” refer to module validations.

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

The table below provides information in respect of the composition of panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period 2021/2022 (Note that ‘Similar institution’ denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission - for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example):

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	10	5	5	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	0
Secretary	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Academic/Discipline Specific	26	15	11	0	0	21	5	0	1	26	0
Student Representative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QA	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching & Learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
External Industry /Third Mission	10	6	4	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	10

**Note(s):**

- Figures above are based on counting a panel member only once even if they reviewed more than one programme or chaired more than one panel.
- The Registrar or Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance act as Secretary for all programme validation panels.
- In accordance with the Institute's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (See AQR Part 1) the composition of programme validation panels is as follows:

Major Awards	Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Chair;</li> <li>• At least two external academics who are acknowledged nationally and/or internationally as academic experts in the field of study;</li> <li>• One practitioner or industry representative;</li> <li>• Representative from the Registrar's Office.</li> <li>• For NFQ level 9 programmes, there must be one academic from outside the State.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Chair;</li> <li>• Two external discipline experts;</li> <li>• Representative from the Registrar's Office.</li> </ul>

- When programme validation panels are being constituted the Registrar's Office ensure that panel member(s) have Teaching and Learning and Quality Assurance expertise as appropriate (as per "Type of Expert" in the Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA above).

## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

This section provides an overview of developments and enhancements during the reporting period 2021/2022. It also provides an update on the main enhancements arising from the CINNTE review process and institutional review report.

### 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/student-learning-and-development-centre/>) provides scheduled tutorials and 1:1 support on academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism. Tutors also work with lecturers to deliver bespoke classes for specific student groups on many aspects of academic writing, study skills and academic integrity. The library runs class, drop-ins and provides 1:1 referencing and information literacy support for students. The SDLC provides a range of resources to support academic integrity and these resources are available to students in the Moodle VLE. The Registrar's Office also provides support sessions on Academic Integrity policy and procedures.

The Institute continued its work enhancing supports for Academic Integrity in the reporting period 2021/2022. The Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the library work collaboratively on Academic Integrity initiatives and activities. The Institute actively participated in *National Academic Integrity Week 2021* which took place from 18<sup>th</sup> October to the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021. The week is curated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) with national events being offered by HEI's as well as webinars offered by ENAI (<https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/>) and ICAI (<https://www.academicintegrity.org/>). The International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating (<https://academicintegrity.org/events-conferences/idoa-international-day-of-action-against-contract-cheating>) took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021. DkIT provided a range of activities in the area of Academic Integrity aimed at promoting best practice in scholarly communication

<p><b>Webinar(s)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Managing Your Time to Ensure Academic Integrity: A Workshop for Students</b> (21<sup>st</sup> October 2021):</p> <p>This interactive session explored effective ways for students to manage time and competing deadlines to promote good academic practice, acknowledging that stress is known to be associated with plagiarism and poor academic practice.</p> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessment Design and Academic Integrity (22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021):</b> This interactive session used practical examples and shared experiences to explore how assessment design can be used to promote academic integrity and reduce opportunities for plagiarism (cross reference in Section 2.2.1 Staff Training and Professional Development)</li> <li>• <b>Academic Integrity - Addressing Plagiarism and Contract Cheating (9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, Dr Thomas Lancaster - Imperial College London, United Kingdom):</b> This staff development workshop explored the role of academic integrity within the education system, with a focus on the procedures in use at DKIT and the resources available to support staff. Although many types of academic misconduct exist, the session prioritised looking at the related areas of plagiarism and contract cheating, both of which can be damaging to students and the educational system as a whole. The workshop considered how educators can help students to avoid academic misconduct, how they can recognise plagiarism and contract cheating and what they should do if these types of academic misconduct are suspected. Participants had access to a toolkit of resources to help them preserve academic integrity and the session also equipped participants to take on the role of Plagiarism Advisor within the Institute to handle suspected cases of plagiarism.</li> </ul>
<b>Library Drop-ins:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Has a Value, Harvard Referencing, Practicing Academic Integrity</li> </ul>
<b>Libguides</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harvard Referencing, Plagiarism - how to avoid it (<a href="https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/">https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/</a>)</li> </ul>

## Academic Integrity Digital Badge

DkIT launched an Academic Integrity digital badge in the reporting period 2021/2022 (19<sup>th</sup> October 2021; building on work completed in previous reporting periods) during National Academic Integrity Week 2021. The digital badge enables students to: (1) learn what academic integrity is and why it is important, (2) understand how academic integrity relates to their work in DkIT, (3) recognise when credit needs to be given to others and (4) be familiar with citing and referencing using Harvard.

## Epigeum Academic Integrity Support Modules

DkIT launched a pilot of the Epigeum Academic Integrity modules (<https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/>) for students and staff for the reporting period 2021/2022 (20<sup>th</sup> October 2021), having subscribed to the modules and commenced planning for the pilot in May 2021. The Academic Integrity modules from Epigeum support institutions in implementing a consistent and unified approach to academic integrity training for both students and staff. The online programme, which is deployed in the Moodle VLE, ensures that every member of the HEI community understands what constitutes best academic practice in their role, substantially reducing the risk of academic misconduct. A number of HEIs across Ireland have adopted the support modules and through Epigeum a community of practice has been established where collaborating partners can share their experiences with the academic integrity modules.

See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022) for actions related to Academic Integrity.

## National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

The Institute continued to be an active participant (through the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Registrar's Office) in the QQI National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) (<https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/engagement-insights-and-knowledge-sharing/national-academic-integrity-network>) which commenced its work in 2019/2020. The NAIN assists QQI with establishing the nature of academic misconduct practised in Irish higher education institutions; identifying appropriate measures to both prevent and address such academic misconduct; and informing dedicated communications strategies and/or enhancement initiatives developed in this area by QQI.

A number of NAIN plenary meetings and Working Group meetings were held during the reporting period 2021/2022. The output of the NAIN continues to inform Academic Integrity policy and procedures, activities and initiatives within the Institute. Dedicated Academic Integrity updates on the work of the network were disseminated regularly by the Registrar's Office during the reporting period. DkIT also continued its participation with the development of the NAIN resource provisionally entitled "*Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management*".

See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023) for actions related to Academic Integrity.



## 2.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This section discusses enhancement in the area of teaching, learning and assessment in the reporting period 2021/2022.

### 2.2.1 Staff Training and Professional Development

#### Accredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

The accredited programmes in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching, Certificate in Learning and Teaching and Certificate in Assessment and Feedback) continued to be successful in the reporting period 2021/2022 attracting learners from among DkIT staff and colleagues from Further Education and Training (FET), post-primary, and private companies across the region. A total of sixty-two DkIT staff members have now completed the Masters programme, nineteen have completed the Certificate in Learning and Teaching and one has completed the Certificate in Assessment and Feedback.

#### Unaccredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

A varied programme of seminars and workshops was offered in 2021/2022 including sharing practice events, masterclasses and short workshops. There was a blend of online and face-to-face provision addressing a wide range of issues including use of Moodle and Moodle data, assessment and feedback and digital accessibility. The schedule was as follows:

Event Title	Date	No. Registered
Induction workshop for First-year convenors	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	30
Student Success: Practice Sharing event.	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	26
Focus on Feedback: Sharing Practice event Keynote: Professor Philip Dawson	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	40
Introduction to Curriculum Management using Akari Curriculum	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	3
Attendance in Moodle	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	3
Analytic Graphs/Heatmaps in Moodle	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	13
Activity Completion in Moodle	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022	5
Attendance in Moodle	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2022	3
Blended and Online Learning Policy	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	46
Blended and Online Learning Policy	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	12
Introduction to H5P	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	13
Introduction to Digital Accessibility	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	27

Starting out with Moodle	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	10
Teaching, Learning and Assessment - New staff induction	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021	8
Introduction to Digital Accessibility	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021	26
Assessment Design and Academic Integrity (cross reference with section 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity).	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2021	19
Enhancing Student Success through student-staff partnership. Keynote: Professor Mick Healy	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	17
Getting published: Going public with your SOTL work Keynote: Professor Mick Healy	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	10
Moodle and Online Delivery for Guest Lecturers	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	12

## 2.3 Supports and Resources for Learners

Significant work to develop a Student Support Hub in the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was undertaken through the reporting periods 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. This was part of the ‘*Gateway to Success*’ project, funded under the Higher Education Authority (HEA)’s 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund (<https://tinyurl.com/383jt3yz>). The Hub was launched in January 2021 and academic year 2021/2022 was the first full academic year of operation. A preliminary evaluation was conducted in semester 1 of 2021/2022 which indicated a high level of use (164,757 view by students and 30,845 student actions between 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022). Student feedback was very positive; students particularly like the ease of use and accessibility of support. However it is clear that further, ongoing work is needed to raise awareness of the Hub and the support it offers. The Hub was shortlisted for the 2022 Education Awards in the ‘*Best Use of Educational Technology/ICT Initiative*’ category.

### National Forum SATLE (Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement) 2020 Projects

SATLE (Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement) is a non-competitive fund from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning co-ordinated and supported locally by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). Under the 2020 fund, DkIT was awarded €96,000. This supported the three projects detailed below. The projects commenced in semester two of academic year 2020/2021 and were completed by the end of academic year 2021/2022. They were co-ordinated by CELT across DkIT. As in previous years, this funding also supported enhancement studentships in summer 2022 to support students as partners in enhancement. These enhancement studentships have been very effective and DkIT hopes to sustain the scheme into the future.

### Data-enabled Student Success: A Framework for DkIT

This project aimed to develop a strategy and framework to support data use to enable student success and to develop capacity in the use of data to promote student success. Project lead Dr Philip Scanlon and researcher Dr Jonathan Hodgers, undertook extensive consultation and developed a draft framework to support data-informed learning and teaching. The framework has a strong emphasis on using the evidence available to inform action. To complement this, the project developed and coordinated a campaign ‘*Make the most of your Moodle Data*’. This focused on raising awareness and included resources and training to encourage staff to use readily available Moodle VLE reports and features to inform their learning, teaching and assessment. The resources are available on the DkIT learning, teaching and assessment Hub, ‘*Learning with Moodle*’ (<https://2023-moodle.dkit.ie/course/view.php?id=984>; DkIT login required). Key project outputs were shared at a student success sharing practice event in June 2022 and also disseminated at the national EdTech 2022 conference (<https://ilta.ie/>).

### Focus on Feedback

This project focused on enhancing feedback and supported the action plan in response to the 2022 *StudentSurvey.ie* survey findings. The project aim were:

- To create space for staff and students to discuss feedback and share best practice;
- To build on existing good practice to increase awareness, of and capacity in, current thinking and best practice in assessment and feedback;
- To promote assessment literacy among students.

The project supported enhancement work by staff and students to enhance feedback and engagement with feedback. This included work in partnership with students to develop resources for students, by students, to encourage engagement with, and application of, feedback. These resources are available on the Student Learning and Development Centre (<https://2023-moodle.dkit.ie/course/view.php?id=3990>; DkIT login required). There was a strong focus on sharing practice. This included a sharing practice event in May 2022, with keynote by Professor Philip Dawson and initial work on an edited collection by staff and students, sharing experiences and practices around feedback. This was completed in the academic year 2022/2023, the output of which was published in STÓR (dkit.ie), ‘Focus on Feedback: Stories of what works and why’ (<https://eprints.dkit.ie/839/>). The project raised awareness of feedback and the importance of good practice.

### Transition in a Digital World

This project focused on transition in the context of the return to campus (after the COVID-19 pandemic). For both incoming first years and returning students, the previous academic years had been very challenging and in some cases, were largely online. This project aimed to:

- To enhance transition and the return to campus;
- To foster a sense of belonging;
- To promote academic engagement, digital citizenship and wellbeing.

The project supported twenty-one small-scale local enhancement initiatives at department, programme or functional area level to promote a sense of belonging. These included a wide range of discipline-specific trips, events and social activities. A student led project produced an edited collection of the experiences of Nursing students (School of Health and Science) during COVID-19, available on STÓR (dkit.ie) (<https://eprints.dkit.ie/786/>).

The project also included studentships that enabled students and staff to work in partnership to develop resources to support induction and transition. The resources are available on the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) Moodle page (<https://2023-moodle.dkit.ie/course/view.php?id=3990>; DkIT login required).

## 2.4 Embedding Employability Project

In 2021/2022, the outputs of the DkIT Embedding Employability Project (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/dkit-embedding-employability.html>) led by the Careers and Employability Centre continued to build on the DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework and Employability Statement. The Careers and Employability Centre secured additional funding from the DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/corporate-partnership-programme.html>) to continue the work of the project. The initial project resulted in a DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework and Employability Statement.

Lead by Project Researcher Dr Michelle Cowley Cunningham, an online resource was developed to support lecturers and careers practitioners to advance, enhance and measure graduate attribute development through a suite of specifically designed employability superfood activities and employability tools. Therefore boosting students confidence in their graduate employability. This resulted in an online lecturer's toolkit promoting attribute and employability best practice in their classrooms and programme design - The 'Embedding Employability Toolkit: Superfoods to Boost Employability in the Curriculum'. <https://toolkitemployability.wordpress.com>.

To complement this lecturer toolkit a student online toolkit (Graduate Futures) has also been developed. Shaped by the DkIT Graduate Attribute framework this student toolkit connects the graduate attribute framework to a range of employability resources, reflections and exercises, and a bespoke Graduate Attribute Workbook and Persona Workbook (<https://graduatefuturestoolkit.wordpress.com/>).

Twenty-five lecturers piloted the toolkit-use workshop. A try-and-test worksheet for self-study time revealed a swell of support ('amazing', 'very slick', 'great teamwork', 'brilliant, so badly needed', '10-dot Matrix really works for me' 'I never thought of layering my modules with employability - this is clever').

The pinnacle of the achievements of the year was achieving a National Award for Graduate Employability at the gradIreland and AHECS Awards in April 2022 (<https://www.dkit.ie/news/dkit-win-national-employability-awards.html>). The independent Award Judging Panel comprised Jameson International, Engage People, GTI, Musgraves. This Award recognised the DkIT Embedding Employability Toolkit created to support lecturers and careers practitioners to advance, enhance and measure graduate attribute development through a suite of specifically designed employability activities and employability tools (DkIT Embedding Employability Toolkit: <https://toolkitemployability.wordpress.com/> and Graduate Futures Toolkit, <https://graduatefuturestoolkit.wordpress.com/>).

The next stage for the project is to ensure that the graduate attributes framework, is incorporated into the curriculum at a programme level. These online resources have been developed to specifically support all academic staff, programme leads and Heads of Department with this process. A presentation was delivered to the DkIT Leadership Team in June 2022, which fully endorsed Institute wide embedding the attributes into the curriculum and advised to work with Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and schools as part of the Programmatic Review process.

See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023) for actions.

## 2.5 National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Project in Higher Education

This is a national collaborative initiative (<https://www.priorlearning.ie/>) between the Institutes of Technology, the Universities and Technological University (TU) Dublin which seeks to build a consistent and coherent approach to RPL within and across the nineteen publicly funded higher education institutions. Funded under the Irish Government's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/4b006-minister-harris-announces-22-innovative-projects-to-be-funded-under-human-capital-initiative/>), the project will see HEIs engineer a significant shift in RPL policy, procedure and practice, that has transformative potential for Ireland's education system to

become an international leader in the field. The project will play a crucial role in delivering on a range of national and European policy objectives in lifelong learning and meeting skills needs. The vision is that RPL will be an integral part of the higher education system, widely understood, celebrated and utilised as a flexible pathway to further learning, certification and professional development.

The DkIT project lead was appointed in 2021. See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022) for actions.

## **2.6 Enhancements arising from Institutional Review (CINNTE Review)**

No progress was made on implementing the action plan that resulted from the Institutional Review that took place at DkIT in 2018 (<https://www.qqi.ie/Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx>). This work is ongoing and will continue into the next reporting period. See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2022/2023).

### 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

#### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

This section describes quality assurance and enhancement activities for the upcoming reporting period 2022/2023 which are aligned to the institute's strategic objectives (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>). The section should be read in conjunction with 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR. Actions/activities not completed in reporting period 2021/2022 are carried over to the next reporting period 2022/2023.

**Note(s):** Actions identified previously as "Research" are now identified as "Research and Graduate Studies".

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> <b>Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</b>	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b>  <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i>  <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) <b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pgs. 164, 165  <b>Note:</b> A number of actions in this category have been combined since the reporting period 2020/2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current Quality Manual to remove reference to QQI with the exception of external cyclical review and Level 10 provision.</li> <li>• Review of QA processes to ensure that they are sufficiently comprehensive and robust in the context of being a DAB.</li> <li>• Review current policy and procedure on collaborative provision in light of DABS and permission for linked provider status.</li> <li>• Review current programme validation processes in the context of DAB.</li> <li>• Review QA processes relating to postgraduate research provision.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
2	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) <b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pgs. 164, 165	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Educational/Awareness programme for various stakeholders on what a DAB means (Governing Body, Academic Council, Academic Staff, Students).</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office.</li> </ul>

3	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: 160	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Institute policy management system, policies and procedures and quality framework to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose. This is related to Institutional Review actions.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office.</li> </ul>
4	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 160	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop quality assurance policies and procedure relating to collaborative partnerships (specifically articulation agreements).</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office.</li> </ul>
5	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 161.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Equal Access and Participation Policy.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Professional Support Unit (Student Services; Access Office).</li> </ul>
6	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 161.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop quality assurance Guidelines for the Preparation, Drafting and Transmission of Examination Papers and Solutions. (Recommendation from an external investigator following an examination paper breach).</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office.</li> </ul>
7	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 161.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commence work for attaining QQI International Educational Mark (IEM).</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Professional Support Unit (International Office).</li> </ul>
8	Teaching and Learning Previous AQR Reference: pg. 162.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop capacity to use data to inform decision-making.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li> </ul>
9	Teaching and Learning Previous AQR Reference: pg. 162.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete review of Assessed Group-work: A Framework and Guidelines.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li> </ul>
10	Teaching and Learning Previous AQR Reference: pg. 162.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote more inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. This includes enhancing digital accessibility and developing capacity in Universal Design for Learning (UDL).</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of Academic Council.</li> </ul>
11	Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capacity in assessment design to promote Academic Integrity.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li> </ul>



12	Academic Integrity Previous AQR Reference: pg. 165.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to plan, implement and enhance Academic Integrity initiatives at Institute level for students and staff, specifically to develop an Academic Integrity Action Plan.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.</li> </ul>
13	Academic Integrity Previous AQR Reference: pg. 165.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures to include Contract Cheating (and other new types of Academic Misconduct that may arise).</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.</li> </ul>
14	Academic Integrity Previous AQR Reference: pg. 166.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Institute Register for Academic Misconduct (mixed model between Schools and Registrar's Office currently in operation).</li> <li>Review and ensure that new forms of academic misconduct (e.g. Contract Cheating) are recorded as appropriate.</li> </ul>
15	Academic Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the Epigeum Academic Integrity support modules for students and staff. (<a href="https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/">https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/</a>).</li> </ul>
16	Research and Graduate Studies Previous AQR Reference: pg. 163	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to build research capacity with a view to achieving the metrics required for Technological University (TU) status.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Executive Board, Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
17	Research and Graduate Studies Previous AQR Reference: pg. 163.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete collaborative partnership agreement with Dublin City University (DCU) regarding the DCU-DKIT Graduate School.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
18	Research and Graduate Studies Previous AQR Reference: pg. 162.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Research Integrity Policy.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
19	Research and Graduate Studies Previous AQR Reference: pg. 162.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
20	Research and Graduate Studies Previous AQR Reference: pg. 163.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the National Researcher Career Framework (continued action). (<a href="https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/">https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/</a>).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the full researcher career framework across all research centres and groups.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
21	Research and Graduate Studies <b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pg. 163.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversify and increase research and innovation funding (ongoing action).</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Research and Graduate Studies Office, Research and Group Directors.</li> </ul>
22	Research and Graduate Studies <b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pg. 164.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access Intellectual Property Portfolio across research community.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Research and Graduate Studies Office, Regional Development Centre (RDC).</li> </ul>
23	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit and review the context and intent of the collaborative partnership/relationship between DCU and DkIT. There was general consensus from both collaborative partners that this needs to take place as a matter of urgency.</li> <li>• As articulated in the DCU/DKIT Graduate School Post Review Response and Enhancement Plan (periodic review of postgraduate research that took place during the reporting period referred to as “PGR Quality Review 2021/2022” subsequently).</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar’s Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
24	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden the scope of the research collaborations between both partners as envisaged in the initial agreement (MOU 2012) when the Graduate School was established.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar’s Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
25	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) or possibly an existing Technological University (TU) to sustain the Institute’s ability to make awards at NFQ Level 10 awards.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar’s Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
26	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree a senior management meeting schedule with DCU to cover the duration of the relationship.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar’s Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
27	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise the addition of one FTE Grade V administrator into the Graduate Studies Office.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
28	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current library research databases with a view to expansion of same</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
29	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise and Implement "Research Access Policy" to ensure appropriate access to research facilities for all researchers with ongoing review.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
30	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the updating of the DkIT postgraduate research degree regulations, and subsequent approval at the DkIT Academic Council, is better aligned with that of DCU's updating of the regulations and approval at DCU's Academic Council.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
31	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure full adoption, where appropriate, of all DCU Postgraduate Research (PGR) forms and supporting policies.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
32	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the information, quantitative and qualitative as appropriate, being provided in the (DkIT) Annual Report to DCU GRSB, with agreement by both collaborative partners. This would involve providing new or enhancing existing information on withdrawals, completion rates, appeals. Information on feedback mechanisms being adopted for postgraduate research (i.e. postgraduate student and staff feedback, etc.) will also be considered.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
33	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a postgraduate researcher alumni society.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>

34	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop of a risk mitigation strategy in relation to postgraduate research studies completion by students.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
35	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-establish the DkIT postgraduate research society.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
36	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce with Institute staff the importance of the role of the DkIT research community in the DkIT registered postgraduate students lifecycle and in the collaborative partnership.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
37	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that DkIT GRPB and DkIT GRSB schedule of meetings is published on the DkIT website (part of a wider issue relating to the management of documentation associated with the DkIT Quality System).</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
38	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a student and staff handbooks specific to postgraduate research provision.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
39	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure DkIT registered postgraduate research students receiving a DCU award are connected to the DCU-DkIT postgraduate researcher community.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
40	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all postgraduate research students have annual skills training audits with their supervisory teams through provision of training to research supervisors.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>

41	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the annual training audits and link to annual progression.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
42	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review research training programmes for staff and students annually and implement enhancements as required in accordance with best practice and stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
43	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all student supports are accessible to the postgraduate researcher community and are available for the full duration of the calendar year.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
44	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a centralised postgraduate researcher space.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
45	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise and implement detailed guidelines concerning the role of Independent Panel Members in line with DCU policy.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
46	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide annual training concerning roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
47	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the effectiveness of Independent Panel Members and ensure policy is fit for purpose.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>
48	Research and Graduate Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Institute postgraduate and career researcher teaching policies across all schools.</li> <li>• PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.</li> </ul>

49	<p>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</p> <p><b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pg. 167 (peer mentoring programme action)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue development of a peer-mentoring programme for first year students.</li> <li>• Provide access to a peer led mental health portal specifically for third level students worldwide called Togetherall.</li> <li>• Signpost supports for particularly vulnerable groups, in collaboration with Pastoral Care.</li> <li>• Provide students with information on mental health support through the use of media screens to highlight national and international campaigns as well as local supports.</li> <li>• Provide targeted supports for specific groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speak Out for victims of sexual assault harassment.</li> <li>○ HUGG Peer Lead Student Specific Support group for those bereaved by suicide.</li> <li>○ The Body Project to address body acceptance and prevent Eating Disorders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Build campus knowledge and skills on mental health and suicide prevention by rolling out three stage trainings on Responding to Distressed and at Risk students.</li> <li>• Lead on the recruitment and selection of a Framework Implementation Manager to lead out on the Framework for Consent and National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework part of whose duties it will be to lead out on the development of a comprehensive Campus Mental health policy</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Student Counselling Service).</li> </ul>
50	<p>Professional Service Areas (Student Services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a structured peer mentoring system for Sports Scholarship students and provide specialised training for committee members for societies and clubs.</li> <li>• Improve both the indoor and outdoor facilities in DkIT so that we can continue to meet the growing needs of the students.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Sports and Societies).</li> </ul>
51	<p>Professional Service Areas (Student Services)</p> <p><b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pg. 167 for ASD Friendly university badge action)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the process of gaining ASD Friendly university badge from AsIAM (<a href="https://asiam.ie/">https://asiam.ie/</a>).</li> <li>• Promote DkIT's Autism and Unimicro site at open days.</li> <li>• Link with local FE Colleges to support the early submission of educational impact statements for their students.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Learning Agreement template to ensure all relevant information is provided to further support students.</li> <li>• Encourage all students who have a disability to disclose and register with the service for supports.</li> <li>• Support the implementation of the Guidance on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations on Practice-based Placements in Professionally Accredited Programmes</li> <li>• Continue to develop Assistive Technology Service</li> <li>• Follow up on recommendations advised in the Accessibility and Sensory Audits and implement improvements where possible.</li> <li>• Develop and implement Action Plan for Universal Design in collaboration with CELT for PATH 4 Phase 1.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Disability Service).</li> </ul>
52	<p>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)  <b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pg. 168.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to encourage a pro-active approach to Health with emphasis on Health Awareness and promotion. Continue with the events calendar aligned to that of the National Health Service Executive campaign programme and include information on the screen in the Health unit waiting room and display cabinet to support events.</li> <li>• Continue to manage and deliver the annual health and wellbeing fair in collaboration with the appropriate community groups and national bodies.</li> <li>• Continue involvement with the Healthy Campus steering committee to help build on existing wellbeing initiatives and assist with the integration of new ones eg: Inviting Clermont Health GP team to take part in lunchtime talks to help our on campus community manage their own Health.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Health Unit).</li> </ul>
53	<p>Professional Support Unit (Student Services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a working plan with Maynooth University through the PATH3 Project that will focus on delivering on the education objectives in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan (following on from the Geiran Report).</li> <li>• Manage the Kickstart Scholarship programme providing ongoing support to the recipients.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement best practice recommendations in the Unlocking Potential toolkit as it relates to this target group.</li> <li>• Continue to promote the HEAR Scheme at school visits, open days etc.</li> <li>• Provide additional supports to newly designated DEIS Schools in the locality. In particular, the focus will be on two newly-designated DEIS schools in Dundalk (Socio-economic Initiative)</li> <li>• Organise open evenings (information provision) for parents of DEIS school students (Socio-economic Initiative)</li> <li>• Continue to provide information sessions at Further Education Colleges and targeted DEIS Schools (including increasing the number of outreach visits, publicising entry agreements and communicating with FET staff and students).</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Access Office).</li> </ul>
54	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt the DkIT Graduate Attributes into programme development.</li> <li>• Adopt the Institute Employability Statement into programme development.</li> <li>• Work with DKIT Teaching and Learning Research Group to establish a specific research specialism in Embedding Employability.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Careers and Employability Centre).</li> </ul>
55	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the Student Support Hub in the Moodle VLE.</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Professional Support Unit (Student Services), Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li> </ul>
56	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</p> <p><b>Previous AQR Reference:</b> pg. 163.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> This action was previously categorized under “Research” as EDI activities came under the remit of the Head of Research and Graduate Studies. As of 2021/2022, the responsibility now lies with the Vice President for Finance, Resources and Diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Athena Swan action plan (as detailed in DkIT’s Athena Swan Bronze award application).</li> <li>• <b>Responsibility:</b> Research and Graduate Studies Office, Office of the Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity.</li> </ul>



57	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The School of Engineering are currently working on an Athena SWAN Bronze Departmental application with a view to submission by the end of 2023.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Research and Graduate Studies Office, Office of the Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity.</li> </ul>
58	RPL Previous AQR Reference: pg. 160	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office.</li> </ul>
59	RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance RL application and assessment processes.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).</li> </ul>
60	RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and record RPL applications in a structured, standard format to allow for the development of an RPL precedence database.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).</li> </ul>
61	RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide professional development and supports.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).</li> </ul>
62	RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure updated RPL information availability via easily accessible communication channels.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).</li> </ul>
63	RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with enterprise and employers to explore the potential for RPL for access &amp; progression in areas of skills needs.</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).</li> </ul>
64	Institutional Review Previous AQR Reference: pg. 166.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Institutional Review Action plan and identify priorities as appropriate. (<a href="https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews?sector=23&amp;provider_type=22&amp;document_type=31&amp;year=All&amp;provider_name=">https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews?sector=23&amp;provider_type=22&amp;document_type=31&amp;year=All&amp;provider_name=</a>, (Feb, 2023)).</li> <li><b>Responsibility:</b> Registrar's Office with other functional areas as appropriate.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

This section provides a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from reviews for the next reporting period (2022/2023). The unit of review may be a Department/School, professional support unit, school, or faculty. See Section 1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews.

### 3.2.1 Reviews Planned for Next Reporting Period

The review schedule for reviews for the upcoming reporting period (2022/2023) is as follows:

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
<b>Professional Support Units (Registrars):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions.</li> <li>• Access Office.</li> <li>• Disability Service;</li> <li>• Health Unit;</li> <li>• Counselling Service;</li> <li>• Pastoral Care;</li> <li>• Sports and Societies;</li> <li>• Schools Liaison.</li> <li>• Careers and Employability.</li> </ul>	January 2023	The area was reviewed previously in 2006.

### 3.2.2 Reviews Planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The review schedule for reviews beyond the upcoming reporting period (2022/2023) is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	2023/2024
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<b>Professional Support Unit (Registrar's):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examinations Office.</li> <li>• International Office.</li> </ul> <b>Graduate Studies Office:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Excellence in Research Award to be externally reviewed.</li> </ul>
<b>Number</b>	2
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	

<b>Year</b>	2024/2025
<b>Areas/Units</b>	Programmatic Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School of Health and Science;</li> <li>• School of Engineering;</li> <li>• School of Informatics and Creative Arts;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School of Business and Humanities;</li><li>• Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	5
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	

<b>Year</b>	2025/2026
<b>Areas/Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be determined.</li></ul>
<b>Number</b>	
<b>Link(s) to Publications:</b>	

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

DkIT is not in a position to submit a case study under the identified themes for the reporting period 2020/2021.

## Appendix 1: DkIT Organisation Chart

