National University of Ireland

2023

Annual Quality Report

National University of Ireland

Reporting Period 2021-2022

National University of Ireland

2023

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.

Annual Quality Report (NUI)

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2021-2022

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.

CONTENTS

PREFACE 2

CONTENTS 3

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template 5

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM 7

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG) 7

Introduction and Overview of Institution 8

1.0 Internal QA Framework 11

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality 11

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision 15

2.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties 21

2.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies 21

3.0 Collaborative Provision 22

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM 23

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments 24

1.1 Strategic QA Updates 24

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR 27

1.3 Governance and Management 28

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule 28

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments 28

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review 30

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews 30

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA 31

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts 33

Institutional QA Effectiveness Review of IPA 33

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity 37

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period 38

3.1QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives 38

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods 39

3.2.1Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period 39

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period 39

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies.....41

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

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

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

- UN Sustainable Development Goals

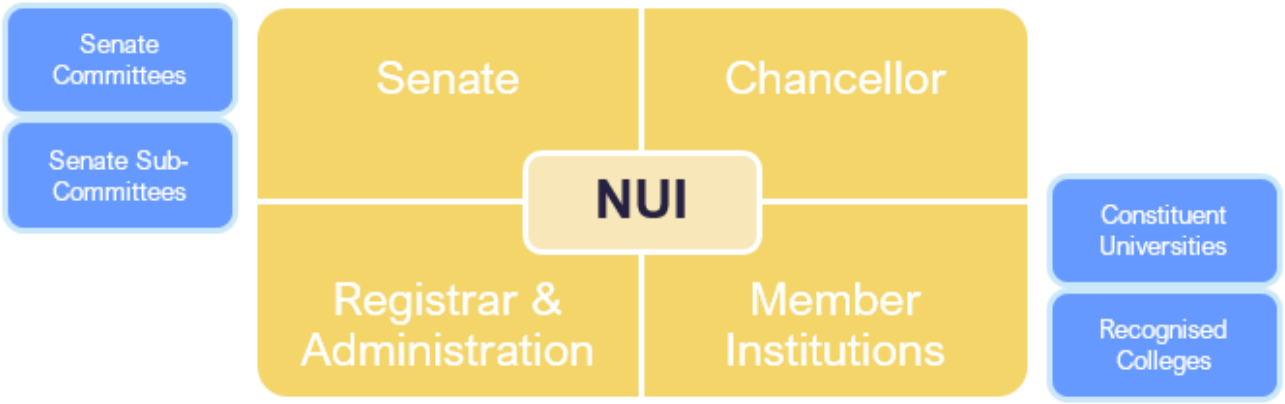
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

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*				
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
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*				
9.0 - *Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
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 **National University of Ireland** (NUI) for the reporting period **1 September 2021 – 31 August 2022.** It is to be submitted by **Friday, 24 February 2023**. The AQR has been approved by Dr Kieran McGovern, Head of Academic Services and Registry and Dr Patrick O'Leary, NUI Registrar, and is submitted by Dr Sorcha Uí Chonnachtaigh, Manager of Academic Affairs.



The National University of Ireland

The National University of Ireland (NUI) is a federal university comprising the largest element in the Irish higher education system with four constituent universities (CUs), two recognised colleges (RCs) and associated institutions. Collectively, these are referred to as member institutions. NUI is a designated awarding body (DAB) but not a provider of education, though it does directly award higher doctorate degrees.

NUI was established by charter in 1908 and is empowered by charter and statute to recognise other institutions of higher education – known as 'recognised colleges' – that meet the quality standards of the University in the academic programmes and student experience that they offer. Through quality assurance (QA) policies, procedures and guidelines, NUI applies standards that are comparable to those in the constituent universities, and on this basis these colleges are permitted to award degrees and other qualifications of the National University. NUI's position as a designated awarding body (DAB) in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 has further strengthened NUI's statutory role in this regard.

Constituent Universities
Maynooth University / MU
University College Cork / UCC
University College Dublin / UCD
University of Galway

Recognised Colleges
Royal College of Surgeons – University of Medicine and Health Sciences / RCSI (DAB)
Institute of Public Administration / IPA (Linked Provider

The AQR Development Process

NUI has a small team of 20 people. The Quality Team consists of the Registrar, the Head of Academic Services and Registry and the Manager of Academic Affairs. The Manager of Academic Affairs has the main responsibility for quality matters in NUI and manages the relationship with the recognised colleges. For this reason, the AQR is written by the Manager of Academic Affairs with input from external stakeholders (in the RCs) and the NUI Quality Team. The Registrar gives final approval before the report is submitted.

A note on the Reporting Period

The former Manager of Academic Affairs left NUI in November 2021 and her replacement took up the role in January 2022. For most of 2022, NUI was preparing its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) for submission in November 2022 and some of the usual QA activities, e.g. policy development, was suspended. This resumed after submission of the ISER, which was after the conclusion of the reporting period.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The terms below are used in the report:

CU	Constituent university
DAB	Designated awarding body
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
LP	Linked provider
NUI	National University of Ireland
QA	Quality assurance
QAE	Quality assurance and enhancement
RC	Recognised college

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

This section provides information on the overarching quality policy and the decision-making fora for quality assurance in NUI during the reporting period.

a. Overarching Institutional Quality Policy

NUI's role and activities relating to quality assurance and enhancement align with NUI's *Strategic Plan for 2018-22*, specifically referencing Strategic Goal 3, which has, as a major objective, to 'ensure recognition of the NUI brand in Ireland and internationally as a mark of the highest quality academic standards'. As the strategy notes, 'academic quality underpins the NUI brand, which is shared by the constituent universities and the recognised colleges'.

NUI's (2017) *Policy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement* states that the University will safeguard the standards of its awards in the recognised colleges (that are linked providers), while stating that the institutions themselves have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance on a day-to-day basis. NUI has developed guidelines, policies and procedures, and provides ongoing guidance and support to its recognised colleges, in line with national policy,[2] sectoral practices and European good practice guidelines. NUI benefits from membership of the European Universities Association (EUA) Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF). At a national sectoral level, NUI engages actively as a member of the Irish Universities Association (IUA) Quality Committee.

This engagement and information-sharing supports NUI's work to review and expand the range of quality assurance policies, procedures and guidelines.

NUI's governing body, the Senate, oversees quality matters – approving new/revised QA policies. The Registrar presents a report on QA matters across the recognised colleges at every meeting of Senate. The Committee of Registrars of the NUI Constituent Universities also provides advice and support on QA matters, as and when required.

b. Quality Assurance Decision-making Fora

[2] NUI is also guided in this task by the *Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland*, issued by QQI in March 2019.

NUI Senate governs the NUI's role as a DAB for the recognised colleges that are linked providers.[3] The NUI Registrar leads and manages the implementation of this role, supported by designated executive staff in NUI, namely the Head of Academic Services and Registry and the Manager of Academic Affairs. The Registrar reports to Senate at its meetings in January, May and November on QA matters in the recognised colleges, bringing forward items for decision, as and when appropriate. Membership of the NUI Senate includes the NUI Chancellor, the NUI Registrar, chief officers of the constituent universities, four government nominees, four elected members from the governing bodies of each constituent university, and eight members elected by convocation (graduates of the NUI). An additional four members may be co-opted by Senate.

Below the level of the Senate, operational business between NUI and its recognised colleges is conducted through separate steering committees for each institution. The steering committees act as the main mechanism for oversight of all strategic, policy and operational issues between NUI and the relevant recognised college. In the case of recognised colleges that are also linked providers, this committee is the key forum for deliberation and decision-making on quality assurance matters, leading to formal decision-making by the Senate where warranted.

Figure 1 below illustrates the oversight and monitoring cycle of QA activity between NUI and its recognised colleges that are linked providers. This is based on an interpretation of quality in its widest sense, inclusive of the approval and re-approval processes for academic programmes leading to NUI qualifications as well as activities more traditionally associated with quality assurance such as external examining and institutional effectiveness reviews.

All these steps – except the periodic institutional review of QA effectiveness - apply to both of NUI's current recognised colleges. As a designated awarding body in its own right, RCSI's institutional effectiveness review is conducted directly by QQI (CINNTE review), and this does not fall within NUI's QA responsibility.[4] The NUI Registrar and staff participate in the reviews of RCSI, attending meetings convened by the external review panels and providing documentation upon request. NUI Senate notes the outcome of the RCSI institutional effectiveness review.

[3] At present, there is only one such recognised college, the IPA. RCSI is a DAB in its own right.

[4] QQI will be aware that the IPA institutional review does fall within the NUI's remit and took place during the reporting period.

Figure 1: NUI QA oversight and monitoring cycle for recognised colleges that are linked providers

a. Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders

External stakeholders are involved in NUI's governing body, the Senate, and external stakeholders and partners are involved in civic engagement activities and ad hoc projects.

As a non-provider, NUI does not have learners in the same way as its member institutions. Learner experience is a core concern of our quality assurance activity with regard to the recognised colleges, but NUI does not have a direct relationship with learners that is typical in provider institutions. NUI interacts with active learners in a limited way, however, through the annual programme of awards, prizes and scholarships. (We provide services to graduates directly, but this is after they have completed their studies.)

In civic engagement activities, the University seeks to include student perspectives, but this is also, necessarily, somewhat limited to student representatives (student union movement, students involved in governance). The approach in NUI previously has been to respect the member institutions' primary relationship with learners and interact in the above, specific ways. The development of the next strategic plan is an opportunity to rethink the relationship and input of student perspectives in NUI activities more broadly.

Important note:

With the prior permission of QQI, NUI has adapted Part A by moving most of the information from further sections of Part A into section 1.2. This change reflects the scope of this Annual Quality Report, which relates only to NUI's quality responsibilities towards its recognised colleges and, in particular, its current linked provider institution, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). Part A, therefore, has the following sections:

- Section 1.2: QA Developments Relating to Recognised Colleges (sub-sections i-xi)
- Section 2: Details of Arrangements with Third Parties
- Section 3: Collaborative Provision

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Linked Providers

At present there are two types of provider institutions with the status of a recognised college of NUI:[5]

- A provider institution that is deemed a 'linked provider' under the Act 2012;[6] NUI is the DAB for qualifications of the linked provider. At present this includes the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).
- A provider institution that is also the holder of the status of designated awarding body under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. Here, the responsibility for approval of the quality assurance provision for that institution lies directly with QQI. At present this includes the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – University of Medicine and Health Sciences (RCSI).

QA Developments Relating to the Recognised Colleges (both DABs and Linked Providers)

i. Programme Design and Approval

All new programmes proposed by NUI recognised colleges leading to NUI qualifications are subject to approval by the NUI Senate. The design of the programme lies with the institution and follows NUI's core procedural document.[7]

During the reporting period, two policies relating to programme approval were approved and published by NUI:

- NUI (2021) *Policy, Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Research Degrees in the Recognised Colleges.*
- NUI (2022) *Protocol on transitioning to permanent online delivery for the 2022-2023 session in the Recognised Colleges*.

[5] The conditions for recognised colleges as set out by Senate are governed under NUI Statute LXXXV1: Chapter LIX. This is not published online however details are available upon request from the NUI Registrar (registrar@nui.ie).

[6] 2012 Act: Section 2(3) states that 'a linked provider is 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'.

[7] These apply to linked providers *and* recognised colleges that are designated awarding bodies: http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Programme_Approval_Regs.pdf

ii. Monitoring and Periodic Review

Monitoring of quality in academic programmes via the external examination process is guided by NUI Senate's (2019) *NUI Extern Examiners: Primary degree and taught postgraduate courses in recognised colleges*.

In May 2019, NUI formalised its long-standing requirement for programme review in the recognised colleges by publishing a new policy and set of procedures governing external, periodic reviews of academic programmes. These guidelines were used by IPA in the (COVID-delayed) external, periodic review of its suite of BA (Hons) programmes and the findings and recommendations were reported to Senate in Autumn 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, programme reviews were suspended in IPA (these have since been reinitiated but after the conclusion of the reporting period).

RCSI suspended scheduled overseas programme reviews during the COVID-19 outbreak. In April 2021, the Education and Training Quality Authority in Bahrain (BQA) were in a position to carry out *their* planned academic programme review (APR) of the BSc in Nursing. After an equivalency review, the report of the BQA review was accepted in place of a separate RCSI programme review, and this has been noted by NUI Senate.[8]

iii. Progression, Recognition and Certification Policies and Procedures

NUI has not materially updated its policies or guidelines in this area during the reporting period.
Progression: During the normal process of programme approval, or to make major changes to existing academic programmes, documentation submitted to NUI must include details of arrangements for access and transfer into the programmes of study and the progression pathways in place for students. As part of its procedures (see section i above), NUI requires re-assurance from an external, independent academic peer assessor of senior rank that these provisions are in line with international good practice.

Recognition: NUI's 2013 *Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning for the Degrees and Qualifications of the National University* applies but is **due for review and renewal** in line with sectoral developments being led by QQI (and a project led by the IUA and THEA); NUI is monitoring and engaging with processes where appropriate.

[8] As required by the agreed process, see Section 6.3 of NUI (2020) *The Quality Assurance Relationship between the National University of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine and Health Sciences*.

Certification: The NUI Registrar co-chairs examination boards in the recognised colleges and formally recommends to the Senate the award of degrees and other qualifications to students who have achieved the requisite results, in line with the published marks and standards of the recognised college. The NUI Chancellor then confers all degrees and other qualifications made in the recognised colleges at conferring ceremonies. All degree and certificate parchments bear the university seal as well as the institutional crest of the recognised college where the graduate undertook the course of study.

NUI also provides a certification service for graduates who have lost their original parchment and seek duplicate documentation as well as a certification service for overseas agencies involved in the process of certifying academic credentials supplied by graduates seeking employment and/or professional training opportunities abroad.

iv. Collaborative and Transnational Provision

NUI has not materially updated its specific policy and guidelines for collaborative and transnational provision during the reporting period. The recently updated and republished (May 2020) core regulatory and procedures document for new or significantly changed academic programmes applies to all taught provision in the recognised colleges, including collaborative or transnational programmes leading to NUI qualifications.

NUI's 2013 *Guidelines for Collaborative and Transnational Provision* remain in effect. These were re-scheduled for review in the academic year 2021-2022 but due to the impact of COVID-19 and staff departures, and in light of NUI's imminent CINNTE review, work will begin on this in 2023 with publication likely in 2023-24. NUI's (2013) *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct* is currently under review and will influence the revision of the guidelines for collaborative and transnational provision.

v. Procedures for Making Awards

The regulations and procedures for making awards are the responsibility of the recognised college, however NUI has a long-standing policy on the usage of titles of degrees and other qualifications, which was reviewed and re-published in January 2020. However, recent sectoral developments regarding non-major awards and the use of 'professional' in qualification titles has prompted a further revision of this policy. It is scheduled for publication in 2023-24 academic year.

NUI also provides guidance with regard to marks bands and generic grade descriptors for NUI degrees. This, too, is planned for review in 2023.

vi. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

NUI has not materially updated specific policies or guidelines in this area during the reporting period.[9] While the teaching, learning and assessment strategies adopted for individual programmes are the responsibility of the recognised college, the quality of teaching staff is a core criterion for recognition by the University of any college seeking recognised status and assurance of same will form part of the approved QA system in any recognised college.

The provisions in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 relating to academic integrity and academic misconduct have gained higher prominence in teaching, learning and assessment and student discipline strategies and policies across the university sector. As a member of the IUA Registrars and Quality Committees, NUI continues to monitor developments in this area and update the recognised colleges accordingly.

vii. Learner Resources and Support

In line with NUI policy on quality assurance in the recognised colleges, learner resources and supports for students are primarily the responsibility of the recognised college itself. However, NUI has oversight of these supports at various stages of its business with the recognised college: when a HEI applies to NUI for recognised college status; when academic programmes leading to NUI qualifications are submitted for approval or re-validation by Senate;[10] when a periodic, external programme review is undertaken of a programme(s); when NUI conducts an institutional quality effectiveness review.

viii. QA of Research Activities and Programmes

As stated, NUI is not a provider institution and does not offer research programmes directly to students. NUI ensures advice is aligned to the policies and procedures for research quality adopted in the NUI constituent universities. As mentioned in Section i above, *NUI Policy, Regulations and*

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[9] The relevant documents in this regard are NUI (2020) *Regulations, Procedures and Guidelines for the Approval of New Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes in the Recognised Colleges* and NUI (2019) *Guidelines for the Periodic External Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in Recognised Colleges that are also Linked Providers of NUI.* Both are available at http://www.nui.ie/about/gvrnce.asp.

[10] See n.9.

Procedures for the approval of NUI Research Degrees in the Recognised Colleges was published in November 2021.

The University also has a statutory function to appoint extern examiners for research degrees in the constituent universities and the recognised colleges. As mentioned in Section ii above, work is almost complete on a new policy on the appointment of external examiners for research degree programmes in the recognised colleges.

Higher Doctorate Degrees on Published Works

NUI also offers higher doctorate degrees on published work, which are awarded directly by the University to scholars who have, over a sustained period, published a substantial body of ground-breaking and influential work in a field of specialisation and who have achieved outstanding distinction internationally in that field.

ix. Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

NUI does not have a direct role or responsibility in relation to the recruitment, development and support of staff in the recognised colleges, however the quality of teaching staff in the recognised colleges is important to the University and this has its roots in NUI's statutes. Any institution seeking recognised college status with the University must – at the time of application – provide information and assurances as to the 'competencies of teaching staff'.

x. Information and Data Management

There have not been any material updates or changes to policy, procedures or guidelines in this area during the reporting period.

The use of information and data for quality assurance and enhancement is a requisite part of NUI's approval of linked provider's approved QA policies and procedures. Annual reports from appointed extern examiners form a core part of this information set for enhancement and NUI provides updates to the Senate from time to time on recurring issues arising from extern reports (across the recognised colleges and the constituent universities).

NUI also requires that recognised colleges (as linked providers) provide updates on the outcomes of information and data-management processes, for example, major curriculum or assessment decisions adopted on foot of student feedback on modules and programmes. Enhancement actions related to information and data-management are further developed during specific programme reviews and formed a significant part of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report from the IPA in preparation for its institutional review in September 2021.

xi. Public Information and Communication

NUI publishes information on its website in relation to the structure and governance of the University, its strategy and academic and QA policies, regulations and guidelines. NUI's internal culture is to prioritise the accuracy of information that we make accessible to our users, and to the public generally. We have a published the NUI web privacy policy, Freedom of Information documentation and the NUI data protection policy on our website.[11]

[11] NUI's Web Privacy Policy, Data Protection Policy and guidance on Freedom of Information requests are available on the website.

2.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

2.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	0 (Please note RCSI has a number of arrangements with PRSBs and submits a separate AQR)
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

3.0 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	RCSI has a number of collaborative partnerships and provides information on these in their AQR.
Joint/double/multiple awards	
Collaborative programmes	
Franchise programmes	
Linked providers (DABs only)	1 (IPA)

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Institute of Public Administration
Programme titles and links to publications	All IPA programmes leading to awards on the NFQ. Details of the programmes (Levels 6-10) can be found on IPA's page of the IRQ website.
Date of last review	2021-22 (Full institutional review of QA effectiveness)
Date of next review	By 2028

NUI has in its awards portfolio a range of approved RCSI collaborative and transnational programmes that have evolved from a number of collaborative partnerships. **As a DAB in its own right, further information on these programmes can be obtained directly from RCSI**. Examples include the collaborative PhD programme in Ireland (with DCU and Trinity College Dublin) in Structured Population and Health Services Research Education (SPHeRE).

National University of Ireland (NUI)
2023

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Annual Quality Report (NUI)

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Reporting Period 2021-2022

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Strategic Context

During the review period (2021-22), NUI was in the concluding period of NUI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 while also engaging in reflection for the purposes of NUI's first CINNTE review. ISER development coincided with work on the new strategic plan (for 2023-27). However, the strategic plan in effect during the review period is what will be considered here. The strategic goals for 2018-22 are:

1. To add demonstrable value to NUI's constituent universities, recognised colleges and associated institutions;
2. To support Irish higher education and advocate for its advancement at home and abroad;
3. To develop and capitalise on the NUI brand nationally and internationally, for the benefit of members and the wider sector;
4. To make a meaningful contribution to Irish civic society;
5. To enhance NUI's staff skills-base and its enabling support structures.

Goal 3, Objective 1 is to 'ensure recognition of the NUI brand in Ireland and internationally as a mark of the highest academic quality standards'. The strategy highlights that 'academic quality underpins the NUI brand, which is shared by the constituent universities and the recognised colleges'. Quality assurance is the focus of the relationship between NUI and its recognised colleges, particularly IPA (NUI's sole linked provider).

During the reporting period, NUI also experienced key staffing changes in the area of quality management and restarted the CINNTE review process resulting in a concentration of resources on the institutional review of NUI.

QA Developments for Recognised Colleges

The issue affecting all aspects of higher education teaching, learning and assessment in 2021-22 was the rapid pivot to online learning and assessment during the 2020-21 academic year and the subsequent consideration of permanent changes to blended learning and online assessment. NUI responded to this rapidly evolving situation by developing a protocol for

managing the transition of programmes to permanent online delivery, which was of particular interest to RCSI with its international education focus. IPA incorporated more online learning resources but welcomed the return to mixed delivery (online and in-person) with its target market of Ireland-based learners.

More policy reviews will be reported in the next AQR. There will be a holistic review of NUI's suite of regulations, policies and procedures starting with the overarching quality assurance framework. A number of policies relating to institutional review and QA revalidation will also be revised, following NUI's experience of IPA's institutional review in 2020-21.

Internal QA Planning, Monitoring and Improvement

The review and reflection prompted by NUI's ISER development brought focused attention to the system of QA policy development and review. NUI, with new personnel, established a formal cycle of policy review, and began work on refreshing the overarching framework of quality assurance and enhancement. The core principle of maintaining the standard of quality set by constituent universities across the federation remains central to NUI QA, but reflection on the mechanisms required to maintain (knowledge of) this standard involved consideration of the communication between quality officers in the CUs and the NUI administration. For the ISER, NUI surveyed members of Senate, which plays a key role in quality management and governance for the federation, on their understanding of quality assurance processes. As a result, changes have been made to the induction of new members of Senate (next cohort began just outside the reporting period, in Autumn 2022, but preparation for this began in Summer 2022). Minor changes to the presentation of QA reports to Senate have also been made to provide greater transparency and encourage deeper engagement.

Student advisers were involved in the ISER development process, and it is hoped that new initiatives in NUI's Strategic Plan 2023-27 will facilitate greater student partnership in QA matters in the next strategic cycle.

During the ISER process, NUI identified that much QA and enhancement in its internal systems were effective and responsive but informal and the CINNTE review team has been asked for direction on formalising an internal QA system for the institution that will be suitable for a small team to implement. It should be noted that this will have only a minor impact on the QA

relationships with recognised colleges (the focus of this report) but will contribute to the overall system of QA in NUI.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) See S.3.1 of NUI's 2020-21 AQR	Update on Status
1	Agree schedule of programmatic review with the IPA	**Complete:** Schedule received, and implementation of the schedule has begun.
2	Preparation of QQI's CINNTE review of NUI	Preparation **complete**: ISER work done and submitted just after the reporting period.
3	Continue schedule of updating NUI policy and procedures in a range of relevant academic and QA areas.	**In progress**: Due to work on the CINNTE review, this was suspended but has begun.
4	Identify key areas for development of new policy, guidelines and procedures	**In progress:** a particular area of interest for NUI is that of 'stacking' or accumulating micro-credentials provided across the federation into (NUI) awards. Renewed policy on RPL due to be completed in 2023.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

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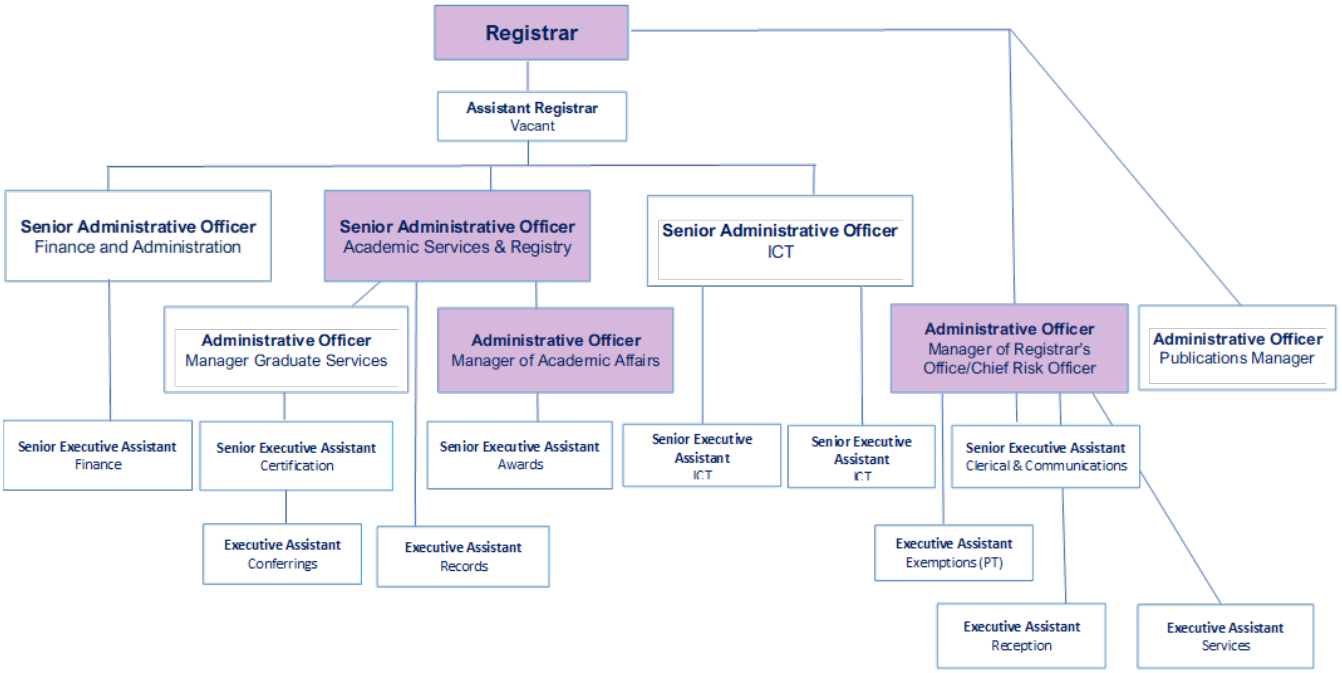
Body	Meeting dates
NUI Senate	Scheduled Statutory Meetings: 4 November 2021 20 January 2022 5 May 2022 Extra Meeting 15 September 2022 (to discuss draft NUI ISER and draft Strategic Plan 2023-27)
NUI-IPA Steering Committee	5 October 2021 11 January 2022 5 April 2022
NUI-RCSI Working Group Executive	15 October 2021 13 January 2022 24 March 2022

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

During the reporting period, four significant NUI roles changed (highlighted in purple in the organigram below):

- Manager of Academic Affairs – started December 2021
- Registrar – started January 2022
- Head of Academic Services & Registry – started May 2022
- Manager of Registrar's Office/Chief Risk Officer – started June 2022



There were two changes to the members of **Senate** during the reporting period:

- Professor Andrew Deeks, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, President of UCD stood down and the Interim President of UCD, Professor Mark Rogers, replaced him.
- Dr Deirdre Lillis, a Government nominee, stood down as her new departmental role rendered her ineligible for the seat. The recruitment process to replace her took place outside of the reporting period.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
IPA institutional review of QA effectiveness 2021-22	QIP submitted April 2022 (as planned)	Final Review Report and IPA Response published on NUI and IPA websites.
RCSI Bahrain programme review of BSc Nursing	Scheduled review suspended due to COVID, alternative in April 2022	The report of the local regulator, the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), was accepted following an equivalency analysis by RCSI and NUI. BQA (2022) *Directorate of Higher Education Reviews: Programme Review Report for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland-Medical University of Bahrain (School of Nursing & Midwifery) Bachelor of Science in Nursing*. HA012-C3-R012. Kingdom of Bahrain: BQA. Report on file with NUI (and RCSI).

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[12] involved in IQA

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

All data provided in the table below relate to NUI's linked provider, the IPA, because RCSI (a DAB) reports on its IQA directly to QQI. (NUI is not involved in IPA's internal reviews of academic or professional services units.)

	Total	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	2	IPA - Institutional Review of QA Effectiveness	0	Professional Diploma in Human Rights & Equality	
of those:					
On-site processes	0				
Desk reviews					
Virtual processes	2	x		x	
Average panel size for each process type*	6	6		5	

* Excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

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

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Institutional QA Effectiveness Review of IPA

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, NUI is required to establish quality assurance arrangements in respect of 'linked providers' that deliver educational programmes leading to NUI awards including institutional review on a seven-year cycle. The Institutional QA Effectiveness Review (hereafter institutional review) of IPA was governed by NUI's *Guidelines for the Institutional Review of Quality Assurance Effectiveness at Recognised Colleges which are Linked Providers of NUI,* which were developed in accordance with QQI's (2019) *Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland.* The terms of reference for IPA's institutional review set three objectives:

1. Objective 1: To review the implementation of NUI-approved QA policies and procedures in the IPA.
2. Objective 2: To review how the IPA enhances quality through governance, policies, and procedures, with regard to its stated mission and quality targets.
3. Objective 3: To review the effectiveness and implementation of the IPA's procedures for student access, transfer, and progression.

The IPA prepared a comprehensive self-evaluation report covering governance and management, their quality assurance system and procedures, management of academic standards, enrichment of the learner experience, and public information and stakeholders. IPA's ISER was submitted in June 2021. Both the Planning Visit and the Main Review Visit took place virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Main Review Visit took place over two days from 8-9 September 2021. The Review Report established that IPA had met all three agreed objectives, highlighted a number of commendations and identified a number of recommendations for improvement.

The institutional review concluded in January 2022 when the Review Report and IPA's response were presented to NUI Senate as the basis for Senate revalidation of IPA QA processes and procedures for seven years. Subsequently, the Review Report and the IPA response were published on the NUI and IPA websites (as noted in Section 1.4.1 above).

The IPA's quality improvement plan (QIP) was developed to address the Review Panel's recommendations and was approved by the NUI Registrar and the Chair of the Review Panel in July 2022 and noted by Senate in September 2022. The IPA regularly updates NUI on progress against the agreed actions in the QIP at meetings of the NUI-IPA Steering Committee.

The IPA provided very helpful quantitative and qualitative feedback on the process of institutional review. It was clear that the guidance on the QIP stage of the process and how approval was managed required greater detail for all parties. Work to revise the guidelines for institutional review has already begun. This policy update will be reported in the next AQR.

Overall, NUI was satisfied that the QA policies and procedures in place to support recognised colleges that are also linked providers is adequate to meet statutory requirements and international quality standards expected across the federation while also allowing the relevant institution to adapt them to suit their specific mission, vision and values.

CINNTE Review of NUI

The CINNTE review of NUI is the first external institutional review of NUI and constituted an unprecedented opportunity for NUI to critically reflect on its strategy, operations and quality assurance processes. As a loose federation comprised largely of autonomous DABs who undergo their own external institutional review and not providing programmes of education and training directly, NUI's main QA role is in respect of its linked provider, the IPA. The generally successful conclusion of the IPA's institutional review in 2022 was an important demonstration of the effectiveness of NUI's own QA policies and procedures, which largely focus on QA in linked provider institutions.

The CINNTE review of NUI began while NUI was led by the previous Registrar, Dr Attracta Halpin and the terms of reference were developed by that Registrar and the then Head of Academic Services and Registry (HASR), Ms Patricia Maguire and the then Manager of Academic Affairs (MAA), Ms Andrea Durnin. When it was clear these three key members of NUI staff would be departing, a request to extend the NUI's institutional review was submitted to QQI. This was, thankfully, granted. The new Registrar, HASR and MAA had a rather tight timeline, nevertheless. The NUI Advisory Group established by the original team continued to support the new NUI team throughout 2022 when work on the NUI ISER began.

As mentioned in other sections of the AQR, reflection for the ISER development process has been very helpful and has already contributed to change in NUI. Bigger, strategic changes are also planned; though some details are dependent on the guidance of the CINNTE Review Team. The process is ongoing, and submission of the ISER, the Planning Visit and Main Review Visit will be reported in the next AQR. Thus far, NUI has been ably supported by the QQI liaison, Ms Órla Barry, and her colleague, Ms Karla Keogan. This support was critical for the new staff in NUI.

NUI and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)

In May 2022, NUI Senate approved a new *Code of Conduct for the Members of the Senate of the National University of Ireland*, which referenced NUI's commitment to the UNSDGs in its services, activities and operations, including the meetings of Senate. These will now be held online with occasional meetings in person (with online participation available). Virtual attendance was previously only facilitated during COVID-19. The previous Code of Conduct required in-person attendance, and this has been removed.

NUI Senate approved a new *Code of Conduct for Employees of the National University of Ireland* at the same time. This includes a similar reference to NUI's commitment to the UNSDGs (NUI 2022: 4): This commitment is not just to those goals in areas related to NUI's core mission such as education, innovation, justice and equality but the wider goals related to NUI's day to day business such as those related to the environment, consumption of energy and other resources, the workplace and climate action.
The Quality Team has, since that time, been looking at ways to make QA-related activities as paperless as possible. For example, appointment letters and documents were previously sent in hard copy to all extern examiners; this is now done electronically. Reports of extern examiners are now required to be submitted in electronic form.

Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

Third-mission Activities

The development of the next strategic plan alongside ISER development and reflection on NUI's activities, brought a renewed and more explicit commitment to EDI, sustainability and social justice, broadly construed. Strategic activities in this area will be relevant to future AQRs.

It was decided in 2021 to review and revise NUI's (2013) *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct* document but this was postponed due to COVID delays. A working group was identified in 2022 and it is anticipated that a revised version of this document will be reported in the next AQR.

Societal and Community Engagement

NUI, while different from provider institutions, has a long history of promoting academic scholarship and research with public audiences. This continued throughout the pandemic. NUI regularly collaborates with the Dublin City Council Archaeological Conservation and Heritage Unit and co-organised and hosted the annual Viking lecture as part of the Dublin Festival of History in October 2021.

In October 2021, NUI organised a webinar with academics from Ireland and the UK and student and university leaders to discuss the purpose of universities and the role of universities and higher

education in contributing to the public good. There was strong attendance at the online webinar from academics and professionals in universities and institutes of technology across Ireland, research students and academics in the UK, France, Denmark and Turkey, officials from government departments, state agencies and higher education sector organisations.

In November 2021, NUI collaborated with the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies (DIAS) to organise a series of Dev Talks commemorating the centenary Dr Éamon de Valera's election as Chancellor of NUI. The series revaluated Dev's legacy with contributions from academics (in Political and Cultural History, Political Science, Irish Studies) and political affairs journalists and drew a diverse audience of secondary school students, third-level history students, academics, librarians, archivists, documentary-makers, journalists, public affairs professionals and politicians in Ireland and further afield.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

As highlighted in the previous AQR, initiatives related to academic integrity are the responsibility of the recognised colleges. However, NUI continues to provide guidance in this area drawn from the practices of the constituent universities and wider sectoral policy developments. Through its membership of the IUA Committee of Registrars and the IUA Quality Committee, NUI is fully aware of the new legislative provisions on academic cheating in the updated Quality and Qualifications Act (2019) and we have discussed the implications of this legislation, as well as providing information on QQI's activities in this regard, to the IPA.

NUI monitors and, where possible, attends NAIN activities. NUI will continue to update its QA policies and procedures with reference to arrangements to ensure academic integrity in the recognised colleges. Regular steering committee meetings provide a forum to discuss quality enhancement and share experiences and information in the recognised colleges; for example, the topic of academic integrity in the context of the move to online assessment during COVID-19 was discussed at steering committee meetings with the IPA.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	**Relevant objectives** **Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable**	**Planned actions and indicators** *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
1	Ongoing review and enhancement of QA management [Ref: NUI Strategic Plan 2018-22, Goal 3 Objective 1 (see p.25 above), QQI QAG Core 2.1 and 2.2.]	New, restructured NUI Quality Assurance Framework – MAA (Quality Team)
2	Ongoing review and enhancement of QA management and the related policy documents [Ref: NUI Strategic Plan 2018-22, Goal 3 Objective 1 (see p.25 above), QQI QAG Core 2.1 and 2.2.]	The MAA (with input from Quality Team) will be responsible for the following: • Obtaining Senate approval of QA policy review log • Carrying out QA policy/procedure reviews, aligned with core quality principles and commitments to ease-of-use (plain language, concise documents), sustainability and EDI (where relevant) and in consultation with stakeholders • Obtain Senate approval of revised QA policy documents
3	CINNTE Review/Statutory requirements of DABs (QAA Act 2012)	The Quality Team (including NUI Registrar) will: • Develop suitable action plan upon receipt of CINNTE Review Report • Gain approval of Review Team Chair and NUI Senate for action plan
4	Statutory requirements of DABs (QAA Act 2012)	The MAA will support IPA's activity of programmatic review.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

The CINNTE Review of NUI will likely be concluded in Summer 2022 and be reported in the next AQR. IPA's programmatic review of their Master of Economic Science in Policy Analysis will be reported in the next AQR.

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
IPA Programme Review: Bachelor of Business Studies (Accounting, HRM, Marketing)	2023	2019/20
Internal QA review of **Extern Examiner Process** to prepare for 2023 internal audit and to coincide with participation in ExPeRa (QQI-funded project on extern examination in Irish HE)	2022-2023	Previously informal and ongoing
Internal audit of **Extern Examiner Process** in NUI	2023	2012

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
IPA Programme Review: Master of Arts (Criminal Justice, Healthcare Management, HRM, Leadership & Strategy, Local Government, Public Management)	2024	(Due 2020/21 but postponed due to COVID-19)

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

NUI participates, in a support/facilitation role, in a number of initiatives that are more properly the domain of the relevant provider institutions. In particular, NUI has been working to support the following objective of effectively facilitating access, mobility and progression of refugees and asylum seekers.

Ensuring IQA can effectively facilitate and support access, mobility and progression of refugees and asylum seekers.

Actions in this area included early agreement of NUI to recognize the equivalent of the Ukrainian Junior Certificate qualification in the Ukrainian language as meeting the requirement for a Third Language for the purposes of NUI matriculation. This ensured that matriculation would not act as a barrier to students who could not complete part of their Leaving Cert equivalent exam due to the war. NUI also recognised the historic qualifications in Ukrainian at their equivalent of the Leaving Certificate even though it is not a Leaving Certificate subject, which is normally required. NUI was also involved in the helpdesk established in Maynooth University. NUI has also engaged with the Minister for Education on the potential issues arising if Ukrainian is not introduced as a non-curricular language as soon as possible.