

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND

2023

Annual Quality Report (NCI)
Reporting Period 2021-2022

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

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)

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

- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

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 AQR for the **National College of Ireland (NCI)** for the reporting period **1 September 2021 - 31 August 2022**.

The AQR has been approved by the NCI Academic Council and is submitted by Patricia Maguire, Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE). The AQR was approved by Academic Council in February 2023. It will also be submitted to the Governing Body on 24th March 2023, as the Annual Report of the Academic Council.

NCI is an independent, not-for-profit College and a registered charity. We have a current student enrolment total of some 6,500 full and part-time students. NCI is partially funded via a core grant through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and a free fees allocation received for a ‘capped’ number of undergraduate full-time learners. All other funding comes from registration and tuition fees from self-funded or employer-funded learners and labour market initiatives funded by the HEA. In addition, the College has a modest level of commercial income.

NCI’s mission is to change lives through education. Since its foundation in 1951, NCI has developed and evolved in response to various internal and external environmental stimuli. NCI has been committed to supporting the development of Irish society by promoting the principles of access, opportunity, and excellence in education.

NCI Strategic Plan 2022-2027

In June 2022, within the current reporting period, NCI’s Governing Body approved the new [2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#). However, the Plan was publicly launched in November 2022, outside of the current AQR reporting period. Accordingly, the next AQR (February 2024), will provide a more detailed update on the first academic year of implementation of the new Strategy (September 2022 - end August 2023).

The Plan was the culmination of more than a year’s robust planning and consultation, supported by external consultants, Mazars. The new Strategy sets out six Priorities that will support the achievement of NCI’s enduring Mission to “Change Lives through Education”. The Strategy builds on the work begun and developed through NCI’s previously published Academic Strategy (2019-2024). The new institutional strategy sets out NCI’s aim, by 2027, to be a distinctive and independent HEA designated institution, with delegated awarding authority, delivering successful graduates, and a world-class model of community engagement, from an 8,500-strong student body, in a state-of-the-art campus in Dublin’s Docklands.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

There have been some material changes to NCI's Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) policies and procedures during the reporting period. These are flagged in the sub-sections below. Each of the 13 QAES chapters remains aligned with ESG Standards and Guidelines and QQI Core and Sector Specific QA guidelines. A review and refresh of the QAES was initiated during the 2021-22 reporting period, and two areas were given priority for during the year: the first was a complete refresh of NCI's Student Complaints Policy (within Chapter 5) and the second was an update to NCI's policy and guidelines on Technology-Mediated Learning (Chapter 13), in line with QQI's pilot validation process for fully online programmes, in Spring and Summer 2022.

The review and refresh of the entire QAES (via the constituent 13 chapters of the QA Handbook) is a major, ongoing programme of work and stems from a strategic commitment made on foot of the 2019 QQI Re-Engagement exercise. Given the scale of the full QAES, spanning as it does policy and procedural aspects for all NCI activities, it made sense to sequence the review and refresh of specific policies and procedures in line with the needs identified by the *Streamlining Student Success* Initiative as well as the priorities of the new Strategic Plan 2022-27 and emerging external factors within the FE and HE environment. Further approved changes to policies and procedures will be provided in the AQR submitted in February 2024.

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

NCI's overall governance and management structures, including roles and responsibilities for are outlined in Chapter 2 of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES). Additional QAES chapters - indicated below- also identify the opportunities and mechanisms for learners and staff to inform and engage in NCI's academic governance and quality management structures.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021-2022 reporting period
Chapter 1: Introduction	No material changes
Chapter 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	No material changes
Chapter 5: Learning and Teaching Environment	Update Student Complaints Policy (section 5.9 of Chapter 5)
Chapter 7: Support Services for Learners	No material changes

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

NCI is not a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), therefore there are no Linked Providers involved in the delivery of the College's programmes and the College is not involved in making any Joint Awards. The policies and procedures for collaborative and transnational provision are contained in QAES Chapter 3: Section 6 and are aligned with QQI's *Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards* (2012) and benchmarked against IHEQN *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision*. NCI does not currently have any arrangements for the transnational delivery of programmes. Further details on active articulation arrangements and collaborations are presented in this AQR, Section 9.3.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation	No material changes

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

In October 2021, NCI's Academic Council approved an Appendix containing NCI's procedures for Devolution of Responsibility for Arrangement of Independent Evaluation Reports (IER). These procedures had been reviewed and agreed with QQI. The appendix to Chapter 3 was published on the NCI Quality and Institutional Effectiveness website.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation	Addition of Appendix with Procedures for Devolved Responsibility (October 2021)
Chapter 12: Provision of Apprenticeship Programmes	No material changes

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The policies and procedures relating to admission, progression, recognition and certification are contained with Chapters 4 and 6 as outlined below and are aligned with QQI's *Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression* (2015).

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 4: Assessment	No material changes
Chapter 6: Admission, Registration and Curriculum	No material changes

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Chapter 4: Assessment contains the policies and procedures relating to the authentication and approval of assessment results (Section 4.4 and Section 4.11, respectively) and the certification of higher education awards (Section 4.18). During the reporting period, NCI stayed closely aligned with evolving QQI policy on assessment and awards, arising from extended COVID-19 alternative assessment arrangements. The notified changes, in Spring 2022, to Sectoral Convention 3 ("Repeat for Honours")

were implemented immediately however the relevant policy section will be updated in tandem with the remainder of Chapter 4, during 2022-23.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 4: Assessment	No material changes

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 4: Assessment	No material changes, but review and refresh underway
Chapter 5: Learning and Teaching Environment	Updated Student Complaints policy .
Chapter 13: Technology Mediated Learning	Updated Chapter 13 Policy and Procedures (draft) submitted to QQI as part of validation of HDip in Science in Computing (QQI online pilot).

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

During the reporting period, NCI and the NCISU signed a ground-breaking Partnership Agreement, based on the principles of the NsTEP programme. The policy commitment to maintain this Agreement will be included in Chapter 7 of the QA handbook, which includes a wide range of policy and procedures governing the Learning and Disability Support Services, Student Assistance Fund, Maths and Computing Support services, Library and Information Services, the Careers service and International Student Support services, among other provisions. Further updates will be provided in the next reporting period.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 7: Support Services for Learners	No material changes

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

There were no required changes to the QA policy and procedures in place for research activities and programmes in the reporting period. NCI's partnership with Maynooth University, for the award of PhD degrees, remained in place and functional. A review of this agreement is scheduled for the next reporting period, overseen by the Academic Council Research committee.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 11: Research	No material changes

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Within the reporting period NCI actively monitored its commitments under the Athena Swan Bronze Award (reported in 2020-21 AQR) and launched its Consent Framework in March 2022. Our strategic commitment to EDI were included in the approved Strategic Plan for 2022-27. The College's Hybrid Working Policy was in progress towards the end of the reporting period, as the College emerged from the Covid-19 era. Anticipating the formal approval and implementation of this policy in the 2022-23 period, no material changes were made to Chapter 8 of the QAES in 2021-22 however a full review and refresh of this Chapter is scheduled for 2023.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 8: Staff Recruitment and Development	No material changes

6.0 Information and Data Management

During the reporting period, NCI's Data Protection Policy and associated DPIA and other guidelines were published and refreshed via NCI's internal Support Hub document repository and reference portal for staff. Chapter 9 of the QAES is under review to ensure that core policy provisions for information and data management reflect the interim updates on Data Protection.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 9: Information Governance and Compliance	No material changes

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Public information and communication about NCI's programmes of education and training are set out in Chapter 6 (Section 2) and within Chapter 10. Information is coordinated and monitored by the Marketing and Student Recruitment Department (MSRD), who ensure accuracy and consistency across all media platforms.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 6: Admission, Registration and Curriculum	No material changes

Chapter 10: Public Information	No material changes
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8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

The policies and procedures relating to the monitoring and periodic review of NCI's programmes of education and training are outlined in the QAES Chapters below. Following a two-year period (2021-2023) of cyclical programme review and QQI revalidation of over thirty major, minor and special purpose awards, and over ten new programme validations, NCI will relaunch an Annual Programme Monitoring and Evaluation process in semester 2 of academic year 2022-23. Annual monitoring and evaluation of programmes is a key part of the NCI Programme Lifecycle Management (PLM) structure. The relevant policy and procedures (Chapter 3 of the QA Handbook) are being refreshed and due for Academic Council approval in Spring 2023 and will therefore be included in the next AQR in February 2024.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2021/2022 reporting period
Chapter 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	No material changes
Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation	No material changes

[Higher Education Institution]

2023

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Reporting Period 2021-2022

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

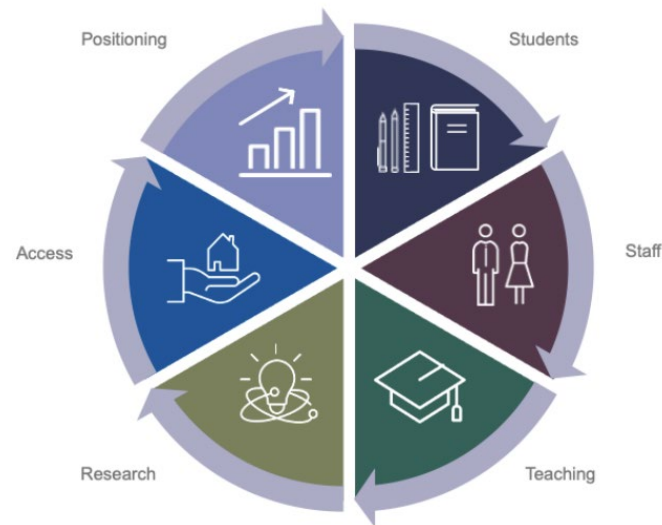
1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The following section provides information on a range of strategic QA updates during the 2021-22 reporting period. Where possible, section 2.0 provides more information on how these developments have thus far enhanced and impacted on Quality.

A) NCI Strategy 2022-2027

2021-22 was a milestone year at NCI in several important ways. During the reporting period, NCI completed an extensive strategic development consultation process, resulting in the completion and approval of a new Strategic Plan for a five-year period from 2022 - 2027. Our new Strategic Plan sets ambitious objectives for growth in the six strategic priority areas depicted below:



The new Strategy confirms NCI's strategic objectives to obtain Delegated Authority (DA) status, to award our own qualifications, and to secure our position as a designated Higher Education Authority (HEA) institution. The development and approval process for the new Strategy demonstrated the robustness of the College's Governance and Management system, from goal-setting at the top-level through the Governing Body to School and

Unit level faculty and staff consultation and organised consultations with students, alumni, employers and other partnership organisations, during the year.

As the new Strategy was formally launched outside of the current reporting period, in November 2022, the AQR submitted in February 2024 will include an assessment of its early impact on the Internal Quality Assurance System at NCI.

B) The end of COVID-19 restrictions

While the new Strategic Plan was under development, the Government, in February 2022, removed most of the health restrictions that had been in place since Spring 2020 to mitigate against the spread of Covid-19. NCI, like all other HE institutions, could therefore begin to assess the impact of the two-year Covid-19 “era” at the College and determine how best to maintain quality in both academic life and the student experience in a post-Covid-19 environment. This meant addressing major questions on the pace and nature of a physical return to campus for learners as well as staff. NCI Senior management consulted over a period of months with the Student’s Union, student class representatives and, of course, staff. to determine the optimum balance of delivery modes that would ensure ongoing quality in the student experience from September 2022 entry. The College reached a decision in early summer 2022 for a return to campus-based in person study in September 2022 for all full-time programmes at UG and PG levels, with some online teaching as needed. Part-time programme delivery would continue in blended mode.

C) Launch of NCI-NCI Student’s Union Partnership

Building on the principles of the National Student Engagement Programme (NsTEP), the College strengthened its commitment to the Learner Voice informing effective decision making, through the launch of a new NCI-NCISU Partnership Agreement.



Figure 1: NCI SU President, Conor O'Reilly and NCI President, Gina Quin

Signed in June 2022, the Agreement places the success and well-being of students at the centre of the partnership. NCI has always placed the learner at the heart of our mission, to change lives through education. This Partnership Agreement between the College and NCI Students' Union demonstrates NCI's commitment to both our learners and our student leaders. NCI and NCISU are delighted to be one of the first HEIs in Ireland to publish a formal Partnership Agreement; our guide to delivering the needs of current and future students.

In advance of the Partnership Agreement being signed, throughout the reporting period NCI and NCISU worked closely on a range of welfare initiatives, including in areas such as gender identity, the coordination of consent training and a cross-college process for confidential reporting of bullying and/or harassment. NCI and NCISU have also co-designed refreshed Student Complaints procedures and are in the process of co-designing a new Student Hub service. The next reporting period will see the finalisation of the Service Level Agreement that underpins the Partnership Agreement.

D) Governance and Management of Quality

During the reporting period, the Academic Council approved the establishment of three sub-committees of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC):

- Teaching and Learning sub-committee
- Assessment sub-committee
- Digital learning sub-committee

These committees were charged with bringing forward proposals for innovation and quality enhancement across their areas of remit, and proposals to refresh policies, procedures and guidelines needed to underpin NCI's strategic commitment to excellence in education. Also, during this period, the recently established Programme Lifecycle Management Executive Sub-Group (reporting to the Executive) became embedded in the management of programme-level quality at NCI. The enhancement impact of the PLM-ESG is outlined in section 1.4.

E) Organisational restructuring of student-facing, programme-related academic administration

As flagged in the previous AQR, the College launched a major initiative in the 21-22 year to take forward recommendations made by the Administrative Services Review in 2019. These included the need to improve the consistency and effectiveness of academic programme-related administrative services for staff and students, as well as enhance career progression and retention within the professional administration community. During the reporting period, a centralized Academic Operations Team came into being, bringing previously School-based administrative staff into a programme-based organisational alignment. A single, unified professional team, led by a senior Manager, is working to provide a consistent set of programme administrative services that will enhance quality and consistency across all programmes for staff and students.

F) Streamlining Student Success Initiative

Spring 2022 saw the launch of the Streamlining Student Success initiative, under the leadership of the Director of Academic Registry Services, following consultations with staff and students in 2021. Over 70 staff and 40 student volunteers actively engaged in the initiative which aimed to review and refresh NCI policies and procedures across the entire NCI Student Journey through a human-centered design approach. Six Task and Finish Groups were established to focus on the six key aspects of the student journey: (i) Applications, Acceptances & Enrolments; (ii) Orientation & Student Welfare; (iii) Learner's Experience, Engagement & Retention; (iv) Student Voice & Programme Quality; (v) Assessments and Examinations; and (vi) Graduates & Alumni. The Initiative is anticipated to continue working for another 12 months to oversee the suitability of the solutions and changes agreed by the Executive to ensure they remain aligned with stakeholder needs, experiences and expectations.

G) Investment in Digital Learning Design

During the reporting period, the College invested in a new Digital Design Learning Team in the Centre for Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL). The team will play a pivotal role in enabling the College's developing Digital Learning Strategy, providing direct support and training for academic staff to effectively use digital technologies in programme and module design.

H) Internationalisation

In November 2021, the European Commission awarded NCI with the ERASMUS+ Charter. This brought NCI into line with the public universities in Ireland, providing the ability to apply for funding to support student and staff mobility (exchange) and other activities with universities, colleges and other organisations in the ERASMUS the European Economic Area (EEA).

I) College Hybrid Working Policy

Significant progress was made during the reporting period towards the development of a Hybrid Working Policy for NCI staff, building on the experience gained during the Covid-19 restrictions. Steered by the College's Executive Group, chaired by the President, a Hybrid Working Group began a detailed consultation process with staff over the summer and this continued into Autumn 2022. Further updates will be provided in the next reporting period, 2022-23.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No	NCI Strategic Theme	Relevant Objectives	Delivery Lead(s)	Planned Action	Impact/Output	Update for 2021-22
1	Outstanding Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and recognise students' participation in college-wide activities, which can contribute towards enhancing the college community at NCI, including student representation roles, work experience and helping with a peer-assisted learning scheme Combine our recognised teaching excellence with an outstanding student experience both on-campus, off-campus and online 	QIE Specialist & NCISU President	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Launch refreshed NCI Learner Voice structure and monitor implementation and impact annually, reporting to Academic Council. 1.2. Ensure the learner voice, gathered through Student.Survey.ie and internal feedback structures is used to monitor the quality of the student experience during and following the lifting of COVID alternative arrangements. 1.3. Review data from the refreshed the annual programme monitoring process to assess evidence of programme level responses to the student voice, and review consistency of teaching, learning and assessment practices across all validated modes of delivery - including online. Academic Council paper to be prepared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased evidence published of student engagement, student influence and NCI's responsiveness to the NCI learner voice through formal and informal feedback structures. Evidence of NCI's responsiveness to the learner voice to hopefully increase student trust and participation in future internal and external surveys. 	<p>1.1 New NCI - NCISU Partnership Agreement launched in June 2022.</p> <p>1.2 26% response rate to 2022 student survey.ie was highest to date. 73% respondents rated their NCI experience as good or excellent. Results presented and discussed at Academic Council.</p> <p>1.3 Major contributions from student survey results at programme level, plus focus group feedback, to cyclical programme reviews and QQI revalidations of more than ten major awards in School of Business.</p> <p>Results of the Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) inform decision-making in the next reporting period.</p>

2	Global Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that internationalisation, through our International Office, has an appropriate presence and position of influence throughout the college and academic structures • Create new support initiatives and advance our existing supports for our international students, alumni, and stakeholders 	QIE Director & International Director	<p>2.1. Academic Council minutes and Annual Quality Report to capture and report evidence of NCI's global impact and monitor quality across collaborative partnerships.</p> <p>2.2. Support the application for NCI to secure the QQI International Education Mark following a mapping process to demonstrate compliance with the Code of <i>Code of Practice</i> for Provision of Programmes to <i>International Learners</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCI secures the QQI International Education Mark (IEM) 	<p>2.1 AQR (sections 1.4.1 and 2.0 capture outcomes of reviews and QQI revalidations of programmes with collaborative partnerships</p> <p>2.2 NCI compliance with draft Code confirmed through self-assessment and peer review process. progress monitored by Executive Group. NCI contributed to the 2022 consultation on the IEM Code</p>
3	Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a suite of online programmes, both fee bearing and free, which allow access to those who otherwise would not be able to avail of an NCI education. • Continue to understand and develop educational opportunities for those who are 	QIE Director & Deans	<p>3.1. Proactively engage with QQI's consultation to validate fully online programmes in response to the needs of key external stakeholders.</p> <p>3.2. Proactively participate in QQI pilots to develop and validate micro-credentials in response to sector, government and COVID-19 recovery plan needs to upskill/reskill the workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCI Programmes validated by QQI available in a range of delivery modes and lengths in line with current and emerging stakeholder needs. • New micro-credentials to be validated and available for learners from 2021/22 onwards 	<p>3.1 Successful engagement with QQI's Pilot online validation process in June 2022 - validation of fully online Higher Diploma in Science in Computing.</p> <p>3.2 Three Centre for Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL) micro-credentials validated and opened for enrolment.</p> <p>Three School of Business micro-credentials validated and open for enrolment in Sept.2022.</p>

		looking to reskill, upskill or avail of education that would not be widely available or affordable to them				
4	Socially Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed our commitment to social responsibility and sustainability in our curricula, policies, strategies and procedures • Demonstrate and report our main social, environmental and economic impacts 	QIE Director	<p>4.1. Review evidence from NCI's Programme Lifecycle Management Structure (PLM), of explicit commitments to social responsibility and sustainability, as well as ethical and data governance embedded within new validated and revalidated programmes - as appropriate.</p> <p>4.2. Monitor consistency and accuracy in the utilisation of NCI's central qualitative and quantitative datasets to inform decision-making and reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consistency and visibility in the use of a single set of data for internal and external decision-making and reporting. 	<p>4.1 Learning Outcomes on Sustainability and Ethics incorporated into revised Business postgraduate and undergraduate programmes revalidated during 21-22 period.</p> <p>Audit of inclusion of these commitments across all programmes due in next reporting period, following programme revalidations and validations in 2022-23.</p> <p>4.2 Programme-level datasets on key indicators (enrolment, progression, grade classifications etc.) used throughout cyclical programme reviews leading to successful QQI revalidations of over ten awards in 2021-22.</p> <p>MIS Project Team established in 2022 to oversee data quality and accessibility</p>
5	Enterprise Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure that all programmes are developed to meet current and future workforce demands • Derive maximum 	QIE Director & QIE Specialist	<p>5.1. Oversee the revalidation of 40 programmes throughout 2021/22 and 2022/23. Revalidation schedule agreed internally and with QQI in Q1 2021 and workload mapping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 programmes successfully revalidated in advance of Sept 2023 entry. • Pool of trained and qualified peers built to be deployed across the revalidation panels scheduled for 2021/22 and 2022/23. 	<p>5.1 during 2021-22, 17 QQI programmes were successfully revalidated with attendant conditions and recommendations fully implemented.</p> <p>Approx. 15 programmes due for revalidation in next reporting period, 2022-23 (some scheduled programmes secured extended</p>

		benefit from external expertise and participation in national and international networks		<p>undertaken to achieve agreed deadlines.</p> <p>5.2. Participate in national and European networking and peer review activities to enhance benchmarking and identify peer reviewers to participate in NCI programme validations and revalidations.</p>		<p>validation periods - will be reviewed and revalidated in 2023-24).</p> <p>5.2 Relationships developed with peers in QQI independent/private colleges sector.</p> <p>NCI Secured Erasmus+ Charter of HE status for 2021-2027</p>
6	Recognised and Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that both schools, all centres and any other departments actively look for accreditations that improve our profile and allow benchmarking against similar organisations 	QIE Director	<p>6.1. Support the School of Business progress towards AACSB accreditation.</p> <p>6.2. Support the alignment with professional body requirements in annual programme monitoring, validation and (re)validation processes.</p> <p>6.3. Support the submission of NCI's QS Stars Application 2021.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased recognition of the quality and relevance of NCI's programmes nationally and internationally. QS Stars rating continued for use in communications and marketing materials 	<p>6.1 Planning for AACSCSB accreditation boosted by successful QQI revalidations of six major postgraduate and four major undergraduate School of Business programmes in 2021-22</p> <p>6.2 Successful re-accreditation of HR and Accountancy professional body requirements for QQI-revalidated School of Business programmes in 2021-22.</p> <p>6.3 In November 2021, NCI received an overall 5-Star rating from QS Stars.</p>

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting Dates
Governing Body	22 October 2021 10 December 2021 11 March 2022 13 May 2022
Academic Council	6 October 2021 8 December 2021 16 Feb 2022 16 June 2022
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	13 October 2021 22 January 2022 25 May 2022
Research Committee	20 October 2021 2 February 2022 1 June 2022

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

During the reporting period the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE) Office was restructured and enhanced with the addition of new staff, reflecting commitments made in the 2019 QIE Plan to scale Quality Assurance and Enhancement support as the College expands its provision and further develops strategically.

As flagged in the previous AQR, the previous Director, Karen Jones, became College Registrar and a new Director, Patricia Maguire, was recruited externally and took up the QIE mantle in early December 2021. Additional organisational restructuring resulted in the recruitment of a Programme Lifecycle Manager position, with a strong emphasis on data analysis and reporting skills to support annual and cyclical, in-depth programme review, as well as administrative management. The team was then complemented by a full-time Administrative Coordinator position. The new QIE team reports to the College Registrar and the Director of QIE also participates as a member of the Executive Group.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review	Links to relevant publications
Programme Validation		
Certificate in The Science of Decision Making	December 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Certificate in Business Intelligence	December 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership	December 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Accounting Internal Review Panel QQI Validation Panel	May 2022 June 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting Internal Review Panel QQI Validation Panel	May 2022 June 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence	September 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Artificial Intelligence	September 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in AI for Business	September 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in AI for Business	September 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Programme Revalidation		
Master of Business Administration	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)

Master of Science in International Business	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Business in International Business	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Management	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Management	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Entrepreneurship	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Entrepreneurship	December 2021	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Arts in Human Resource Management	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Finance	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Finance	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Bachelor of Arts in Business Management	March 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Diploma in Business Management	March 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Certificate in Business Management	March 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Bachelor of Arts in HRM Strategy and Practice	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Diploma in HRM Strategy and Practice	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Finance (180-ECTS)	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)

Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Finance (240-ECTS)	February 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Differential Validation		
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing	June 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Certificate in Science in Computing	June 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Thematic/Department/Support Service Review		
Review and Refresh of Quality and Enhancement System (QA Policies and procedures)	ongoing	Due for completion in the next reporting period
Review to Streamline NCI Student Success Structures	2021/22	N/A

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels² involved in IQA

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

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	9				3	4	2
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews	0						
Virtual processes	9				3	4	2
Average panel size for each process type*	6				6	6	4

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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	9	8	1		2	7				3	6
Secretary	9	6	3		2	7				3	6

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

Academic/Discipline Specific	17	10	7		1	11	5			2	15
Student Representative	7		7			7				4	3
QA											
External Industry /Third Mission	8	3	5			8					8

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

A) Teaching, Learning and Assessment

As referenced in section 1.1.D (Strategic QA Updates), the governance and management of quality at NCI was significantly enhanced during the reporting period by the establishment of three dedicated sub-committees of the Academic Council's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (LTAC), namely:

- Teaching and Learning sub-committee
- Assessment sub-committee
- Digital learning sub-committee

The Learning and Teaching sub-committee set about identifying the policies and procedures within QA Handbook *Chapter 5: Learning and Teaching Environment*, including NCI's plagiarism and academic integrity policies and procedures. Updated policies, for approval by the Academic Council, are expected in the next reporting period 2022-23.

Given the ongoing sector-wide importance of assessment in Higher Education nationally and internationally, and particularly arising from the lived experience and impact of Covid-19 alternative assessment arrangements on learners and on staff, the Assessment sub-committee began an institution-wide review of policies and procedures within *Chapter 4: Assessment*. The sub-committee gathered views from the *Streamlining Student Success* Task and Finish Group on strengths and weaknesses in the current practice of established policies, and reviewed assessment-related data. Changes to some policies and procedures are anticipated during the next reporting period, when QQI's Covid-19 alternative assessment arrangements will come to an end (summer 2023). Care will be taken to ensure ongoing alignment with QQI Assessment and Standards (2022). A full update will therefore be provided in the AQR submitted in February 2024.

Technology-Mediated Learning

During the reporting period, NCI was a keen participant in QQI's 2022 Pilot Differential Validation process to validate fully online versions of the popular Higher Diploma and Certificate in Science in Computing (existing, validated blended learning programmes). To support this process, The NCI Digital learning sub-committee of the Academic Council Teaching, Learning and Assessment committee reviewed and refreshed NCI policy, procedures and guidelines on all Technology-Mediated Learning and a draft update to Chapter 13: Programmes using Technology-Mediated Learning was submitted to the QQI Differential Validation Panel to support the extension of NCI's Scope of provision towards fully online programme design and delivery. The final revised Chapter 13 was approved by the Academic Council in October 2022 and the QA enhancement impact of this development will be assessed during the next reporting period.

President's Teaching Award for Online Learning

In December 2021, the NCI President's Excellence in Education award went to Sam Cogan, (then) Online Academic Programme Supervisor and his colleague Tegan Jennings, Online Learning Support. (Sam is now NCI's Digital Learning Design Digital Design lead in the Centre for Education and Lifelong Learning). This award recognised that the Online Directed Learning (ODL) model of pedagogy and curriculum design - planned "Directed" asynchronous learning outside of the classroom, with a more discursive and less didactic teaching style in the classroom - was positively impacting on students' learning experiences. ODL requires painstaking planning, development, and review for each module. The evidence supplied for the President's Award competition highlighted both staff and student views:

Sample staff testimonial: *"I have both studied and lectured through distance learning, and I can say with confidence that the Directed Learning method is by far the best method for delivering and receiving content that I have encountered. The combination of practical explanation via Directed Learning with the ability to expand on the Directed Learning material during contact with the students, gives the lecture the best chance to deliver their content and the students the best chance of absorbing the material"*

Sample student testimonials:

- I) I have found that I quickly took to the directed learning approach as it allowed me to control the pace of which I consume the content, I could re-watch the content if I didn't understand something initially and if I still had questions, I had the ability to turn to my lecturers for clarification.*
- II) The main thing is that the videos never assume that we have heard of the topic before, so it makes the subjects a lot more approachable and interesting. I also find the code challenges very helpful to practice before the weekly lab, so we have a chance to practice the new topic before we come to the lab which is graded.*

B) Programmes of Education and Training

During the reporting period, NCI's Programme Lifecycle Management (PLM) structure, introduced in February 2021 (flagged in the previous AQR), began to make an impact on the quality of programme-level decision-making at the College.

The new PLM Executive Sub-Group gained momentum in its role, reaching recommendations (based on structured documents with requisite evidence provided) for the approval of new programme proposals and managing an intense schedule of programmatic review and QQI revalidation. This new management structure, supported by dedicated resourcing in the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office (QIE) oversaw in-depth data-driven review of six postgraduate programmes (Major awards) in the School of Business (plus embedded awards) and four undergraduate programmes (major awards) also in the Business School. In addition, four new postgraduate programmes (major awards) were

validated in the School of Computing and two new postgraduate programmes were validated in the Business School.

President's Award for Access and Engagement

During the reporting period, this award went to Drs Leo Casey and Ita Kenneally, and Stephanie Roe, for their work on the P-TECH programme. This innovative partnership programme with North-East Inner-City (NEIC) Dublin second-level schools, and Industry partners, provides a QQI-validated NFQ Level 6 certificate in P-TECH (Pathways to Technology) for students on track towards their Leaving Certificate exams. Through the programme, the students have a unique opportunity to gain higher education-level knowledge and skills (with a HE award from NCI) along with high calibre work experience in industry. This will provide learners with a competitive advantage in employment in IT and related areas after they finish school. The President's award recognised the ground-breaking work led by Dr Casey and his team. The impact of this initiative has gone across the wider College, stimulating discussion and investigation into possible partnerships with second level and further education colleagues in other subject areas to grow access routes and remove barriers for all potential learners.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

During the reporting period 2021-22, NCI continued to actively contribute to the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). NCI's Librarian, the NCISU President and Vice President are NAIN representatives and run NCI's Academic Integrity week from 18th - 25 October 2021. Throughout the year, the Librarian actively disseminated sectoral updates, guidelines and resources from NAIN to all NCI staff and organised training and information seminars.

The Library continued, during the period, to allocate significant resources to supporting students' academic integrity through LibGuides, LibChats and the NCI Referencing Guide, now in its 5th edition. In addition, the Library's accelerated its education and training on **Turnitin**, the College's plagiarism-detection software accessed via the VE platform, Moodle, during the reporting period. Detailed information is provided via Case-Study 2.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

During the reporting period, NCI approved its new Strategic Plan for the 2022-27 period. Six major Strategic Priorities were identified, with commitments made to achieve strategic objectives within each priority area.

The objectives set for QA and QA within the 2019 QQI Re-Engagement Plan (QIEP - Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Plan) have now been brought forward as part of the Strategic Implementation Plan for the new Strategy. Incomplete deliverables from the QIEP - referenced in the QAR for the previous reporting period, have been mapped to the new Strategic Priorities for 2022-27. Responsibility has been assigned to the Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (DQIE). The table below outlines the key deliverables for the DQIE for Quarter 4, 2022 and Quarters 1-3 of the calendar year 2023.

Priority	Executive Group Actions	KPI/Evidence of Success	Owner	2022	2023		
				Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1. Students	Be responsible for monitoring that the student voice is used to inform planning and decision making	Student feedback gathered, analysed and reported on annually at programme, School and College level	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. Evidence from surveys and participation by current students included in all planned programme reviews and revalidations	Refreshed Module Learner Evaluation Survey approved by Academic Council and launched	Refreshed Annual Programme Monitoring Pilot launched, including results of module surveys.	Student Survey (module and programme) data used in scheduled programme reviews and revalidations.
2. Staff	Provide effective and efficient clarity, guidance and support to academic leaders and programme teams preparing for QQI programme validation and revalidation	100% success rate achieved for all programmes submitted to QQI for validation and revalidation, enhancing the likelihood of success in the DA and HEA Designation processes	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. Internal Working Group established to lead on NCI ISER Preparations	Completed. 7 existing Major Award programmes recommended for revalidation to QQI by external panels	4 new major award programmes recommended, plus a suite of micro-credentials. 1 existing programme recommended.	3 new major award programmes recommended. Two School of Business Special Purpose award programmes recommended for revalidation.
3. Teaching	Ensure robust data is used throughout the Programme Lifecycle Management structure to inform effective decision making across NCI's portfolio of programmes, highlighting SDG 4 Quality Education contributions and SDG references within NCI programmes	Data on programme demand (applications and enrolments), quality (progression, attrition, completion, grade classifications), SDG relevance, EDI, and currency explicitly used in programme, school and institutional decision making.	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness		Completed. Quantitative data supplied to all programme teams engaged in programme review, revalidation and annual monitoring processes in 2023	i) LTAC to consider collated learnings from 2021-22 and 2022-23 QQI Revalidations, on programme design and assessment topics ii) PLM ESG approval gained for new programmes identified and agreed for development and validation in 2023/24	Academic Council approval secured for refreshed internal programme quality policies and procedures, including for online delivery
4. Research	Gather and analyse data on the postgraduate student needs and experiences to drive effective decision making across NCI	The postgraduate student experience demonstrably informs relevant programme and institutional decision-making	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness		Encourage the NCISU and Student Services to target promotions to postgraduate students to participate in internal and external student surveys	PG student feedback captured as a part of refreshed Module learner evaluation survey	PG student feedback (research projects) captured and analysed as part of refreshed Module learner evaluation survey
5. Access	Identify and support opportunities for innovation with programme access routes, FE/HE partnerships and diversity of delivery modes in line NCI and national strategic goals	Increased diversity in NCI's student body and portfolio of programmes	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness		Completed. Access innovation (FE entry pathways) supported in the revalidation of the BA(Hons) in Business and Higher Certificate in Business programmes	Support the validation of the new MSc in Open Data Management programme, designed and delivered with European partner institutions	i) Support the review and revalidation of NCI's suite of apprenticeship programmes and the development of a new P-TECH apprenticeship programme
6. Positioning	Lead NCI's preparations for success in the 2024 CINNTE process	Successful CINNTE process outcomes achieved in 2024	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. ISAR Steering Group established	Annual Quality Report (AQR) approved by Academic Council and submitted to QQI	Refresh undertaken of quality assurance policies and procedures for approval by Academic Council	Case studies gathered across NCI for use in CINNTE, DA and HEI Designation Processes
	Manage and maintain NCI's register of accreditations to ensure accuracy and completeness	NCI maintains compliance with PRSB accreditation requirements for all validated programmes	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. Review of all PRSB accreditations		Online Register available via NCI Knowledge Support Hub, to staff	

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Programme Validation		
MSc/PG Dip in Open Data	May 2023	N/A
Diploma and Certificate in Professional Human Resource Practice	May 2023	N/A
Diploma and Certificate in Professional Learning & Organisational Development		N/A
MSc/PG Dip in Business Analytics for Decision Making	June 2023 (TBC)	N/A
Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning & Digital Learning Design	June 2023	N/A
Programme Revalidation		
MSc/PG Dip in FinTech	November 2022	April 2016
MSc/PG Dip in Cybersecurity	November 2022	April 2016
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology	January 2023	June 2017
Bachelor of Arts in Business (180-ECTS & 240-ECTS)	February 2023	July 2018
Higher Certificate in Business	February 2023	October 2015
Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management (180-ECTS & 240-ECTS)	February 2023	July 2018
Bachelor of Arts in Marketing Practice (180-ECTS & 240-ECTS)	March 2023	July 2018
MSc in Marketing/PG Dip in Marketing		June 2016

Certificate in Not-For-Profit Leadership & Management	April 2023	June 2016
Thematic/Support Service Review		
Quality Service Review: Central Timetabling Office	November 2022	N/A

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Programme Revalidation
Bachelor of Arts (Hons & Ord) in Data Science
Higher Certificate in Data Science
Certificate in Data Science
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Recruitment Practice (Apprenticeship)
Higher Certificate in International Financial Services (Apprenticeship)
Higher Diploma in Financial Service Analytics (Apprenticeship)
Certificate in Software Development Fundamentals (Micro-credential)
Certificate in Learning & Teaching (Micro-credential)
Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (Micro-credential)
Certificate in Digital Capabilities and the Learning Experience (Micro-credential)
Diploma in Financial Services for Credit Unions
Certificate in Credit Union Business
Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Managing Social Protection Services (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Social Protection Studies (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Community Welfare Service Provision (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Social Welfare Appeals (Department of Social Protection)
Certificate in Data Governance and Cybersecurity
MSc in Data Analytics/PG Dip in Data Analytics
Certificate in Learning and Technology
Certificate in Strategies of Learning and Teaching for P-Tech

Certificate in Educational Practice for P-Tech
Certificate in Technologies in Assessment, Feedback and Learning Support
Certificate in Technologies in Teaching and Learning
Certificate in Curriculum and Pedagogical Practice for Early Childhood Home Visiting
Certificate in Leadership, Governance and Change Management in Early Childhood Home Visiting
Thematic/Support Service Review
Enhancing the Quality of NCI's Associate Faculty staffing model

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1: NCI Work Placements



National
College of
Ireland

Introduction and Context:

One of the selling points for the National College of Ireland NCI is its work placements programme. Currently, the college organises work placements on the Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) programmes (QQI Levels 8 and 9) in both the School of Computing and the School of Business. Typically, a student on the UG programme can opt to do a work placement in the third year of their course subject to guidelines. In the School of Computing, work placements (internships) are at PG level.

As tripartite, signed agreements between the college, employers and students, all work placements are with employers who advertise the roles through the college's career office, although some students secure their own work placements.

Unit/School	Programme	QQI Level	Work Placement/Internship Duration	Work Placement Start
School of Business	BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management	8	8 - 12 months	June / September
	BA (Hons) in Business	8	8 - 12 months	June / September
	BA (Hons) in Marketing Practice	8	8 - 12 months	June / September
	BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance	8	8 - 12 months	June / September
School of Computing	BSc (Hons) in Computing	8	6 months	January / February
	BSc (Hons) in Technology Management	8	6 months	January / February
	MSc in Cybersecurity*	9	12 weeks	May - August/ September - December
Early Learning Initiative	N/A (Internship is paid, but not accredited)	N/A	Flexible - ELI determines requirements	Flexible - agreed with post-holder

Table 1: NCI Programmes offering Work Placements in academic year 2021-22.* At PG level in Computing, the terminology used is Internship.

Key Features

1. **Diversity** – NCI's increasing range and diversity of work placement and internship offerings. As well as credit-bearing placements within UG and PG degree programmes, NCI's Early Learning Initiative (ELI) also offers paid Internships for NCI students (29 applications for 5 internship jobs in 2021-22 year).
2. **Student Support** – Students are supported at different stages through their programmes in preparation for their work placements. Business and HRM students are required to take the Career and Management Skills module. Students may also avail of Careers Support such as talks, CV preparation and dedicated academic supervisors during their placements.
3. **Dedicated Staff** – The work placement programme is enabled by teams of dedicated staff:
 - a. the Career Development and Employability team
 - b. Academic staff including the work placement programme director, Academic Supervisors, faculty and associate faculty.
4. **Feedback** – Student feedback on their experiences during their placements is obtained utilising tools such as surveys and focus groups and through direct supervisor site-visits and/or weekly meetings to students. Focus groups are generally conducted during in-depth programme review when preparing for QQI programme revalidation. The Graduate Outcomes Survey is more frequent and is sent out annually to all graduates at the end of a programme
5. **Quality Assurance** – This includes external examiner reports, reviews of grade classifications, learner feedback to lecturers, and surveys of learners as part of QQI programme reviews and revalidation.

The Student Voice

Student feedback about the work placement programmes has been overall positive. Responses to the 2022 and 2023 surveys highlighted three common themes:

- i. the development of skills for work and college
- ii. the acquiring of real-world, professional experience
- iii. the opportunity for personal and professional growth that the work placement programme had provided.

An overall positive sentiment reflected the feeling of support from colleagues in the companies and organisations in which the students did their work placements. Figure 1 provides a sampling of the comments relating to the three themes identified.

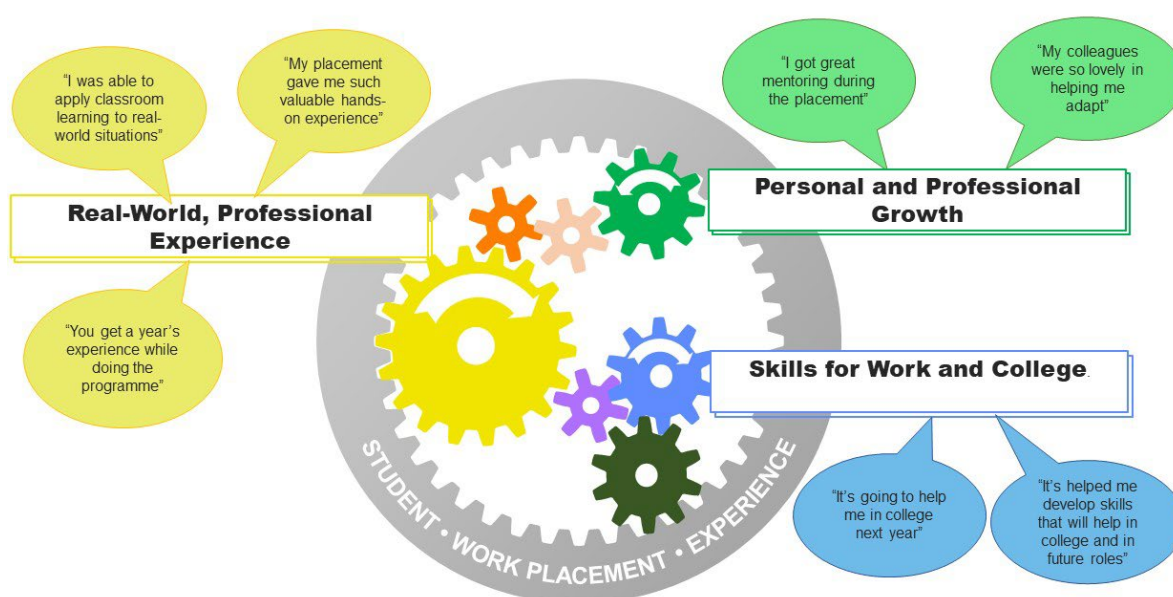


Figure 2: The Student Voice: Key comment areas about Work Placements (feedback provided by Programme Directors)

Graduate Outcomes and Grade Classifications

Data from the **NCI Graduate Outcomes survey**³ for the November 2021 graduating cohort indicated that the work placement programme positively impacted graduate outcomes and student grades.

Table 2 provides high-level information on First Destinations of graduates who had completed placements as part of their programmes.

Table 2: Graduate Outcomes - First Destinations following graduation.

		School of Business	School of Computing
A: Undergraduate students			
Total number of graduates from UG programmes who had undertaken placement	76	18	58
Available for work and employed in graduate role following placement		17 (94%)	51 (88%)
B. Postgraduate students			
Total number of graduates from PG programmes who had undertaken Internship		N/A	6
Offered permanent positions in Internship companies, post-graduation			4 (66%)

In the section below, Figures 2 (School of Business programmes) and 3 (School of Computing programmes) show First Class Honours grade attainment among students on programmes with placement options. The data presented does not include 2nd Class Honours attainment, however it must be emphasised that this is also an indicator of high academic achievement.

Figure 2: School of Business – 2021 % First Class Honours degree attainment among students taking placements and those not taking placements.

BAHACF	BA (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
BAHBMD	BA (Honours) in Business
BAHHRD	BA (Honours) in Human Resource Management
BAHMRP	BA (Honours) in Marketing Practice

It should be noted that 62% of the graduates (with work placements) from the BA(Hons) Human Resource Management (BAHHRD) and 80% of the graduates (with work placements) from the BA(Hons) Business programme, obtained their degrees with 2nd Class Honours classification.

³ More information on the NCI 2021 Graduate Outcomes Report is available from the NCI Careers and Employability office: [Career Development & Employability Service | NCI \(ncirl.ie\)](https://www.ncirl.ie)

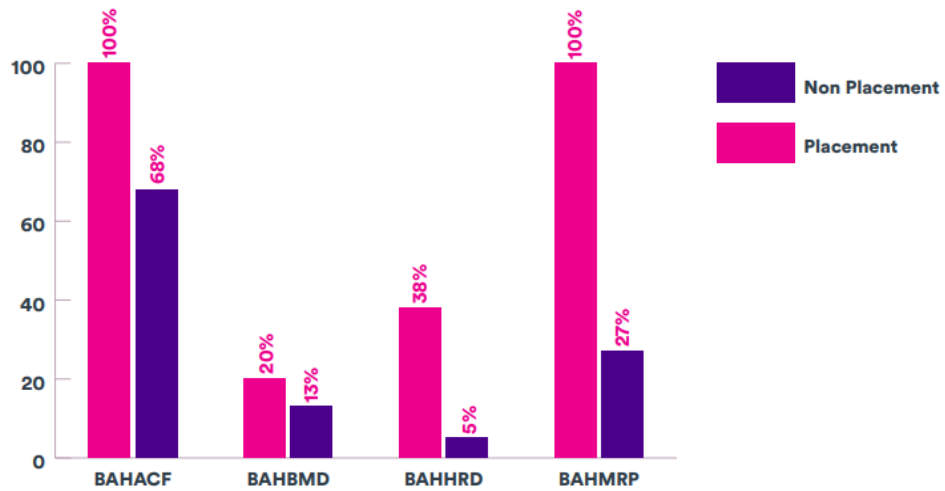


Figure 3: School of Computing – 2021 % First Class Honours degree attainment among students taking placements and those not taking placements.

BSHC	BSc (Honours) in Computing
BSHTM	B.Sc. (Hons) in Technology Management
BSHBIS	BSc (Hons) in Business Information Systems
MScCYB	MSc in Cyber Security

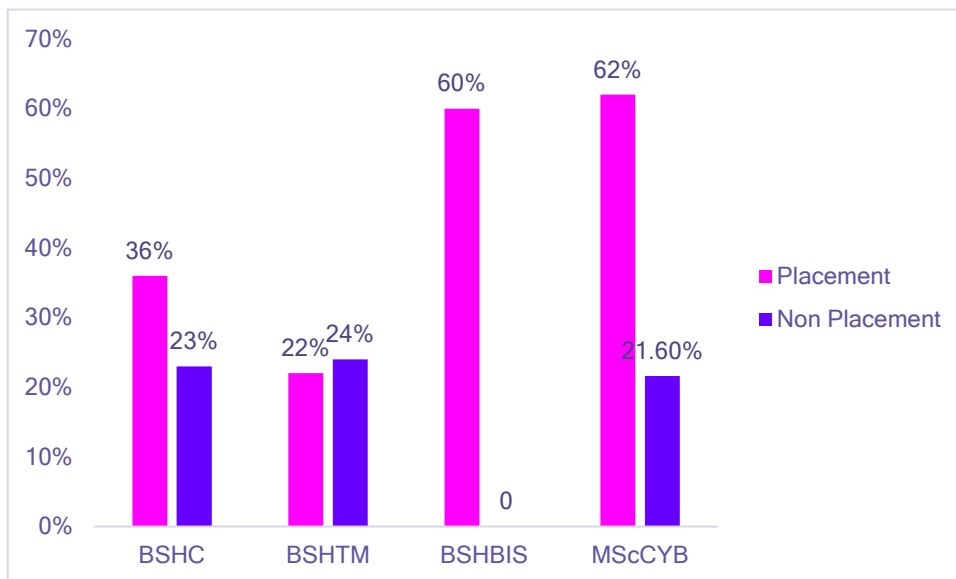


Figure 3: School of Computing – 2021 % First Class Honours degree attainment among students taking placements and those not taking placements.

BSHC	BSc (Honours) in Computing
BSHTM	B.Sc. (Hons) in Technology Management
BSHBIS	BSc (Hons) in Business Information Systems
MScCYB	MSc in Cyber Security

Lessons Learned and future areas for development.

Based on feedback from the Programme Directors, the following have been identified as key lessons learned and areas for future attention:

1. Automation of the tri-party agreement process would improve the administration of Work Placements, particularly as student numbers increase.
2. Promotion, student feedback and impact assessment are continually needed.
3. Resourcing levels to be kept under review, as the numbers of programmes incorporating Work Placements expands.
4. Where entry criteria for placements apply, keep these under review, in the interests of equity of opportunity for students.
5. Additional engagement with SUSI to streamline recognition processes for undergraduate learners (on SUSI grants) who return from Placement to their final year study.

Conclusion

Overall, the work placement initiative is highly successful, enhancing NCI's programmes and the student experience (demonstrated through student feedback, grade classifications and graduate outcomes). An increasing number of students are opting to undertake work placement, indicating a potential for greater collaboration between NCI and industry. We will consider a model of resourcing and service provision that is linked to programme and student enrolment planning, so that an expanding work placement programme is quality-assured.

CASE STUDY 2: Norma Smurfit Academic Integrity - Library Turnitin Developments

Academic year 2021-22

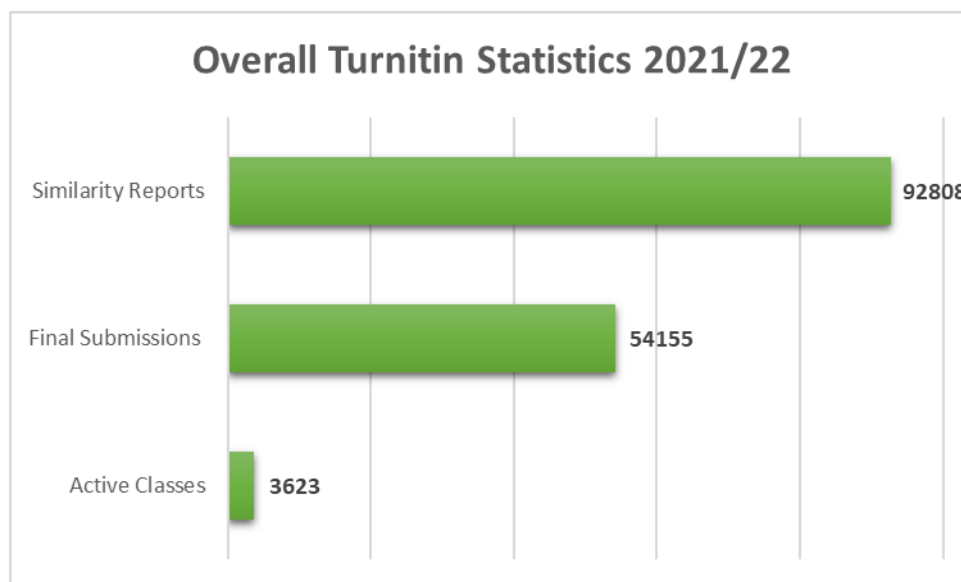


Fig.1. Overall Turnitin account statistics for the academic year 2021/22

Introduction and Context:

For the academic year 2021-22 the Library's main aim, in terms of Turnitin, was to continue to educate students and staff on how best to understand and utilise Turnitin. This work first began when the library was part of an inter-departmental working group, originally set up in February 2018, to examine the use of Turnitin within the college. One takeaway from this working group was the need to provide additional training to staff, primarily lecturers, on how to make the most of Turnitin in terms of grading papers and providing feedback to students, as well as identifying possible cases of plagiarism and how to deal with them. The other main concern was how to change students' attitudes to Turnitin, in terms of viewing it as a possible aid to better academic writing instead of something to be feared. Below are some of the initiatives the library undertook, in the past academic year, in order to contribute to the above aims of changing staff and students' relationship and attitude towards Turnitin.

Summary of Initiatives Undertaken in 2021-22:

Turnitin Guide and FAQs

One of the main methods the library uses to provide instruction to users is through LibGuides which are online guides that cover different subjects, such as Cloud Computing and Psychology but also things like Library Essentials and Referencing. The library's Turnitin LibGuide includes links to Turnitin's instructional videos as well as similarity report tips and Turnitin misconceptions. The guide has become more popular over time and was viewed 4,295 times in 2021/22. It is particularly well used during the busy assignment submission periods, such as November each year when it averages around 1,000 views for the month.

The guide also includes a Turnitin **FAQs** section where students and staff can search for questions or submit one if they do not find an answer. These Turnitin FAQs have high public views particularly

those in relation to similarity scores or reports such as, “What does the colour on my Similarity Report mean?”, which had 3772 views in 2021/22. This highlights one of the main concerns that we wanted to address with our guide and FAQs, the fixation students seemed to have with the similarity score or percentage and their misunderstanding of what it meant. To address this, we try to include several FAQs and information boxes emphasizing the fact that having similarities does not equate to plagiarizing and that Turnitin simply finds similarities and does not determine whether a student has quoted or cited correctly.

The Turnitin guide also includes a staff tab which provides links for staff to complete Turnitin training as well as instructions for setting up assignments and detecting plagiarism and there are also staff specific FAQs available. The decision was made to have both the staff and student resources available to all, in one place, it was felt that this would further help to demystify the whole process behind Turnitin for students as they could see how and for what their lecturers used it.

Draft Coach

Since 2018 students have been allowed to make multiple draft submissions to their Moodle submission point, and although this was a welcome and necessary step it still caused a certain amount of doubt and apprehension for students. Students were hesitant about submitting drafts to their module submission points on Moodle and there are also certain restrictions in place for this system in terms of how many drafts one can submit within a certain timeframe. For these reasons Turnitin’s Draft Coach feature is a very welcome development and one the college will be adopting for the coming academic year, 2022-23. This new feature will allow students to run similarity, citation, and grammar checks on their work prior to submitting it to Moodle. It can be done through Word Online or Google Docs and the library has an additional guide and FAQs prepared relating to the use of Draft Coach. The average number of draft submissions being made per student per assignment through Turnitin (Moodle plugin) for the 2021/22 academic year was less than 1 draft so it is hoped that by introducing Draft Coach it will increase students’ use of editing and redrafting to improve their academic writing.

Library Help Centre

The Library Help Centre is a very important service within the library in terms of helping students with all areas of academic writing and study. The Help Centre is also a very important resource for students who want to better understand their similarity reports and then, if necessary, improve their referencing. With the changes to the draft submissions policy students can now go to the Library Help Centre and seek advice on their similarity report before making their final submission and the introduction of Draft Coach has made it even easier for the Help Centre to evaluate students’ similarity reports at an earlier stage.

Conclusion and Future Plans:

The Library, during the 2021/22 academic year, has been part of a wider effort to improve student and staff understanding of Turnitin and to dispel many of the misconceptions around it. There is an effort to bring it out into the open as opposed to it being a software working in the background and something to be feared. We have attempted to highlight as much as possible that **similarity does not equal plagiarism** and that students should see Turnitin as a tool to help improve referencing, paraphrasing, and academic writing in general. The Library must continue to update its guides and FAQs in order to ensure students are getting accurate information. The FAQs, in particular, is an area where more might be done, we currently have 42 Turnitin specific questions but there is scope there to increase this number. Promotion and awareness are also vital elements. In 2021 the library added a link to the Turnitin guide to all other guides and this led to an increase

in public views. The library also participated in Academic Integrity Week 2021 and 2022 and this is a good annual opportunity to promote some of the library resources in this area. Draft Coach will be rolled out in the coming academic year and this will need to be continually promoted and supported. Another recent development is in the area of AI generated text and we will need to monitor how Turnitin plans to deal with this issue and how quickly they can implement new technologies into their finished product using Turnitin's Artificial Intelligence detection interface, which is due to be launched later in 2023.

CASE STUDY 3: The Impact of Student Surveys



Academic year 2021-22

Introduction and Context:

In this short case-study, we highlight the institutional impact of the *student survey.ie* results in 2022 (from fieldwork carried out among the eligible student body in February 2022).

NCI has always placed a premium on student feedback as a key component of robust Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) processes for programmes of education and training and the student experience more widely. As a relatively small College, albeit one that has grown significantly in recent years, NCI staff and students have always enjoyed close relationships, built on high levels of one-to-one contact and underpinned by our core values of Inclusivity, Learner-centredness and community.

Values-based commitment and good staff-student relationships facilitate the **Learner Voice** to come to the fore in decision-making. This was further strengthened at College level in 2021-22 with the signing of the NCI – NCI Student's Union Partnership Agreement (see Strategic QA updates in section 1.1 of this report).

2.1 Findings at institutional level: 2022 *Student survey.ie*

NCI achieved a 26% response rate in the 2022 national student survey. This was the highest response rate in NCI since the beginning of participation in 2013/14. NCI's Executive Group (EG) and Academic Council (AC) discussed the 2022 *student survey.ie* results extensively, as an important insight into students' views during the 2021 – 22 academic year, which was the second academic year of Covid-19 restrictions at the College.

The following key findings were the focus of attention at the institutional level and will continue to be monitored closely year on year:

Student Survey Results 2022



Response Rate: **26%**

Overall Satisfaction:

 **73%** rate their overall experience as good or excellent

 **77%** would choose NCI if they were to start their studies with NCI again

NCI was pleased to note that respondents selecting “good or excellent” to describe their overall experience in NCI has steadily increased (from 68% in 2017-2018 to 73% in 2022). In addition, 77% of learners responded that if they were asked to start their studies again, they would start again with NCI. This result was up 6% since 2017-18. It is essential that we continue to build on these positive scores.

NCI’s results also showed a year-on-year improvement since 2019 across nine of the ten *studentsurvey.ie* engagement indicators – however we noted that although the 2022 result was 3.36 (out of 60) up on 2021, satisfaction with levels of Student-Faculty interaction was the lowest scoring indicator in 2022 (a sectoral finding). The Academic Council agreed to emphasise this finding at School and Programme levels with all faculty, particularly in relation to formative assessments which provide opportunities for students to engage with academic staff on their performance in modules.

NCI closed the feedback loop with students by communicating the high-level results to all students via the website and NCI social media and engaging with the Student’s Union leaders on the key findings. In addition, where survey results were available at programme-level, Programme Directors fed these through to scheduled programme reviews and QQI revalidations during the reporting period.

2.2 Learner demographics

With 26% of eligible respondents (first year and final year undergraduate students and all postgraduate students) completing the survey, the profile of respondents across demographic indicators gave us a useful snapshot/point-in-time picture of the student population, and highlighted differences with the wider HE sector (including all public universities, Technological universities, IoTs and other independent and private colleges).

We include this snapshot of respondent demographics as an illustration of NCI’s distinctiveness as a provider HEI. However, the profile below should not be taken as the demographic profile of the NCI learner population as a whole: we were mindful that the data was shaped by the eligibility

parameters of *studentsurvey.ie* - all postgraduate students can respond, but only first and final year undergraduate students, as well as the numbers of students who respond in total, and across each category, which have a bearing on the results.

Table 3: 2022 Studentsurvey.ie respondents: demographic profile

	NCI	Sector
Total respondents (% of total eligible)	26%	27.8%
Age	=/<23: 24% =>24: 76%	=/<23: 61.8% =>24: 31.2%
Gender	Male: 50.6% Female: 49.4%	Male: 38.9% Female: 61.1%
Domicile (refers to a student's country of permanent address three years prior to entry to their programme of study)	Irish: 49.4% Non-Irish: 50.6%	Irish: 84.5% Non-Irish: 15.5%
Mode of study (Full-time or part-time/remote)	FT: 66.8% Part-time/remote: 33.2%	FT: 85.8% Part-time/remote: 14.2%

This student profile snapshot illustrates NCI's distinctive profile in the Irish HE Sector, with a learner community that is older than the sectoral average, with a more balanced gender representation, a more balanced proportion of Irish and non-Irish domiciled learners and larger proportion of learners studying on a part-time basis.