

South East Technological University

AQR May 2022-December 2022

Annual Quality Report (SETU)

Reporting Period May-December 2022

Approved by SETU Academic Council

South East Technological University

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Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period May-December 2022

PREFACE

This South East Technological University (SETU) Annual Quality Report (AQR) is the University's first presentation of its Quality Assurance Framework, in response to QQI's annual reporting request of all Irish higher education institutions. This AQR provides documentary evidence of the robustness and progress of SETU's internal quality assurance system. In turn this reassures our community, the general public and QQI that internal quality assurance procedures are in place and are being implemented in line with public expectations and legal requirements.

The AQR will also be considered in the next SETU institutional review, presenting the University's QA ethos, practice and published links to a variety of publicly available documentation to substantiate procedural QA documentation, as well as process outcomes. As such, it is an important contribution to confirming public confidence in this new Technological University and will contribute to its evaluation by an external review team as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews. This will confirm that the University'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).

The SETU AQR will be published on the QQI website, along with the AQRs from all other Irish HEIs, providing transparency to external stakeholders on how the University ensures and improves quality. Together with other Irish HEIs this AQR repository is a single national standard for quality assurance practices in Irish HEIs.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM	6
Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)	6
Introduction and Overview of Institution	7
1.0 Internal QA Framework	9
1.1 Governance and Management of Quality	9
1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision	11
2.0 Programme Development and Delivery	14
2.1 Programme Development and Approval	14
2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification	15
2.3 Procedures for Making Awards	16
2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment	16
3.0 Learner Resources and Support	18
4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes	20
5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	22
6.0 Information and Data Management	24
7.0 Public Information and Communication	26
8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review	27
9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties	28
9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	28
9.2 Collaborative Provision	33
PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM	42
1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments	43
1.1 Strategic QA Updates	43
1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR	45
1.3 Governance and Management	46
1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review	47
2.0 IQA System - Enhancement and Impacts	50
2.0.1 Governance and Management of Quality	50
2.0.2 Programmes of Education and Training	50
2.0.3 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	51
2.0.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment	51
2.0.5 International Update	51

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity	53
3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period	54
3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives	54
3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods	55
3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period	55
4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies	58

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 first AQR for South East Technological University for the reporting period May 1st 2022 - December 31st 2022. The AQR has been approved by Academic Council and is submitted by the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, David Denieffe and Dr Derek O'Byrne.

South East Technological University (SETU) is an autonomous University, established under the Technological University Act 2018, through the merger of Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology. With the establishment of the new University, Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology were both dissolved as Higher Education Institutes. SETU builds on the fine reputations, traditions and achievements of two Institutes that had previously been central to economic, social and cultural life in the South East for over fifty years. The merger of the two institutions to form SETU on May 1st 2022, has created an opportunity for enhanced higher education development to take place. SETU is a multi-campus University offering higher education in Carlow, Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow.

As a Designated Awarding Body, the University makes higher education major awards at all levels on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from Higher Certificate (Level 6) to Doctorate (Level 10), as well as associated minor and special purpose awards, from Level 6 to Level 9. It also jointly offers higher education with several international and national partners.

SETU's key priorities are to contribute to regional and national economic, social and cultural development. The University aims to elevate and enhance its academic performance across teaching, research and engagement, supported by robust governance, management and operational excellence. The University's ambitions and priorities are captured in its recently published Strategic Plan. Its mission is to deliver inclusive education, innovation and impact for the south-east of Ireland. This is articulated through an educational environment and context where learners pursue studies in higher education and research up to doctoral level. Through a culture of enquiry, innovation and excellence, SETU challenges its learners, staff, global collaborative partners and other stakeholders to create, apply and share knowledge and values in a supportive and vibrant University-level University. SETU is an international, entrepreneurial and connected multi-campus Technological University that will drive sustainable economic, environmental, cultural and social development in the south-east of Ireland.

SETU's Strategic Plan is informed by wide-scale consultation with learners, staff, graduates, employers and representatives of all our stakeholders, as well as through periodic external strategic and academic reviews of faculties and external strategic reviews of professional services. The plan was commissioned and later approved by the Governing Body, with the President entrusted with the overall plan delivery. In terms of peer and public confidence, we are guided by national engagement and feedback initiatives, QQI, the technological higher education quality framework, the national forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning, professional bodies, national policy and national and international reports. This report was developed, collated and editorially overseen by the Registrars' Offices.

Finally, AQR 2022, the first quality report for SETU, covers the first seven months post-establishment, May to December 2022, and thus a very active transitional phase immediately post-designation. This represents a time of enacting an intensive programme of work on the development of policies, procedures, structures and processes, which got underway during this reporting period and has been ongoing during the drafting of this report. At this point, therefore, this report captures the new governance and interim executive structures of the nascent University.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

On May 1st 2022, SETU was established under the Technological Universities Act (2018). As SETU is a new legal entity with a separate statutory role and a different governance and management structure, the TU Act 2018 provides for an initial transfer of functions (Section 37), programmes of education and training (Section 59), and quality assurance and access, transfer and progression procedures (Section 61) from the dissolved component institutions to the new Technological University on designation day. The SETU Governing Body has been established in accordance with the provisions of the Act and its functions are as identified in the Act. Governing Body membership will be expanded in accordance with the Act.

The first meeting of the SETU Governing Body took place on May 1st 2022. At that inaugural meeting, SETU was formally established and Professor Veronica Campbell was appointed as President. Other items addressed at the inaugural Governing Body meeting included outlining some of the key initial priorities, including the development of the strategic plan and a clear concentration on Engagement, Research and Innovation and Teaching and Learning/Academic Planning. A nominations' committee was established to fulfil remaining governing body membership including staff and student representative election processes. At subsequent meetings, items addressed included: Code of Conduct of Governing Body Members, Delegated Functions, Child Protection Policy, Risk Management, Health and Safety and Equality Statements.

The Governing Body also ratified an interim [Academic Council](#), to meet the legislative requirements to have an Academic Council in place from Establishment Day. This interim Academic Council would proceed until SETU Governing Body approved a permanent academic council structure, which will happen in the next AQR reporting period. There were 59 members in the inaugural SETU Academic Council. The procedure for selecting members was agreed by the Joint Academic Councils of WIT and ITC in March 2022. The appointed membership consisted of the President of SETU (as an ex-officio member) and 58 other members drawn equally (29 each) from the membership of the Academic Councils of WIT and ITC as they existed immediately preceding the establishment of SETU. These 58 members are drawn from four pools within each of the previous institutions' Academic Councils: Ex-officio members (20); previously elected academic staff members (30); previously elected professional, management and support staff members (4); Nominated student members (4). As stipulated in legislation and internationally recognized as best practice, the majority of the members of the inaugural Academic Council are SETU academic staff members.

The interim SETU Academic Council committee structures included four working committees:

- Research
- Academic Development, Learning and Teaching

- Academic Quality and Regulations Committee
- Student Experience,

Each committee had a set Terms of Reference and associated Work plan. Academic Council also had a Standing Committee to ensure essential academic operations continued in the summer period.

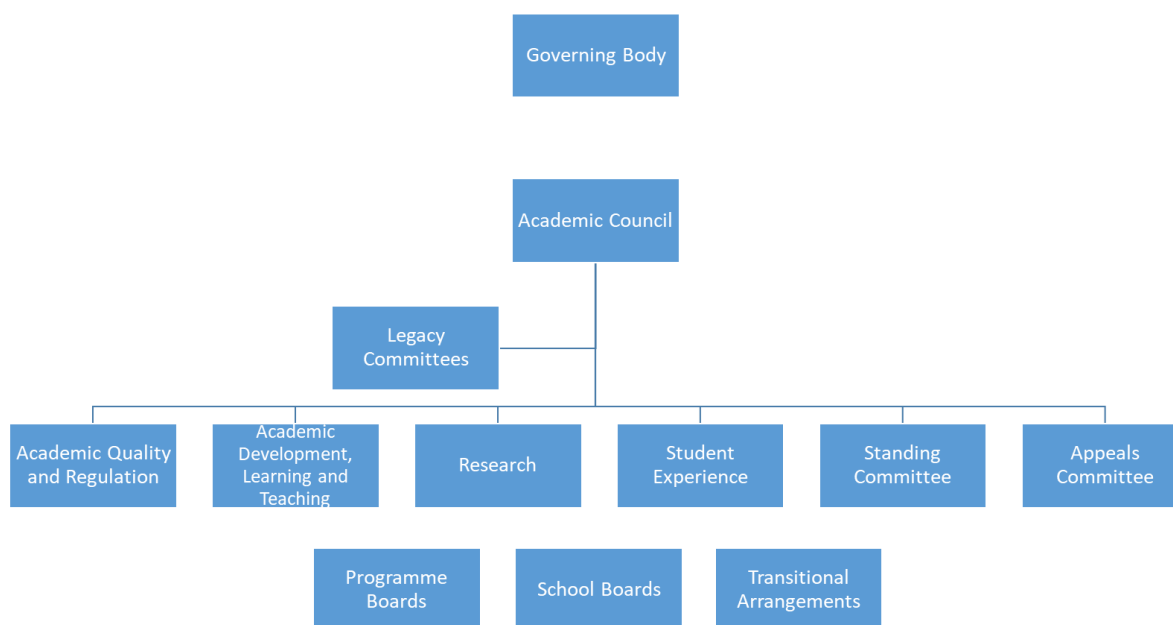


Figure 1.2 SETU Governance Structure

The Research, Academic Development, Learning and Teaching, Academic Quality and Regulations Committee and Student Experience committees met monthly during the academic term, in the reporting period. The Standing Committee met once during the summer. The Transitional Arrangements did not meet, as its duties were covered elsewhere in the structure, while the Legacy Committees met only in the early stages (first two months of the University, up to June 2022).

One of the first actions of the new Council was to pass a motion that following the SETU's establishment, all registered students of Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC) and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) on April 30th 2022, undertaking programmes of study on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications within the existing institutions were transferred to SETU. Therefore, from establishment day (1st May 2022), these students were considered students of SETU and were recorded as such on any systems or registers of the Technological University.

The executive management of South East Technological University and its academic and administrative systems rests with the Executive Management Team which, through the President, is directly answerable to the Governing Body. Each member of the senior executive is responsible for and represents, at this forum, distinct academic or professional service faculties or departments. Overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, academic standards and programme validation rests with the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs & Registrar, with the assistance of the Assistant Registrars and the Head of Quality Promotion and Academic Policy Development.

Academic Council commissioned a new Quality Framework, which will be published in the next reporting period. The new QF will link the University strategy to its quality policy and procedures. The Framework will provide an overview and guiding principles for the overarching policy and procedures for quality assurance, the governance framework, procedures for quality assurance in teaching, learning and research, on-going monitoring and review, the learner voice, procedure for the design, development, validation and withdrawal of programmes, admission, progression and completion, staff development, learner supports and information management.

To properly close out the operations of the Institutes of Technology, legacy Councils from both founding Institutes to meet in the University's early formation period, to consider the examination results and any other outstanding legacy items. The legacy Councils adopted a temporary subsidiary committee role to the SETU Academic Council and decisions were ultimately brought for ratification to the SETU Academic Council.

The first academic year of operation saw each of the University's progenitor Institutes' Quality Manuals being operated. The principles behind this decision were to not rush the required work to bridge the relatively small amount of differences between both Quality Manuals, while never disadvantaging a student and their education, where differences did occur.

The University's quality culture is not confined to academic spheres but extends to robust corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development and improvement. Apart from the Strategic Plan mentioned earlier, an organisational redesign was also commissioned in the reporting period to spur growth into an effective and holistic university. The Redesign Report will also be published in the next reporting period. Furthermore, the University will continue the ethos of its antecedent Institutes in promoting accountability, transparency, and the public provision of information. In practice, this will mean continuing to publish the outcomes from quality review processes, to foster excellence in corporate as well as academic governance. To realise this ambition, the following non-academic policies and procedures were approved: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Recruitment & Selection Appeals Procedure, Code of Conduct for Staff Members, Voluntary Campus Transfer Policy & Procedures, Protected Disclosures Policy, Email Policy and IT Acceptable Usage Policies, Research Policies (Conflict of interest, Intellectual property & Consultancy). The Policy Management Framework details the processes surrounding the lifecycle of policy development and provides staff with guidance on policy development that is consistent, inclusive and to a high standard.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The quality assurance of collaborative programmes was guided by the individual Quality Manuals ([here](#) and [here](#)) for the reporting period supported by a comprehensive set of regulations and the approval processes managed through relevant School Boards, Executive Board and Academic Council, which are robust (see Section 3.1). SETU has entered into joint and double degrees, which are listed on the following links ([link](#) and [link](#)).

Current agreements in place include:

1. The BA (H) in International Business, which is a double degree programme with the Munich University of Applied Sciences ([link](#));
2. The Master of Science in International Business/Master of Business in Internationalisation Collaborative Programme, which is a joint degree programme with the École Supérieure de Commerce, Bretagne, Brest ([link](#));
3. Double BSc degree with the Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST) ([link](#));
4. BA (H) International Business which is a double degree with the Hochschule Hannover University of Applied Sciences and Arts ([link](#));
5. Double BA Visual Communications and Design with Jilin Normal University China ([link](#));

Apart from agreements with other HEIs, there are also agreements in place with other organisations and industry bodies:

1. Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting with WLR FM and Beat 102-103 ([link](#));
2. MA in Social Justice and Public Policy, a collaborative provision with Social Justice Ireland ([link](#));
3. Teagasc and SETU collaboration agreement to establish and deliver educational programmes ([link](#));
4. The Higher Diploma in Arts in Television Production, which is co-delivered by SETU with Nemeton TV ([link](#)).

The University has long-standing collaborations with Carlow College St Patrick's, [An Cosán](#) and the Irish Defence Forces and currently offers over thirty programmes through these collaborations. They are our linked providers of these programmes.

Other national linked providers include:

- [Gestalt Institute of Ireland](#) with programmes including the Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy
- [Tivoli Institute](#) with programmes which includes the Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical)
- [Dublin Art Therapy](#) with programmes which includes the Master of Science in Creative Art Psychotherapy: Working with Young People
- [Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport](#) which provides programmes including Higher Certificate in Supply Chain Management.
- Irish National Stud with the Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding programme.

Through Extended Campus, SETU provides various programmes in partnership with several third party organisations.

Internationally, the University has collaborative provision agreements with the Carlow International College of Technology, which in collaboration with Henan University of Animal Husbandry and Economy, China.

The University has a full register of all linked provision and collaborative partners both national and international which are on the [University website](#).

The University has signed progression agreements with partner Colleges of Further Education, to offer preferential entry to students who successfully complete a linked QQI FET programme and who meet certain criteria. The Colleges of Further Education progression agreements are presented [on the University website](#).

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The antecedent Institutes operated their original programme development procedures in the reporting period and the dual operation gave time to develop a new University process. The differences between both processes were not significant, in that, for example, both were two-phase evaluations with the academic phase being the latter and more substantial of the two. Key differences lay in the conception phase where one Institute placed strong emphasis on programme alignment with strategy and the other had more emphasis on evaluating the concept in a national context and meeting resource requirements. The individual Institute's process flows are available to staff ([here](#) and [here](#)). The process and panel profile are the same for both, with extensive input from the relevant external stakeholders, such as professional bodies and employers, along with the participation from skilled academics from other universities, students and employers.

Academic Council presents the final stage in the approval and this is a two-stage process itself in that the Academic Quality and Regulations Committee initially consider the evaluation panel's report and the proposing team's response, before recommending AC approval or requesting further input from the proposing team.

Staff training and support is available from the Quality Promotion Office and [on the VLE](#), which hosts a number of documents and videos, from preparing Learning Outcomes to the relevant NFQ (EQF: *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.) The Quality Promotion Office also promotes and enables continuous quality improvement across the academic and administrative units, primarily by managing the Quality Review process for Schools and Units. This work includes support and guidance to Heads of Schools and Directors of Units, as well as academic and administrative staff; engaging and liaising with reviewers; advising on the implementation of recommendations in the review report; analysis of all review process findings.

Panel reviews are published for public reading on the websites ([link](#)) and ([link](#)). This publication is to assure all stakeholders that all SETU activities are at an appropriate standard and are fit for purpose, and to facilitate their ongoing enhancement and development.

Finally in terms of programme development, the University has a dedicated Continuous Professional Development week in February each year, during which staff are offered training on a wide range of topics, including QA processes, such as for new programme development/modifying existing programmes and creating NFQ-appropriate module descriptors.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The Interim Quality Framework (IQF) requires that the University have clear and robust admissions, promotion and graduation policies and procedures that are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed to facilitate the smooth academic progress of learners. In this regard, the IQF requires that relevant information, support and guidance regarding the learning pathway and the various stages along the pathway should be provided to stakeholders as appropriate. This includes areas such as pre-learning awareness, enrolment, introduction, assessment, transfer options and certification. To address this requirement, the University initially adopted the twin Quality Frameworks from the original Institutes of Technology ([here](#) (Section A) and [here](#) for taught programmes, and [here](#) and [here](#) for research programmes), and has worked towards developing its own regulations, policies and procedures for taught programmes, linked provision and research, which will be recorded in the next AQR reporting period. Throughout this document where this dual nature is ongoing, both of the links will appear in the text.

The University offer multiple entry routes to its programme portfolio, to achieve its ambition of being as open and accessible as possible to applicants. This is in part visible in the variety and number admissions-related documents on the University website, in the University prospectus and linked through the CAO, Qualifax, CareersPortal and similar websites. Through the Human Capital Initiative (HCI), SETU offers a range of fully- and part-funded industry-led, science and engineering postgraduate courses to those seeking to reskill in areas of skills shortage and emerging technologies. Also through the Human Capital Initiative (Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) and co-sponsored by the Technological Higher Education Association and the Irish Universities Association) the university is participating in the National Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education project. This project is a collaborative initiative working to embed and expand RPL across 14 partner higher education institutions. The University also offers a High-Performance Entry Scheme recognising achievements outside of formal learning in Innovation/Entrepreneurship, Sport and Active Citizenship in consideration for entry. The University is also a member of both the HEAR and DARE initiatives, with a dedicated Access Officer to support students gain admission to SETU.

SETU offers a Mathematics Entry Exam for students who have not achieved the required entry grade in maths. This provides another opportunity for students to achieve that grade by attempting a paper at the Leaving Certificate ordinary level and is open to all Leaving Certificate applicants, including those students who sat Foundation maths.

After admission, a University-wide introductory session is held by the President and senior management, faculty and staff and current students. This provides information on their chosen programme delivery, formation and assessment, student supports, and insights into student life in their new community.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

In one of its earliest actions, the University approved the awards' standards used in the predecessor Institutes of Technology. These included generic awards standards to broadly cover all disciplines. The next reporting period will record the adoption of discipline-specific awards standards, as well as a policy outlining the principles and procedure for the creation of future SETU awards. This policy work began in a developmental group prior to University formation and the policy will be presented for approval in the next reporting period.

The existing and future awards will be benchmarked against the NFQ and this includes the future development of smaller awards, including micro-credentials of less than 5 ECTS, a small number of which are currently being trialled on a pilot basis. Moreover the evaluation of learning outcomes will be grouped according to these broad categories, Knowledge-Breadth; and Kind; Know-How and Skill-Range; and Selectivity; and Competence-Context; Role; Learning to learn; and Insight.

The Interim Quality Framework has retained a two-stage process for the evaluation of new awards and, as mentioned earlier, the Academic Quality and Regulations Committee is entrusted by Council to take the lead on evaluating and recommending to Council.

Academic Council approved the creation of a Professional Masters Award Standard, as the University's first new Awards Standard.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Academic Development, Learning & Teaching (ADLT) Committee of [Academic Council](#) oversees the universities teaching, learning and assessment activities and is the policy formation and oversight committee tasked with the development of teaching learning and assessment policy.

The committee also has an Academic Integrity remit and is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), which QQI established, following the passing of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training-Amendment) Act 2019. This NAIN representation was important in helping deal with AI and to some extent in establishing the University's Staff and Student training in this reporting period ([link](#)).

The [SETU Academic Integrity](#) webpage provides staff and students with relevant information on referencing, academic writing, academic integrity principles and guidelines,

The external examining process is different in both predecessor Institutes and will be resolved in the future. At present, while external examining is a key component in Assessment QA, one model uses module examiners, supported by overarching School Examiners, while the other model uses programme-based examiners. Clearly both models have merits and the final University version of external examining will be informed by the positive experiences from each model.

Some initiatives that will be dealt with in the next reporting period include convergence on Marks & Standards, already more or less complete; procedures to assure the quality of teaching and learning, including student membership of Programme Boards and their involvement in programme approvals; the merging and reporting on the student feedback process, and reporting on the impact of National Forum funding on the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE), and the expansion of staff training to address an ever-evolving higher education landscape. The N-TUTORR funding for the TU sector has also impacted work in this area and initiatives in various areas will be dealt with upon completion of the various work packages.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The profile of the SETU student, the economic reach of the University and its regional ambitions, each pose individual challenges to the Learner Resources and Support that it offers. The University is strongly regionally focussed and recruits by far the largest number of learners from the south-east region, typically ranking first across Carlow, Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny. This, and the consistently high numbers in student surveys reporting part-time work, underlines the need to support learning that may be intermittently remote, asynchronous and time poor. Furthermore, the University also recruits strongly from under-represented student populations, especially students with disabilities and has concentrated resources on providing a high-quality education for all. Finally, the University aims to grow numbers of part-time learners and already has very strong extended campus activity, and consequently has increased the flexibility in its curriculum through an increase in minor and special purpose awards, and in online and concentrated or block delivery.

For these reasons and the expanding demands of the entire student body, academic support is a crucial component in their learning. SETU academic support activities include:

1. Library resource ([link](#) and [link](#));
2. Teaching and Learning Centre ([link](#));
3. Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning ([link](#));
4. Computer services ([link](#) and [link](#));
5. Virtual learning ([Blackboard](#) and [Moodle](#)) support;
6. Computing and Maths Learning Centre [support](#);
7. SETU Research Support Unit ([link](#));
8. Access support ([link](#) and [link](#));
9. Retention Office ([link](#));
10. International Office ([link](#) and [link](#));

In terms of Access, the University has a number of activities including a Reach programme and a Hear scheme in place. In addition to Academic support there are a range of other services targeted at broad student welfare and development. These are generally coordinated by the Student Life & Learning ([link](#) to all listed supports); as are many of the above academic resources. The general support activities include:

1. Student Life & Learning / Student Services ([link](#) and [link](#));
2. Student Assistance Fund ([link](#) and [link](#));
3. Careers Development Centre ([link](#) and [link](#));
4. Student Counselling Service ([link](#) and [link](#));
5. Disability Service ([link](#) and [link](#));

6. Orientation / Induction Support ([link](#) and [link](#));
7. Peer to Peer Mentoring ([link](#) and [link](#));
8. Student Handbook ([link](#) and [link](#));

Student Finance is managed by the Office of the Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Finance. Student finance can be complex, so a dedicated web-page was created with information on budgeting, fees and grants ([link](#)).

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

The QA policy and procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes are presented in the Quality Manuals, which are available publicly on the SETU website [here](#) and [here](#). These set out the regulations in respect of registration, enrolment, supervision, transfer and assessment of research candidates.

In addition, the Quality Manuals are also supported by a webpage dedicated to research policies and procedures ([link](#) and [link](#)). These include policies for:

- Research Practice
- Postgraduates
- Project Management
- Data Protection
- Technology Transfer Office
- Research Ethics

The South East Technological University Academic Council, with the approval of the South East Technological University Governing Body, has established a Research Committee of Academic Council and Postgraduate Research Programme Boards. The purpose of these bodies is to assist the Academic Council in the performance of its functions in relation to programmes of research leading to higher degree awards.

Structured Doctorate programmes had been successfully operated in some areas prior to University formation. This approach will be incorporated across the University ensuring that all students have engaged with modules during their research programme. The University's strategic ambitions and stretch targets for doctoral growth will see applications for an expansion in the number of Structured Doctorate programme areas. The first stage in this expansion will happen in the next reporting period and will feature in the report for that period.

The existing Structured Doctorate programme is implemented at a discipline level by School or Departmental Research Programme Boards. Board membership is offered to all active research supervisors. The remit of the board encompasses co-ordinating the selection of students, monitoring student progress on an ongoing basis, and for co-ordinating aspects of the assessment procedures. An internal website was established on SharePoint for researchers, to enable ready access to appropriate forms and regulations for this board ([link](#)).

The role of the research supervisor has changed in recent years. Often supervision is in teams and requires agreeing an education plan from the structured modules on offer. To complement the proposed supervision teams' skills, the University offers 10-credit Level 9 modules in Research Methods and in Mentoring ([link](#) and [link](#)).

The importance of ethical behaviour in higher education and in higher education research has been underpinned by the requirement to complete Research Integrity training (provided by Epigeum ([link](#))). The Research Ethics Committee ([link](#)), a sub-committee of SETU's Academic Council, scrutinises all research, which involves humans and animals, to ensure it is compliant with statutory requirements and is conducted to the highest ethical principles, which emphasise the rights and welfare of subjects (both people and animals), treating all with dignity and ensuring that those who participate in research, whether subjects, researchers, other stakeholders and/or SETU are not put at risk.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

SETU has fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of all staff, which allows them to ensure the competence of their academic staff, with all Policies and Procedures supporting recruitment and ongoing performance, to be found on the Governing Body's Statements and Policies webpage ([link](#)). The University has a dedicated staff resource to education and development of staff (academic, administration and support), including the organisation of the annual training and development week in semester 2.

The University has a strategy to ensure the quality of its academic staff and for providing them with a supportive environment:

- Follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment, appointment, promotion and dismissal that recognise the importance of teaching and learning;
- Offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of academic staff;
- Encourages innovation in teaching methods through its Masters modules in Education, online webinars and National Forum initiatives, especially the Strategic Alignment for Teaching & Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding;
- Provides opportunities and promotes professional development for all staff and postgraduate learners to undertake training through the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning; recognise excellence in teaching through internal academic awards criteria and through national, public awards such as the Teaching & Learning Awards ([link](#)).

SETU was conferred with a legacy Bronze Athena Swan Award and is committed to achieving equity of opportunity for all and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our learners, our leaders and our staff. This includes providing support to Departments and faculties to develop bespoke Gender Action Plans and apply for Athena Swan Awards. Associated policies and procedures, including the South East Technological University Gender Equality Action Plan can be found [here](#).

The University encourages and supports the professional and personal development of all of its staff, with the aim of performing their duties at the highest possible level, both to achieve the University's strategic goals and also for the purpose of self-fulfilment.

SETU's Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) offers staff both accredited and non-accredited professional development, supporting evidence-based and reflexive practice across the University. TLC also works closely with the National Forum and colleagues from across the sector, nationally and internationally ([link](#)). The School of Education and Lifelong Learning also provides development opportunities to staff, by providing modules from their portfolio of programmes, including the Masters in

Education in Teaching and Learning ([link](#) and [link](#)), for continuous professional development, with modules, offered as Minor Awards or as contributors to a Major Level 9 award, in Adult Learning, Research Supervisory Skills, Blended Learning, Academic Enquiry, Applied Pedagogy, Mentoring, Curriculum Development and Assessment, Content and Interaction for Teaching & Learning Online, Education Research Methods, Education Research Project and Independent Learning Project.

Finally, the Centre for Technology-Enhanced Learning ([link](#)) and the Teaching and Learning Centre ([link](#)) run training workshops and a community of practice to support the development and utilization of the eLearning infrastructure.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision making. SETU collects, analyses and uses relevant information in developing strategies and for effective management of all activities. There are large variety of formal and informal processes in place to collect and analyse information, with many processes feeding into the University's internal quality assurance. This information is additionally used to inform all academic and support service reviews. Information on SETU's activities is also useful for prospective and current learners as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. SETU provides such information on its website, including the prospectus of programmes on offer, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures, and the progression opportunities available to all learners.

The University has a dedicated student record system (Banner), which records each student's progress from registration onto to the completion of the programme of study. Banner is used by a large number of Irish HEIs and SETU led on a significant upgrade to this system in the reporting period, which will increase the flexibility and capability of student recording nationally. This system provides key data, such as establishing a profile of the student population and monitoring student progression, success and drop-out rates. This in turn has been used to inform decision-making and improvements to programmes. For example, the statistics on access, progression and awards were presented and analysed, by each school for their School Review.

SETU recognises that in performing its role as a higher education institute, staff create, gather, store and process large amounts of data on a variety of data subjects including students (potential, current and former), staff, third parties and members of the public. This University recognises the requirement to protect Personal Data, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The primary policy and procedure documents governing data protection are presented in a dedicated Data Protection webpage ([link](#)) and include:

1. Data protection policy;
2. Data Protection Procedures ;

Privacy Notices on:

3. General Privacy
4. Student Data Privacy
5. Staff Data Privacy

Relevant Data Collection Notices to report and perform analyses:

6. Student Data Collection Notice
7. HEA Data Collection Notice

Also included are contact details to seek further information on campus and for the Office of the Data Commissioner, as well as downloadable forms for Data Protection related procedures.

Student satisfaction surveys are a growing part of the information strategy. While currently sought through student representation on Governing Body, Academic Council, programme evaluation panels, programme boards and local, course-specific feedback, the University closely monitors and evaluates feedback from the national studentsurvey.ie. The evaluations of the studentsurvey.ie data are debated at the Academic Council, publicly offered through the Office of the Head of Quality Promotion and available to each school for school-wide use.

As well as data policies, University regulations exist to guide the collecting, analysing and using of relevant information. The quality assurance procedures for programme boards, who collect and use data in reports to the Academic Council. In terms of Information and Data Management, programme board responsibilities include collecting, analysing and using relevant information that range from reflecting on the outputs of teaching and learning strategies, examination performance, award distribution, and taking or recommending appropriate remedial action when required.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Information on SETU's activities is useful for prospective and current learners as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. The University is very open in terms of the range and extent of public information that it makes available. It routinely provides, to the public, an extensive range of quality assurance and other documents including:

1. All of its quality policies and procedures;
2. Outputs of quality processes including:
 - a. Programme validations;
 - b. School Review reports (commitment to future publication);
 - c. Institutional Review report (commitment to future publication);
3. Operational and financial policies, including data protection and freedom of information policies;
4. Statutory information such as annual reports and strategic plans;
5. Advice and guides to students, including handbooks;
6. Programme information including award levels, progression opportunities and indicative programme content;
7. Agenda and Minutes of Governing Body meetings;
8. Information on complaints procedures;
9. Contact information on a variety of telephone, email, webpage and social media channels.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, individuals have a right of access to information held in the University's records, a right to have official information relating to them amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading and a right to have made known to them the reasons for decisions that have materially affected them, provided it does not conflict with the public interest and the right of privacy of individuals. The University supports such access for the general community to information about how the University operates, as well as to aid individuals in framing requests, by creating a dedicated webpage explaining how the Act relates to SETU and the process and relevant forms for applying all presented ([link](#)).

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

SETU Quality Review has a robust, replicable model for all reviews, with a strong emphasis on monitoring, self-evaluation, benchmarking, independent peer review, student surveys reporting, and evaluating at Academic Council. While some reviews may be one-off commissions, the vast majority have a defined temporal cycle, usually annually or greater. Reviews are independent, with panels composed of external experts, students and other stakeholders. Panellists are expected to maintain confidentiality and may not have a close or longstanding relationship with any member of the team being assessed. All panel are trained on gender bias and are paid for their contribution to the University, for their thorough and comprehensive review of quality and proposed changes in the final report. Each review should be comprehensive and involve serious consideration of the submitted self-assessment documentation and proposing team's defence. Finally, each review should culminate in a set conditions or recommendations for quality enhancement from the panel and action planning from the team that was assessed.

In reporting period, review and monitoring continued to be a central part of the overall quality strategy and framework. All SETU activities are subject to review and enhancement in line with good governance principles:

1. Internal review of activities (including. programme management structures), which may also include user feedback (i.e. students or employers)
2. External review of the activities, which are led from the interim dual regulations (e.g. external examining), the commissioned review of an activity (i.e. the proposed enhancement of the Structured Doctorate scheme in the next reporting period) or from the production and evaluation of a self-evaluation report.
3. The quality of programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis. Programme Boards, which include student members, report annually to Academic Council. External Examiners validate the quality of assessment activity and work with staff on the ongoing development of programmes.

While academic quality processes are being established, the University is examining and redesigning its approach to ongoing monitoring and review of all areas. During this period, legacy policies and procedures are in place to ensure continuity.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Note: For this reporting period, the individual PRSB recognitions are recorded by former Institute, pending internal reorganisation and successful re-approval.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	38 Programmes; 20 PRSBs
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	1

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	The Honourable Society of King's Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	LLB, BA (Hons) in Law https://www.kingsinns.ie/cmsfiles/entrance-examination/KI_EE_ScheduleOfApprovedDegrees_2023.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Name of body	Kings Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) in Law BA (Hons) in Legal Studies with Business LL.B. (Hons) degree
Date of accreditation or last review	2008 to 2014 (depending on programme)
Date of next review	No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained to maintain Approved status.

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body	Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann NMBI - Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) General Nursing BSc (Hons) Intellectual Disability Nursing BSc (Hons) Psychiatric Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2024

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems); Bachelor of Engineering in Aircraft Systems

	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Aerospace Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronic Systems https://www.engineersireland.ie/FindAccreditedProgramme/
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2023
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Construction Project Management Master of Science in Innovative Technology Engineering Master of Science in Sustainable Energy Engineering Master of Engineering in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Sustainable Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Building Services Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management and Engineering Higher Certificate in Electronic Engineering Higher Certificate in Mechanical Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	2021
Date of next review	TBC

4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2024
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Architecture (Honours) https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/accredited-programmes
Date of accreditation or last review	2022
Date of next review	2027

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Royal Aeronautical Society
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Aircraft Systems https://www.aerosociety.com/media/9494/c-users-ejackson-onedrive-the-royal-aeronautical-society-academic-accreditation-accredited-courses-ug-pg-september-2018.pdf

Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

6. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2024

7. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Chartered Institute of Building file:///C:/Users/RYANS/Downloads/CIO4337%20Overseas%20Accredited%20Apr23.pdf
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc(Hons) Construction Management and Engineering BSc(Hons) Construction Management Top-up MSc Construction Project Management
Date of accreditation or last review	Ongoing
Date of next review	Ongoing

8. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2024

9. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) in Psychology BA (Hons) International in Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2024

10. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Athletic Rehabilitation Therapy Ireland (ARTI) https://www.arti.ie/certification/
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sports Rehabilitation and Athletic Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	Annually
Date of next review	Annually

11. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body	Teaching Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Teaching in Further Education and Adult Education Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education (P/T) Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education (F/T)
Date of accreditation or last review	2012
Date of next review	No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained

12. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (Exemptions from sitting some CIMA exams)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) Finance & Investment BA (Hons) Accounting Bachelor of Business (Hons) Accounting B Business Studies (Economics & Finance) B Business Studies (Accounting) B Business Studies (Hons) Bachelor of Business (Hons) BA (Hons) International Business B Business Studies Ordinary Bachelor of Business BSc Retail Management B Business Studies (Marketing) Master of Business (Accounting)
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

13. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Chartered Accountants Ireland (Exemptions from sitting some CA Proficiency 1 (CAP1) exams)
Name of body	Chartered Accountants Ireland

Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business (Honours) Accounting Stream (link) BA (Honours) Accounting (link)
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2024
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting (link) Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting and Finance (link)
Date of accreditation or last review	Annually
Date of next review	Annually

14. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body	Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Finance & Accounting (link)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) in Accounting BBS (Hons) 4 years (Accounting Stream) BBS (Ord) BBS (Ord) in Financial Services BA (Hons) in General & Corporate Administration Higher Certificate in Business (link)
Date of accreditation or last review	Annually
Date of next review	Annually (No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained)

15. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (Qualification exemptions on programme/module completion)
Name of body	Certified Public Accountants Institute (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Honours) Accounting BA Finance & Investment Bachelor of Business (Honours) Accounting Bachelor of Business (Honours) Economics and Finance Bachelor of Business (Honours) HRM, Management or Marketing Higher Certificate in Business Studies
Date of accreditation or last review	
Date of next review	No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	5
Collaborative programmes	66
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	12

1. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	Carlow College St Patrick's
Programme titles and links to publications	Research and Collaborative Development Initiatives Master of Arts in Irish Regional History Higher Diploma in Politics and Society Certificate in Child Developmental Psychology Certificate in Creative Writing (Fiction) Certificate in Creative Writing (Poetry) Certificate in Creativity and Social Media Certificate in Cultural Heritage Certificate in Cyberpsychology Certificate in Introduction to Theology Through the Creative Arts (Cinema, Literature and Music) Certificate in the Psychology of Gender and Sexuality Certificate in Revealing Hidden Voices (Oral History) Certificate in World Religions, Peace and Conflict Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

2. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	Irish Defence Forces
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Communications Technology Management PG Dip in Science in Communications Technology Management BEng in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems) Higher Certificate in Engineering in Electronic Engineering MEng in Weapons, Ordnance, Munitions and Explosive Engineering Certificate in International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device/Device Disposal (10 credit, Level 9) MSc in Military Engineering Management PG Dip in Science in Military Engineering Management BA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies BA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (Logistics) Certificate in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (minor award Level 7 30 Credits) Higher Certificate in Arts in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	2021
Date of next review	2026
3. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	The Tivoli Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical) Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling (Clinical) - 3 years ab initio Honours Degree with Minor Award exit of Certificate after stage 1 Certificate in Psychotherapy Theory (Level 9 - 30 Credit Minor) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	2020
Date of next review	2025
4. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	Dublin Art Therapy College
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Creative Art Psychotherapy: Working with Young People (90 credits Level 9) Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy, with exit award of minor Level 6 after Stage 1, Higher Certificate after Stage 2 and Bachelor degree after Stage 3 Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	2018
Date of next review	2024

5. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	Gestalt Institute of Ireland - Irish Gestalt Centre
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Certificate in Gestalt Theory (Level 9 - 30 Credit Minor) Certificate in Clinical Supervision (Level 9, Special Purpose, 20 credits) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	2020
Date of next review	2025

6. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	Irish National Stud
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	n/a
Date of next review	2024

7. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies)	An Cosán
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>BA in Applied Addiction Studies and Community Development (Level 7)</p> <p>BA in Leadership and Community Development (Level 7)</p> <p>Certificate in Leadership and Social Enterprise (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Applied Addiction Studies and Community (Level 6)</p> <p>Certificate in Leadership and Community Development (Level 6)</p> <p>Certificate in Social Analysis (Level 6)</p> <p>Certificate in Community Leadership (Level 6)</p> <p>Certificate in Group Work & Facilitation Skills (Level 6)</p> <p>Certificate in Learning to Learn at Third Level (Level 6)</p> <p>Certificate in Introduction to Social Enterprise Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Community Leadership (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Transformative Community Education (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Citizenship and Social Action (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Introduction to Community Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Introduction to Community Leadership (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in the Nature and Context of Addiction (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Drug Prevention, Education & Awareness (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Community Development Practical Approaches (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Understanding and Managing Conflict in a Community Development Context (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Reflective Practice, Knowledge, Skills & Attitude (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Social Policy (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Equality & Diversity (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Leadership & Organisational Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Introduction to Counselling & Motivational Interviewing (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Approaches to Treatment and Rehabilitation (Level 6 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Community Development and Technology (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Research Methods and Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Project Cycle Management in the Community & Voluntary Sector (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Leadership and Social Change (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Leadership in Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Drugs and Crime in a Global Context (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Community Drug Work and Leadership in Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award)</p> <p>Certificate in Communications (Level 6 Special Purpose award)</p> <p>Certificate in Critical and Ethical Thinking in a Changing World (Level 6 Special Purpose award)</p> <p>Certificate in Foundations in Adult Learning (Level 6 Special Purpose award)</p> <p>Certificate in Personal and Professional Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award, 60 credits)</p> <p>Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf</p>
Date of last review	2021
Date of next review	2026

8. Linked provision (Type of linked provision)	Linked Provision
Name of body (/bodies)	The Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport Ireland (CILT)
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Business in Logistics and Supply Chain Management (Level 6 Major Award) Certificate in Business in Logistics and Supply Chain Management (Level 6 - Minor Award) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETU-Carlow-Register-of-Linked-Provision-v.11-10-Feb-2023.pdf
Date of last review	2016
Date of next review	2023

9. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Double Degree
Name of body (/bodies)	L'École Supérieure de Commerce Bretagne, Brest
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Business in Internationalisation Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2017
Date of next review	2022 (under renewal)

10. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Double Degree
Name of body (/bodies)	L'École Supérieure de Commerce Bretagne, Brest
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2017
Date of next review	2022 (under renewal)

11. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Double Degree
Name of body (/bodies)	Munich University of Applied Sciences
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (H) in International Business Bachelor of Art (H) in International Management Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2019
Date of next review	2024

12. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Double Degree
Name of body (/bodies)	Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (H) in Software Systems Practice Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2021
Date of next review	2026

13. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Industry Agreement
Name of body (/bodies)	WLR FM (South East Broadcasting Co. Led.) /BEAT 102-103 (WKW FM Ltd.)
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2019
Date of next review	Under renewal

14. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Industry Agreement
Name of body (/bodies)	Nemeton Television Ltd
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Arts in Television and Media Production Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2021
Date of next review	2024
15. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Industry Agreement
Name of body (/bodies)	Social Justice Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Social Justice and Public Policy Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2021
Date of next review	2024
16. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	Industry Agreement
Name of body (/bodies)	Teagasc
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Horticulture and associated Minor Awards Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Bachelor of Science (H) in Agricultural Science Bachelor of Science in Forestry Bachelor of Science (H) in Land Management (Agriculture) Bachelor of Science (H) in Land Management (Horticulture) Bachelor of Science in Food Science Bachelor of Science (H) in Food Science in Innovation Collaboration Agreements - SETU Waterford Campus formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie)
Date of last review	2017
Date of next review	2022 (extended to 2023)
17. Linked Provision (Type of Linked Provision)	
Name of body (/bodies)	Munster Technological University
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Business in Investment Fund Administration Postgraduate Diploma in Business Certificate in Business Certificate in Regulated Investment Funds
Date of last review	New
Date of next review	2026

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	5 Link to Articulation Agreements
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1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies)	Liffey College
Programme titles and links to publications	Appropriate 1st Year Programmes at Institute of Technology Carlow
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	6th May 2020
Date of next review	5th May 2023
Detail of the agreement	<p>South East Technological University welcomes applications from qualified graduates of the Certificate in International Foundation Studies (IFS) at Liffey College. The following will be considered by South East Technological University for the purposes of accepting Liffey College students onto the appropriate 1st year programme at the University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will be accepted based on their merits on a case-by-case basis. Apart from academic achievements, considerations will also be given to factors like areas of study, maturity of applicant and demand for the specific programme. • Students will also demonstrate an achievement of IELTS 5.5 or equivalent with a minimum of 5.5 across all bands. It will be noted that Liffey College IFS graduates will achieve a minimum of B2 on their CEFR scale which will satisfy the requirements. • When required and requested, applicants will need to submit any relevant transcripts and certificates.

2. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies)	ATHE
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Information Technology Management
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	November 2021
Date of next review	November 2024
Detail of the agreement	<p>South East Technological University welcomes applications from qualified graduates of programmes. Applicants may also be considered for other programmes of the University on an individual case-by-case basis. In general, applicants will need to demonstrate an achievement of 60% average and will also need to have achieved a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (or equivalent) in order to be considered for entry onto the students onto a Bachelor degree programme of the University. When required and requested, the applicants will need to submit any relevant transcripts and certificates.</p>

3. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies)	The Sir Sandford Fleming College
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>Bachelor of Business in Marketing Bachelor of Business in International Business Bachelor of Business in Business Management Bachelor of Business in Finance and Accounting Bachelor of Business (Ordinary) in Human Resource Management</p>

	Bachelor of Business (Ordinary) in International Business Bachelor of Business (Ordinary) in Management
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	February 2019
Date of next review	February 2024
Detail of the agreement	South East Technological University welcomes applications from qualified graduates of programmes. Applicants may also be considered for other programmes of the University on an individual case-by-case basis. In general, applicants will need to demonstrate an achievement of 60% average and will also need to have achieved a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (or equivalent) in order to be considered for entry onto the students onto a Bachelor degree programme of the University. When required and requested, the applicants will need to submit any relevant transcripts and certificates.

4. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies)	Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) - International Business Management
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	April 2022
Date of next review	April 2027
Detail of the agreement	In order to facilitate collaborative agreements, Conestoga College Institute of Technology and South East Technological University agree to establish the Articulation and Exchange Agreement to formalise the academic pathways between the two institutions in the areas of credit transfer and advanced standing; Exchange of students to provide students with the opportunity to attend and experience another institution for academic creative and cultural development; Exchange of faculty members.

5. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies)	Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Visual Communication and Design (Honours Degree)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	November 2021
Date of next review	November 2024
Detail of the agreement	Canadore College and SETU have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to ongoing collaboration on several important fronts. Under the umbrella of this MOU, specific student pathways have been identified that enhance the professional and international learning opportunities for the graduates of Canadore College (affiliated to Colleges Ontario) and of SETU (affiliated to the Technological Higher Education Association).

South East Technological University

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2022-2022

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

Quality implementation and developments have been dominated by the realisation of the University's vision and goals. This realisation has been in part merger and in part the aim of achieving even more than the sum of the constituent parts. The legacy of COVID-19 has also contributed to this space, although no longer through imposed distance education. A number of programmes, from Level 6 to Level 9, and across a variety of disciplines, successfully applied to remain fully online, following the removal of distancing restrictions. The lateness and uncertainty around the Leaving Certificate results have been noted and Council approval granted to the current Year 1 approach.

This section of the report reports on the University's ambition of offering a uniformly high-quality educational experience in a changing higher education landscape, with some key developments already achieved and with others identified as being in train.

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The next reporting period will see the launch of the University's first Strategic Plan and through submissions and consultations, the central role of quality assurance and enhancement will be explicitly articulated.

The QA and QI submissions drew in part from five existing QA strategic themes:

1. To increase the type and variety of awards and to enhance the process by which awards can be created as a means of being more flexible and responsive (ST-A);
2. To meet the QA performance criteria, across teaching & learning, research and the student experience, of the Technological University (ST-TU);
3. To enhance learning opportunities across access and life-long learners (ST-L) and international student (ST-IS) markets,
4. To enhance industry focus by offering greater pathways for continuous professional development and up-skilling in industrial and commercial settings (ST-IF);
5. To improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of administration and quality assurance governance (ST-E).

This strategic focus to quality assurance and enhancement systems supports the University's strategic objectives. These objectives are supported by the five existing QA strategic themes (ST-). Consequently, the University will be known:

- I. For our provision of high-quality educational experiences to students that are student centred and responsive to learner needs (ST-A, ST-IS);

- II. As an accessible new University that offers a wide range of learning opportunities, access and progression routes and flexible modes of engagement with learning that reflect learner needs and societal change (ST-TU, ST-IS);
- III. As a research-led organisation with a demonstrably impactful, innovative, and dynamic research community (ST-TU);
- IV. For being deeply embedded in regional discourse, policy-making, economic, social and cultural activity and as a driver of regional change (ST-L, ST-IF);
- V. For our international profile that finds expression in the approach of our students and staff and in our extensive partnerships (ST-IS);
- VI. As an effectively governed and managed organisation that is strategically focussed and demonstrates quality in all its activities (ST-E, ST-A).

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This is the first AQR from SETU.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates between May 1 st and Dec 31 st 2022
Governing Body	12 Meetings (link) 1 st May, 3 rd May, 12 th May, 24 th May, 31 st May, 14 th June, 12 th July, 26 th July, 6 th September, 4 th October, 8 th November, 8 th December
Academic Council	8 Meetings (link) 17 th May, 7 th June, 13 th September, 11 th October, 15 th November, 6 th December Special Meeting 20 th June, Standing Committee Meeting 19 th August
Academic Development, Learning and Teaching	4 Meetings and 42 Sub-group Meetings 27 th September, 3 rd October, 25 th October, 22 nd November
Student Experience	3 Meetings 30 th September, 28 th October, 25 th November
Academic Quality and Regulations Committee	4 Meetings 16 th June, 30 th September, 28 th October 2022, 25 th November
Research Committee	3 Meetings 27 th September, 25 th October, 22 nd November
Ethics in Research Committee	6 Meetings 4 th May, 31 st May, 16 th June, 14 th October, 9 th November, 8 th December

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

No changes have been made to the Leadership and Management team in this reporting period. However, the University has commissioned a review of its organisational structures which will finish in the next reporting period.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

No periodic reviews occurred in the reporting period.

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels¹ involved in IQA

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

	Total	Academic Schools/Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/ Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	46	0	0	0	15	31	0
<i>of those:</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
On-site processes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desk reviews	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Virtual processes	43	0	0	0	15	28	0
Average panel size for each process type*	6.5	0	0	0	7	6	0

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

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

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	46	15	31	0	0	46	0	0	0	15	0
Secretary	46	42	4	0	15	31	0	0	0	15	0
Academic/Discipline Specific	97	60	37	0	0	90	5	0	2	30	0
Student Representative	19	17	2	0	0	19	0	0	0	14	0
QA	31	2	29	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching & Learning	30	27	3	0	0	26	2	0	2	30	0
External Industry /Third Mission	65	28	37	0	0	29	2	2	0	0	29

2.0 IQA System - Enhancement and Impacts

The University formation has led to many developments and discussions on Internal Quality Assurance developments and enhancements in the reporting period. While a new Quality Framework was being commissioned both previous Quality Frameworks were independently in use, with the strong caveat that students could never be disadvantaged by this implementation. This prospect rarely required consideration but nonetheless demanded some vigilance and awareness. The new Quality Framework will be approved in the next reporting year and recorded in the next AQR, which will also present an analysis of the University QA integration and development. There are currently four Integration Leads in place in Teaching & Learning; Academic, Legal and Compliance; Academic Administration, and Student Support. The impact of their work on integration has been positive and considerable, with some key highlights presented in the following.

2.0.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Part A Section 1.0 of this report describes the overall governance, executive management and academic management structures, led by the SETU Governing Body. The SETU Governing Body held its first meeting on May 2nd 2022 and its meeting minutes are publicly available on the SETU website ([link](#)). The Body's membership consists of external stakeholders, as well as learners and staff. The Academic Council normally meets once per month on average during an academic year and its meeting minutes are publicly available on the SETU website ([link](#)). Having established these essential governance bodies, both bodies have tackled the challenges of creating a nascent University, which while drawing heavily on the insights and experience of its constituent members, will be much more than the better of its two constituent parts. This has led to the appointment of the first president, the commissioning of a strategic plan and the commissioning of an organisational plan, the latter two of which will return results in the next reporting period.

2.0.2 Programmes of Education and Training

Measurement, reporting and publication are key aspects of good academic governance. Throughout the reporting period, the University has continued to meet monitoring, evaluating and reporting requirements, for example programme board reports and external examiner reports.

The University also updated on the Irish Register of Qualifications details for the SETU, which lists all of our programmes leading to qualifications recognised within the National Framework of Qualifications.

The university values the professional development of students and therefore has engaged in the CORU accreditation process for Social Care related programmes. Wexford Campus successfully completed this process during this reporting period.

2.0.3 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Staff education and upskilling remains a key strategic pillar in SETU. The University encourages and supports the professional and personal development of its personnel with the aim of performing their duties at the highest possible level, in order to achieve the University's strategic goals and for the purpose of self-fulfilment. The University would like to:

- Expand levels 9-10 teaching and research and correspondingly improving staff knowledge and skills development, in both advanced level education and applied research.
- Further strengthen networks with industry and community organizations in education and research.

New staff are offered dedicated Induction training and all staff are supported in pursuing additional education. The University has a dedicated staff resource to training and development, and procedures in respect of training and development of staff (academic, administration and support), including the organisation of the annual training and development week in semester 2.

2.0.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Through the Teaching and Learning Centre and the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning, the University supports all staff and learners with a range of academic supports, webinars and a community of practice.

2.0.5 International Update

The first learners were admitted in September of this reporting period to the Zhengzhou-located Carlow International College of Technology, operated in partnership with Henan University of Animal Husbandry and Economy (HUAHE). The learners have been admitted to three degree programmes: a BSc (Honours) in Brewing and Distilling; a BSc (Honours) in Sustainable Farm Management; and Agribusiness and a BSc (Honours) in Software Development. The next AQR reporting period will include a section on the operation of Year 1 and future plans.

Linked provision for the Accra Business School, Ghana of the MSc in Information technology Management, the BSc in Cybercrime and IT Security and BSc in Information Technology Management

was approved in August by the Academic Council.

The proposal to expand SETU's collaboration with NUIST, China, to offering dual degrees delivered in Nanjing, will be evaluated in the next reporting period and, if successful, will be reported on in the next AQR.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The University created a variety of initiatives to counter the challenge of maintaining Academic Integrity. For example, Epigeum Academic Integrity training was offered to both staff and students on the Virtual Learning Environments (distinct staff and student modules). This training was supplemented with bespoke staff and student online Programme Briefing and Q&A sessions in September 2022. Furthermore, academic writing sessions are offered for all students to join on a voluntary basis. The National Academic integrity week took place in October 2022 and the University undertook a week of Academic Integrity activities and talks to learners and staff. Bespoke group support sessions were offered to students, including those of our collaborative partners. An example of this was a session on Academic Writing for Dissertations, offered to students within the Defence Forces. A similar session was offered to final-year students in Engineering over a three-week period to support them in the drafting of their theses. Finally, SETU also has two representatives on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN).

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators
1	Quality Framework	This work will be led by the TU QA Integration Lead and presented in the next reporting period to SETU AC.
2	University Regulations	This work will be led by the TU QA Integration Lead and presented in the next reporting period to SETU AC.
3	Strategic Plan	The VP for Strategy has consulted widely in the current reporting period and will present a draft Plan to Governing Body for approval, in the next reporting period
4	Structured Doctorate Expansion	AC will invite all Schools to submit Structured Doctorate proposals in the next reporting period.
4	International Delivery of SETU programmes	A proposal to expand the existing international offering of SETU programmes is being prepared and will be evaluated in the next reporting period.
5	Formation of an Institutional Review Steering Committee and ISER Development	QQI will organise an Institutional Review of the new University in 2024. As part of the preparation, a Steering Group and ISER will feature in the next reporting period.
6	Ongoing Alignment of Policies, Procedures and Processes	This work will be led by the TU QA Integration Lead and presented on an ongoing basis in the next reporting period to SETU AC.
7	Development of a Student Charter	The central role of the student will be captured in a Student Charter, to articulate the commitment made to our learners and to capture their part in the SETU community.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

1. Reviews scheduled/completed during the current Reporting Period

Unit reviewed	Date of review
Linked Provision Review	None
Programmatic Reviews	None

2. Agreements renewals scheduled with linked providers during the current Reporting Period

Linked Provider	Agreement Type
Defence Forces	MOA
Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport	MOA
Gestalt Institute of Ireland	MOA
The Tivoli Institute	MOA

3. Additional activities completed during the current Reporting Period

Activity	Date completed
Joint Quality Visit (Defence Forces)	October 2022
Joint Quality Visit (Defence Forces)	November 2022
Joint Quality Visit (Defence Forces)	December 2022

4. New Policies Approved during the current Reporting Period

Policy Title	Date Approved
Voluntary Campus Transfer Policy	July 2022
Travel & Subsistence Policy	December 2022
Risk Management Policy	May 2022
Recruitment & Selection Policy	December 2022
Protected Disclosures Policy	July 2022
Intellectual Property Policy	September 2022
Hospitality Policy	December 2022
Honorary Degrees Process	December 2022
Equality Statement	May 2022
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	May 2022
Email Policy	July 2022
Data Protection Policy	December 2022
Data Retention Policy	December 2022
Conflict of Interest Policy	September 2022
Data Governance Policy	December 2022
Code of Conduct Policy	July 2022
Child Protection Policy	May 2022
Career Break Policy	December 2022
Acceptable Usage Policy	September 2022
Travel & Subsistence Policy	December 2022

5. Policies Renewed during the current Reporting Period

Policy Title	Date Approved
Both Institutes' Sets of Regulations for the Interim period (carried forward)	

6. Reviews scheduled for the next Reporting Period

Unit / Department	Date of last review	Date of next review
SETU Structured Doctorate programme	May 2018	June 2023
Review of Programmes delivered in NUIST, China	July 2016	May 2023

7. Further Education Statistics for the current Reporting Period

Total number of applicants via the FE Progression Pathway Scheme	94
Total offered/accepted	46
Total number registered	90
Total Registered and attending 2022/23 academic year	44
Total Deferred for 2022/23 academic year	2

8. Ethics in Research Statistics for the current Reporting Period

Details	Taught programmes	Research Programmes
Total (Taught & Research)		
Number of applicants	44	
Number of applicants Approved	26	39
Number of applicants Approved (subject to clarification/amendments)	26	20
Number of applicants required to Resubmit their application (i.e., not approved)	26	28

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning; a national approach

The recent increase in interest in micro-credentials has been driven by the growth and expansion of online learning, in part due to Covid-19, and the need to upskill rapidly post the pandemic. Micro-credentials are defined as **'a recognised proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a short learning experience** (Commission recommendation adopted by the Council of the European Union (EU) on 16 June 2022).

Micro-credentials are seen as an opportunity to engage with both non-traditional learners in HE and are also seen as a means to offer third level students additional relevant learning opportunities that may augment their employability prospects. They can offer lifelong learners an opportunity to access a form of flexible third level provision and they may also assist Universities in responding to accelerated global shifts that require upskilling in specific disciplines and indeed in new fields of learning.

The European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable people to participate fully in society. The European Pillar of Social Rights specifically addresses micro-credentials as a mechanism which can support the education, social and economic participation rights of EU citizens by providing 'flexible learning pathways and support workers on their job or during professional transitions'. Furthermore, micro-credentials can support EU's 2030 targets of 60% of all adults participating in training every year and an employment rate of at least 78%. The EU has included micro-credentials in its approach to education, training, skills development and digital education which is represented in the following policy documents:

- The European Skills Agenda: Of its 12 flagship actions, a new initiative on a European approach to micro-credentials. This new initiative aims to support the quality, transparency and uptake of micro-credentials across the EU (COM (2020) 274).
- European Education Area by 2025: Develop a European approach to micro-credentials for higher education institutions and VET institutions (COM(2020) 625).
- The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience calls on the Commission to 'explore the concept and use of micro-credentials' (OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1.).
- European Universities Initiative: micro-credentials could help widen learning opportunities to accommodate non-traditional learners and the demand for new skills in the labour market (J C 221, 10.6.2021, p. 14).

- The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027: accessible learning opportunities for digital skills and support Commission's '2030 Digital Compass' plan to develop a digitally skilled population 2030 (COM(2020) 624 final).
- European Green Deal: which is Europe's growth strategy aiming to transform its economy and society and put them on a more sustainable path (COM) (2019) 640 final).

SETU is engaged in three EU funded projects to develop micro-credentials in specific fields (Sustainability/Digital Literacy/Health)

SETU, as a member of the EU-CONEXUS European University initiative, is leading the development of a recognition framework across 9 partner Universities. This framework (completed and approved in April 2023) provides a mechanism for the development and recognition of micro-credentials addressing the Green/sustainability agenda across all EU-CONEXUS partners. This framework is informed by current EU policy on micro-credentials and specifically addresses the EU Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (EC, 2022).

SETU is currently involved in two Erasmus+ projects aimed at the development of micro-credentials for lifelong learners working in the fields of adult learning ([Search | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)) the European Basic Skills Professional Development for basic skills teachers and professionals working in the Health sector across Europe (Dynamic Digital Resilience for Medical and Allied Professions in Health Services (DDS-MAP) brings together 15 European partners consisting of Higher Education Institutions (medical, nursing, education and digital technology), NGOs, health authorities and health insurers to develop new training in the form of micro-credentials for health care professionals, helping them acquire and master new and emerging digital technologies, and manage the challenges associated with them.

In addition to the on-going work in SETU there are a number of national projects in Ireland that have addressed the role, use and development of micro-credentials to address learning for under-graduate students and lifelong learners.

MICROBOL ([Home - MicroBol \(microcredentials.eu\)](#)) is an Erasmus+ project. The project is linked to the aims of the new Erasmus+ Programme and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to increase access to continuous learning for all learners, regardless of age or experience. These learners include regular higher education students, but also all those who want to improve their knowledge, skills and competences. The Microbol project has produced a framework based on a review of European policy and the work of the partners.

MicroCreds ([MicroCreds | Irish Universities Association \(iua.ie\)](#)) is an Irish project funded by national funding (Human Capital Initiative) and is a 5-year (2020-2025), multi-campus micro-credentials project led by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) in partnership with University College Dublin, University

College Cork, University of Limerick, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin City University, University of Galway and Maynooth University. The MicroCreds project aims to deliver a national framework for quality assurance and accreditation on micro-credentials. The framework will provide all learners with a pathway from bite-size micro-credentials to larger awards, while providing flexibility for the learner and their changing needs as they progress through their career path. As part of the project MicroCreds partners are collaborating to develop, pilot and evaluate the building blocks required for a transformation in lifelong and life-wide learning through micro-credentials.

MicroHE ([Home - MicroHE \(microcredentials.eu\)](http://Home-MicroHE(microcredentials.eu))) is an Erasmus+ funded project. The [MicroHE](http://Home-MicroHE(microcredentials.eu)) project started in 2018, with the aim to provide a comprehensive policy analysis conducted of the impact of modularisation, unbundling and micro-credentialing in European Higher Education. Its expected impact was to increase the quality and quantity of micro-credentials on offer within the European Higher Education Area, as well as enable recognition of those same credentials by different educational organizations and employers.

- The opportunity for Higher Education in Ireland is to develop a national framework for micro-credentials across all HEI's.
- This would involve national infrastructure (including a database) for learners, with a specific focus on lifelong learners.
- While HEI's have institutional student record systems, many are challenged by the full development of micro-credentials as small learning opportunities that are portable, stackable and digitally verifiable. A system wide approach to credit based micro-credentials would offer greater awareness building across HE for micro-credentials and widen access for lifelong learners with clear pathways in and out of Higher Education.
- This national opportunity to act as a European leader in this field could be coupled with the introduction of a national individual learning credit (or voucher) scheme for lifelong learners. Access to a short HE micro-credential at a low or no cost would offer incentivised lifelong learning and work towards the target of 60% participation rates in lifelong learning for 2030.

Case Study RPL for Lifelong Learning

HEA Innovation and Transformation project 2018-2021

SETU (then WIT) secured funding under the 2018 HEA Innovation call to develop an RPL portal for Lifelong Learners based on specific named destination awards aligned to skills needs identified via the South East Regional Skills Forum, SLMRU (SOLAS) and the South East Action Plan for Jobs (South East Development Office).

The rationale supporting this Innovation project was based on measures that needed to be taken to increase the numbers of adults accessing lifelong learning programmes. Participation in lifelong learning in Ireland (at the time, 2018) falls below EU average with a recent SOLAS (2017) report indicating a participation rate of 8.9%. While this is a small improvement on the 2015 (CSO) figure of 7%, Ireland's lifelong learning participation rate is below the EU 28 average of nearly 11% and well behind the top performers, Denmark (31%), Sweden (29%) and Finland (25%). Overall, Ireland is ranked 20th out of 28 EU countries (Eurostat 2017). Ireland's Action Plan for Education (DES, 2016-2019) had the goal of increasing the lifelong learning participation rate to 10% by 2020 and 15% by 2025.

In 2017, degree graduates were at least three times more likely to participate in lifelong learning than those who left school before attaining an Upper Second Level Qualification (Euromonitor, 2017). As the levels of participation at third level in the South East are below average at 38% (CSO, 2017) the challenge of increasing the lifelong learning participation rate was significant. There are a range of factors impacting on participation rates for lifelong learning including prior educational experiences, levels of educational attainment and access to relevant learning opportunities. While national and EU policies underpin the concept of the recognition of prior learning, its application to lifelong learners has been very slow.

The South East Action Plan for Jobs (DJEI, 2015) identified Agri-Food, Tourism, Global Business and Finance, Construction/Manufacturing, Bio-Pharma & MedTech and ICT as key sectors requiring upskilling.

The project portal developed an online portal for lifelong learners in consultation with industry representatives in each sector and a framework to map prior experiential, workplace and certified learning was developed for each sector. Engagement with industry stakeholders included the identification of processes to validate informal and non-formal learning in the workplace.

The on-line portal provides details and support to engage with an RPL process (including the development of a Special Purpose Award for learners in RPL) to access a destination award and offer

step by step assistance in the development of an individual RPL portfolio for submission to SETU. This project has created an on-line RPL portal that targets and facilitates adult learners (lifelong learners) with upper second level qualifications to participate and engage with higher education in the South East.

The problem this Innovation was trying to solve was how we facilitate greater access to RPL for lifelong learners; how we build awareness of RPL across the academic community and how we engage with industry using workplace learning that is recognized for access or credit to higher education.

Following completion of the project, the project team in SETU was invited to input into the national Human Capital Initiative project addressing RPL (a collaboration between the Institutes of Technology, the Universities, and Technological Universities). The aim of this national project is to build a consistent and coherent approach to recognition of prior learning (RPL) within and across the entire public higher education (HE) sector.

Initial findings from the national HCI funded project support the findings of the SETU Innovation project, however, in order for benefits to be maximised and a significant increase in RPL to be seen a number of recommendations (requiring resources are needed).

- HE System wide infrastructure to track the number of RPL applications. This infrastructure needs to include a database to establish equivalence to NFQ levels (when assessing particularly professional and industry experience). This system needs to be connected to the HEA SRS annual monitoring system for HEI's to establish a base line regarding the use and metrics associated with RPL for lifelong learners.
- RPL personnel are needed in each HEI. They may be academic or administrative, however the expertise and processing requirements for RPL applications are significant. HE will not be able to deliver on widening the use of RPL to address lifelong learning without dedicated HR resources in each HEI.
- A significant finding from the SETU Innovation project was low levels of awareness and understanding across the academic community in HE. A concerted and funded campaign that includes training and practice orientated knowledge sharing is required to build this awareness across HE.

- Industry engagement is critical to the development of RPL access routes, with significant work-based learning taking place in industry that can be difficult to align to third level awards. Expertise and personnel are required across HE to map industry experience across key sectors. This may form part of a national database on RPL for experiential learning with a focus on industry.

Government's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and agility), the project will see the higher education institutions engineer a significant shift in RPL policy, procedure and practice, that has transformative potential for Ireland's education system to become an international leader in the field.

The RPL Project team have contributed to the development of a Digital Badge in RPL with the national forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

The SETU Project team has formally engaged with the national QQI RPL network, the HCI national project, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and other national and international HEI's to ensure this Innovation project reflects current understanding and strategy for RPL within a lifelong learning context.

Case Study: Choose the right course for you.

Right student, right programme

At South East Technological University, it's important to us that our students get the best out of the course they study and we have invested strongly in our student services to support our students during their time in University.

We have gone a step further as we also believe that we can influence students' college experiences by providing them with help and support long before they start in college. Our main focus is on helping them make better course choices and supporting them on that journey.

Our main audience are sixth year and FE students, and their parents and teachers, who are at the business end of making those all-important decisions, but we also look for ways to provide fun and interactive activities for earlier stage students to start thinking about college choices.

The mainstay of University marketing programmes are school visits and open days and these remain hugely important tools in our goal to get students thinking about what colleges courses would best suit them, and to familiarise them with University life.

We have augmented these traditional approaches with other outreach activities and have designed different events and initiatives depending on where the student is in their senior cycle.

For instance, we have piloted the SETU TY game for transition year class groups focusing on subject choices. Our outreach team use a board game, word search and supplementary SETU guides to work with students to understand their strengths, the subjects and the extracurricular activities they like to guide them to better course choices. We do this in conjunction with the guidance counsellor and early stage feedback has been very positive.

One of our most successful initiatives has been our "Try SETU" series which allow students to "try" a discipline area before they make those final CAO choices. They are interactive events designed for individual students rather than class groups and importantly they are for students who have a genuine interest in discovering if the discipline is the right one for them. In 2022/2023, we held 22 try events with almost 1,000 students taking part and hope to add a fuller programme in the next academic year. www.setu.ie/try.

Our 'Chat to SETU' initiative runs at key times in the CAO cycle: on the run up to 1 February, the change of mind period up to 1 July and for two weeks over the CAO offers period. Prospective students have different concerns at different times of the year and our team co-ordinates with other parts of the University and provide a "one stop shop" approach to answering those queries.

For instance, we work with the Accommodation Office to support queries on accommodation, with Admissions to assist with communication to new first years, available place options and other initiatives, with Student Life & Learning to support first year orientation and many more activities. Our team provides different ways for students and their parents to get in touch, through live chat, Instagram live, campus tours and telephone. In a typical offers period, we deal with upwards of 2,000 queries.

We are in the process of updating our set of help guides which will be freely available to download on our website. There is one for guidance counsellors to work with sixth and fifth years to help them solidify course choices, a similar one for parents on how to work through choices with their child and one for both teachers, parents and students on subject choices.

We supplement these high touch initiatives with informative course pages with a focus on the student or graduate giving their experiences through “stories” on course pages. Our web presence for school leavers is designed to be easily navigable and provide them with relevant information at appropriate times.

Not only are all these initiatives designed to give students important information at key times, we also design the programme to maximise our contact with students. From TY to sixth year, we hope to meet a student multi times, in their classroom, at open events, online and at more targeted events like our Try events. Our aim is to familiarise students with our courses, with University life and make it accessible to them, even before they start in September.

While these are intensive initiatives, both in terms of time and money, we feel their impact will be positive for SETU and also other universities. We are aware that in helping them find the right course, they may choose another college or another path entirely. But our overarching goal is to improve students' University and course choices and help them find their right path sooner rather than later with the added benefit of contributing to improved retention figures.

Case Study of Postgraduate-Undergraduate Peer Support Programme

Hear to HELP - Postgraduate and Undergraduate Peer Support Programme

Overview

The 'Hear to Help' Learner Support Initiative was developed as part of a suite of Covid-19 support initiatives. The aim of the initiative was to support all learners by bringing undergraduate and postgraduate learners together, through a peer network, in an effort to support each other through personal, social and academic stressors. The initiative created the opportunity for more experienced students to provide advice, guidance and support, using the University's supported online platforms.

Rationale for the Initiative

This initiative was developed in part as a result of the findings of all-student survey conducted by the Students' Union, the Teaching and Learning Centre and Student Services. The aim of the survey, conducted in December 2020, was to ascertain the support needs of students in the second term of that academic year and to support students in their learning journey in a holistic and meaningful way. The survey had a response rate of 20.25%.

Findings from the survey revealed that a large majority of students identified counselling as a one of the most required support measures. A counselling service was already in place, the provision of which had moved online. However, as demand for this service had not increased significantly in the first term of the academic year, it was deemed that the request for counselling may have had a broader interpretation for students, and may have included such issues as wellbeing and resilience support. Based on this consideration, one of the actions and recommendations that emerged from the survey analysis was to put in place a more formalised support structure for students and from this the Hear to Help Initiative emerged.

The initiative aimed to support and empower undergraduate students to overcome challenges presented by the pandemic restrictions, whilst creating a safe space for students to voice their concerns with a peer. In addition, it aimed to further promote learner engagement and progression by encouraging students to be more active in their learning and to raise awareness of the support systems that existed for learners. Due to the nature of the initiative, it was also developed to support both social and academic integration and to create a support network for both undergraduate and postgraduate students during the online pivot. In tandem, its objective was to mitigate aspects of social isolation created by the pandemic through the promotion and nurturing of a sense of belonging amongst both cohorts of learners and to offer specific academic support within a range of disciplines, which would complement existing University practices to support learner engagement, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience for all students.

Literature Review

Much research has been conducted in recent years on the effectiveness of peer support systems within higher education (Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 2001); and how such programmes can have a wide range of benefits for students, including increased retention and a sense of belonging (Collings et al., 2014) and enhanced cognitive well-being (Byrom, 2018). In addition, it has been identified that peer support programmes not only offer positive approaches to addressing the stressors reported by undergraduate students in higher education (Crisp, Rickwood, Martin, and Byrom, 2020), but can also support those student facilitators who are involved in such programmes, by creating for them a sense of belonging and community. There is also evidence to suggest that being involved in such programmes can support peer facilitators to further enhance their own transferable skills, such as communication and interpersonal skills along with increasing their own levels of empathy and understanding, in terms of personal growth.

Braxton and Hirschy (2004) asserted that students do not tend to socially integrate with the entire student body of an institution but rather with subsets of that population, which would support the idea of the proposed initiative in that links are being established between individual postgraduate students and class groups.

Aims of the Initiative

The aims of the initiative were as follows:

- To support and empower undergraduate students to overcome challenges presented by the circumstances of the pandemic;
- To create a safe space for students to voice their concerns with a peer;
- To further promote learner engagement and progression by encouraging students to be more active in their learning;
- To raise awareness of the University support systems that exist for learners;
- To support both social and academic integration in the current virtual learning environment;
- To create a support network for both undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- To mitigate aspects of social isolation created by the pandemic circumstances through the promotion and nurturing of a sense of belonging amongst both cohorts of learners;
- To offer specific academic support within a range of disciplines;
- To complement existing University practices to support learner engagement;
- To enhance the overall learning experience for all students.

Underlying Principles of the Initiative

The initiative was underpinned by the following principles and values:

- **Trust:** this initiative was rooted in a trusting relationship between the undergraduate students who may have been experiencing difficulties and the postgraduate students, whose knowledge and experience allowed them to appreciate these unique challenges. The cornerstone of the

relationship between the postgraduate and the undergraduate students was confidentiality. Meetings between the groups were confidential and names of individual students or staff members were not disclosed at any of the meetings between the postgraduates, the Teaching and Learning Centre, Student Services and the Students' Union. Confidentiality was respected at all times and no identifiable markers were disclosed whereby individuals may have been identified.

- **Supportiveness:** this refers to the peer facilitators' ability to show undergraduate students that they care about their academic progression and their personal well-being. This fostered the development of strong relationships amongst those involved in the initiative.
- **Shared communication:** it was envisaged that facilitators would listen to students in an encouraging and sensitive manner and that the undergraduate students would be receptive to the advice and guidance shared by postgraduate students.
- **Respect:** learners who felt respected were likely to feel more integrated in the group and there was an understanding that all students involved in this initiative would show respect to all other students at all times throughout the process.
- **Compassion and empathy:** being able to empathise refers to being able to identify, relate and understand another person's feelings. This was a critical component to the initiative as many students were experiencing a wide range of challenges which were impacting upon their ability to focus on their studies. With that in mind, postgraduate students were encouraged to try and imagine others' points of view and to offer relevant support and advice where possible.

Coordination

The 'Hear to Help' initiative was coordinated by the University's Teaching and Learning Centre and had the full support of Executive Management, the Covid-19 Response Team (Teaching and Learning), Student Services and the Students' Union. The Teaching and Learning Centre coordinated the Supplementary Academic Support Scheme which was in place and, as such, had extensive experience of this type of initiative.

Initiative roll-out

1. The 'Hear to Help' initiative ran initially for 8 weeks (starting on Monday 1st Feb, until the end of the second term - 26th March) at which point it was reviewed.
2. The initiative was conducted in conjunction with the existing network of class representatives.
3. All registered research postgraduate students were invited by email to partake in the initiative. The email outlined the broad thinking behind the initiative. Anyone interested in being part of the programme was asked to submit an expression of interest by email to the Teaching and Learning Centre.

4. An induction session with research postgraduates (facilitated by the Teaching and Learning Centre) was held to inform students of the initiative details and to explore issues such as confidentiality, support and trust and to work through the practicalities of the initiative².
5. In tandem, an information meeting with class reps (facilitated by the Teaching and Learning Centre) was held to brief them on the proposed initiative.
6. Each participating postgraduate student was allocated 6-9 undergraduate classes for which they were responsible. It was expected that they would connect with the class groups, through the class reps, for approximately 10 minutes a week (per class) to capture any difficulties that had been raised by the students. It was recommended that this would be done through the creation of a MS Teams group and a dedicated meeting time with the class, during which the PG could deal with queries.
7. The initiative coordinator made use of the existing class rep network to connect the undergraduates with the postgraduates and 128 class groups were involved. It was the class representatives' responsibility to communicate details to the class group about the initiative.
8. Every week the postgraduate students also had a 30-minute group meeting with the Head of the Teaching and Learning Centre (and Student Services and Students' Union) to relay challenges that were raised by the class group members and to assist with arranging academic support where necessary and appropriate.
9. These sessions between the postgraduates and the undergraduates were termed 'micro-sessions'. The times for these meet-ups were negotiated between the class groups and the postgraduate students themselves. These 'micro-sessions' were deemed as safe spaces, in which undergraduates could relay any concerns they had, and the postgraduate students would listen and support them by addressing their concerns and navigating them to support resources available.
10. The initiative coordinator was then able to follow up by notifying the relevant Heads of Department, and those within particular functional areas, of any issues that were coming through from the groups.
11. Academic support hours were then arranged with the Teaching and Learning Centre and were delivered by the postgraduate students where possible.

² In regular circumstances, a more comprehensive training programme would be offered to facilitators in advance of the roll-out of such an initiative. However, within the context of the initiative, and the need to expedite the offering of support services, a briefer induction programme is being offered in lieu.

12. For further specific supports, outside of the remit of the Teaching and Learning Centre, assistance was sought by those in the relevant areas, e.g. Student Services, IT Services, Library, etc.
13. For their involvement in the initiative, the postgraduate students were paid 3hrs a week in accordance with tutor rates. This covered their time at the micro-sessions and the weekly feedback sessions with the initiative coordinator. This was funded as part of the Covid-19 funding mechanisms.
14. Attendance at the micro-sessions varied from 1 student to a full class group of 30 undergraduate students. Attendance at the sessions fell as the initiative went on and this was explained by the fact that, at that stage, many of the issues raised had been resolved.
15. Ongoing evaluation of the initiative took place and, at the end of 8 weeks, a full evaluation was completed to ascertain the impact of the initiative and to establish as to whether there was a need for this type of support to continue. It was deemed at the conclusion of the initiative that, as the students were approaching revision and exam preparation, there was no need for this particular support to continue at that time. However, other exam-focused supports were then offered to students through the Teaching and Learning Centre.

Initiative Evaluation

On conclusion of the 8-week initiative, a full evaluation took place which included focus group sessions with the postgraduate students and feedback from undergraduates. The success of the initiative was that it provided an extra channel for undergraduates to express their concerns and to get support from peers. Undergraduate students who, due to being offsite, may not have easily reached out to the relevant support structures, were able to bring their concerns to a postgraduate who would then be able to advise them accordingly. Because of the way the initiative was implemented, it meant that undergraduates had a direct line to the postgraduates and they knew that their concerns would be acted upon promptly. In that sense, they felt very supported within their higher education institution.

Impact

Although the main aim of the initiative was to support and empower undergraduate students to overcome any Covid-19-related challenges, and in particular to promote student well-being, there were many additional benefits and impacts from the initiative, including that it formalised the first peer support system between postgraduate and undergraduate students.

In addition, it helped support retention and learner engagement, meaning that students were more likely to continue with their studies through to graduation. This was not only the case for the undergraduate students, but there were significant benefits for the postgraduate students also, as the weekly check-

ins with the coordinator became, for them, an important space to connect and to create a supportive community. This meant that their learning environment was enhanced and that they felt supported and experienced a sense of belonging during their postgraduate studies.

The impact of this was felt long beyond the initiative itself, as the postgraduate students continued to meet more informally and provide support for each other and have since pedagogical disseminated their experiences of being involved in the initiative at conferences, seminars and through a peer reviewed publication. In that sense, being part of the initiative, meant that the postgraduates felt more supported with their pedagogical practice as many of them were providing academic support to the undergraduate students. The postgraduates also commented that it helped them to grow personally and professionally as they had to navigate through a series of undergraduate student challenges but because of this, they commented that they developed their own communication and interpersonal skills.

The initiative also provided an opportunity for the postgraduates to start engaging with peers from different disciplines and to consider possibilities for interdisciplinary research, culminating in a more connected experience for graduates to bring into their future world of work.

Future Directions

Though the initiative was positioned within the emergency remote teaching period, the types of supports required were not all entirely pandemic-related and there is evidence that students continue to need structured support systems in situ. Having such formalised peer support systems in place, specifically between undergraduate and postgraduate students, ensures that all learners feel supported, thereby helping them to achieve their learning outcomes and to develop both personally and professionally. This is also a way to ensure that attrition rates are lowered, which is of significant financial benefit to students and their families.

It is envisaged that more such formalised peer support programmes would be designed to ensure continued peer engagement across all stages of the learning journey and to support learners in a way that is meaningful, relevant and sustainable for them.

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Case Study of Unifying Educational Sectors

Exploring Pedagogical Possibilities

Overview

The Inaugural Conference and Launch of Community of Practice between SETU and its Educational Regional Partners, Laois-Offaly ETB, will take place in August 2023. This event marks a significant regional collaboration across the unified tertiary sector, with the aim of exploring and embedding innovative pedagogical practice. This is one of the ways in which the University can collaboratively enhance the learner experience by sharing practice with colleagues from within Further Education. The event will see over 100 colleagues from the FE sector join with colleagues from SETU to explore pedagogical possibilities and enhance the learning environment.

Rationale for Event and Community of Practice

The event provides the platform from which to consolidate links with educational partners in the region and to have impact by supporting learners, within the region, to have access to a quality education. In addition, an event such as this can support learners who may be bridging the perceived gap between further and tertiary education. Participants will have the opportunity to connect and network and engage with colleagues from different educational levels, sharing ideas and innovative practice, thereby fostering more collaboration across a unified sector. Collaborative workshops at the event will include, inter alia, team-based learning (supporting collaborative approaches) digital learning, (in line with the national priority to support digital transformation through capacity building), inclusive pedagogies and universal design for learning.

In addition, the establishment and launch of a practitioner community of practice across the educational sectors will further consolidate links and ensure that innovative pedagogies are supported and embedded in all practices, thereby leading to enhanced learner engagement. This will also provide a platform for colleagues across the sector to collaborative pedagogical practitioner research and to disseminate their research and practice, thereby contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning within a unified tertiary sector. Currently, there are over 30 colleagues from Laois-Offaly ETB engaging in accredited professional development within SETU, as part of its MA in Teaching and Learning, which is an indication of the links that currently exist across the sector.

Impact

Supporting initiatives such as this ensures that sustainable connections are made across the region for the betterment of all students. This aligns with the national priority of creating and supporting a unified tertiary sector, as evidenced in the recently launched Unified Tertiary Education policy (December 2022), which aims to strengthen learner pathways and ensure accessibility for all. One of the affordances of the collaboration between SETU and the regional ETB is that through sharing innovative pedagogies across all curricula, learners will be better supported to engage with all aspects of their

learning journey, ensuring that they are best prepared for the world of work upon graduation. This speaks to the idea of a connected curriculum which, in itself, should lead to greater societal impact and transformative learning. Forging such strong links between SETU and the regional ETBs will further support students who wish to start degree programmes with the ETB sector and complete them with the HE sector.

Additionally, a community of practice, between SETU and its educational regional partners, will support new colleagues within all sectors to learn from each other and to consider and embrace new pedagogies. It will also offer them the opportunity to consider and reflect upon their own teaching practices, thereby fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous learning.

Future Directions

An enhanced learning experience will support students to develop personally and professionally and will encourage them to develop critical thinking skills needed for the dynamic society in which they live. It is also envisaged that having a more consolidated approach to pedagogical professional development, such as this, will contribute to the development of a more consolidated learning journey for all students, within SETU and all other educational providers within the region, meaning that any transition into or out of a particular education level will be supported. This should not only increase student numbers engaging in education but will encourage students to reconnect with learning, thereby upskilling and ensuring that they are better qualified for the workplace. Added to this is the fact that by having strong links across the sectors, the student base for SETU from the ETBs should increase in the coming years. This means that students are being supported to stay within the region for the duration of their studies, which in itself, will represent a significant financial saving for students and their families.

If more initiatives such as this were embedded, this would ensure that such collaboration becomes a standard feature of University life and the template of collaboration that currently exists could be extended to other ETBs from around the South East.

Finally, having clear educational pathways and support structures for students who start their learning journey in FE and transition to HE, will ensure that their learning is valued and recognised at all levels, thereby supporting them to develop on both a personal and professional level. In this way, they will recognise that learning is a continuous journey thereby encouraging other learners to consider the same flexible learning pathways.

Case Study for Collaborative Online International Learning

COIL: embracing a global world from wherever you call home

Overview

COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), also known as Virtual Exchange, is an innovative approach to learning which is global-oriented and connected. COIL centres on interactive collaboration between Faculty and students ([Leask, 2020, p. 188](#)), from different cultural backgrounds to engage within and outside of the classroom. An example of these interactive online engagements would be collaborative projects conducted by students from across a variety of international HEIs. COIL is designed to be accessible, flexible, and cost-effective and encourages students to collaborate across borders, thereby transcending any physical limitations.

Rationale for the Initiative

The internationalisation of the curriculum should be viewed as a driver of curriculum innovation and as such needs to be supported and developed within all programmes. This initiative would see current pockets of practice, in terms of international exchange, from across the University, being formalised into a cohesive and systematised approach to Internationalisation at Home (IaH). Current practices include, joint student projects, collaborative peer writing and online project presentations.

SETU has already started formalising this approach and has provided COIL training and professional development to Faculty and the wider staff body, through engagement with [UNICollaboration](#). A total of 20 places were made available to colleagues across all campuses to engage in a 2-day workshop. This was hosted online and the training supported staff not only to design COIL initiatives and projects but if provided staff with the opportunity of experiencing an interactive, collaborative online learning setting. Staff who completed the programme were issued with a digital badge and were provided with materials and resources to support the implementation of their own COIL initiatives.

As a result of this series of professional development sessions, a University-wide COIL/Virtual Exchange Steering Group was established to continue this engagement and to plan for a more formalised approach to internationalisation at home. The Steering Group is composed of Faculty and staff members from across the University, ensuring that internationalisation is not viewed as an additional feature within the curriculum, but rather as an integral and embedded aspect of everyday University life.

Impact

Being able to develop a systematic approach to internationalisation at home through the COIL initiatives ensures that all students are afforded the opportunity to engage with peers on a global scale, providing

them with an international learning experience and embedding internationalisation into the curriculum in a structured, sustainable and accessible way.

By engaging in COIL, students experience authentic and meaningful global. Such engagement can have a transformative impact not only on students' intercultural competence but, also in terms of developing their levels of global citizenship, leading to a more inclusive society for all. In that regard, COIL has significant societal benefits, supporting students and graduates to gain a heightened appreciation for a diverse range of perspectives, norms and values. In addition, COIL empowers students to become active agents in their own learning and to develop an appreciation of pedagogical approaches within different cultures and to engage in critical thinking and collaborative work that will serve them beyond their University experience. COIL also supports student engagement and personal growth, ensuring that graduates have developed a wide range of skills and competences relevant for an interconnected world.

Future Directions

SETU already has a significant number of international partners and cross-cultural connections, with which it can engage in numerous COIL initiatives, thereby strengthening partnerships and adding an international dimension to the overall learner experience. This would further enhance the University's reputation on an international scale and could lead to more foreign direct investment within the southeast region.

Further funding in this area would allow for a unified focus on the key enablers of internationalising the curriculum, from a University perspective and would ensure that COIL becomes fully integrated and embedded within the curriculum within a meaningful way. This would include conceptualising internationalisation within classroom practices, and as part of teaching, learning and assessment strategies to support the creation of a global classroom. Finally, it would support ongoing professional development in this area ensuring that capacity was enhanced across the University.

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Case Study for Embedded Tutor Training

Tutor Training: *Being the first point of contact*

Overview

The role of tutor includes acting as a primary point of contact for academic guidance and pastoral support (McIntosh and Grey, 2017; Yale, 2019), with the aims being to promote student integration, inform students on academic and personal development, signpost to support services and encourage participation in the different aspects of University life. The class tutor has an integral one within the University as they are the ones who can identify student concerns as early as possible which in turn can promote retention and progression (Warne and McAndrew, 2008). They are also the ones who can create a sense of belonging, especially for Year 1 students, which in itself can enhance the overall University experience (Stuart, Willocks and Browning, 2021).

UKAT (UK Advising and Tutoring) refers to the tutoring role as being ‘A purposeful personal relationship in which an advisor/tutor enables students to become autonomous, confident learners and engaged members of society. This ongoing and collaborative relationship connects students deeply to their institution, supporting them through their course and beyond (UKAT, 2020). This speaks to the national educational priority of supporting student success through a whole campus approach to wellbeing, which was theme under consideration at Ireland’s first national wellbeing conference for higher education, ‘Supporting Success through Wellbeing in Higher Education’, hosted by the Higher Education Authority (20 April 2023).

Rationale for the Initiative

This initiative was developed in response to staff members who sought specific training and professional development in the area of tutor training. Faculty within SETU often take on the role of class tutor, which represents a first point of contact for the student. However, in recent years, no formalised professional development in this area, had taken place.

To address this, a series of departmental Tutor Training sessions were rolled out to support staff, as part of a pilot within the academic year 2022-2023. These were developed, coordinated and facilitated by the University’s Teaching and Learning Centre. The sessions set out to explore the current practices in relation to tutoring and to review departmental approaches, whilst exploring some of the issues, challenges and opportunities that the role of tutor presents. The session also signposted University sources of support for staff and learners. Additionally, each session comprised a needs assessment so that future professional development activities in the area of tutoring could be appropriately designed and implemented.

Impact

The impact of these collaborative workshops was significant in improved the overall learning experience through supporting staff. In this way, it allowed colleagues to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of the role of tutor and its attendant responsibilities and clarified for them ways in which they could better support the learner. As a result of the sessions, tutors from across departments engaged in more student conversations around support in addition to organising student-faced events and initiatives, thereby creating a supportive, collaborative learning environment for all. This had the result of students developing a greater sense of belonging and of partaking in extra-curricular activities which were organised by the tutors, which led to a deeper sense of engagement on behalf of students. Faculty were also encouraged across departments to develop their own 'Tutor Charter', in collaboration with their students, so as to understand what their students required in terms of support. In some cases, this was oriented towards academic support, whilst in other situations it centred on social and pastoral support. In this way, the range of University's support systems was communicated to the learner in a supportive and open way, ensuring that learners felt part of the University and knew what to do in case they required additional supports. As a result of this, students felt more empowered in their own learning and were able to be better supported both personally and professionally.

Colleagues were also encouraged to develop frameworks for tutoring within their own departments, as a way of empowering them to shape the role. Some suggestions included the development of vertical-tutoring, in which tutors from later stages of the programme engaged with those involved with earlier years, with the aim of sharing some of the challenges that students were encountering. This led to more targeted support for those in the early years of the programme and addressed some concerns around retention.

Future Directions

In terms of future directions, it would be envisaged to design and develop a University-wide framework for tutoring, and to implement structured professional development for tutors across SETU, with the aim of supporting all students to achieve their personal and academic aspirations and to enhance the learner experience for everyone.

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Case Study for TEAM Entrepreneurship

TEAM Academy: engaging with open education while nurturing entrepreneurial expression

Overview

TEAM Academy is a collaborative approach to entrepreneurship education, originating in Finland in early 1990s. SETU TEAM Academy is focused on post graduate engagement, capturing their individual ambition, and nurturing a collaborative approach to problem solving and societal impact.

TEAM Academy recognises entrepreneurs as “individuals with an enterprising mind-set, who express themselves as artists supported by science, sustained by values and value, and motivated to make a difference and offer sincere intervention and impact towards societal *storms*”.

TEAM Academy principles have been piloted with 120 students on the Carlow Campus since 2020, the process is sufficiently refined to be scaled using a combination of digitalisation and selective in person engagement and international collaboration. The inaugural TEAM Academy “June School” is being hosted in 2023, a multi-disciplinary group of postgraduate students will be hosted and coached to support their individual ambition and career aspirations.

TEAM Academy will host a monthly webinar called “insights”, these webinars will capture opinion and expression from an entrepreneurial mind-set, opinion which will be collected from a range of national and international impactful individuals.

TEAM Academy has five core objectives:

- Engage with individual post graduate ambition, and support collaborative engagement.
- Access International opinion and entrepreneurial expression.
- Explore, discuss and where possible develop meaningful societal impact.
- Promote open and networked knowledge exchange.
- Active entrepreneur engagement will offer wisdom and experience to support real-time post graduate interaction.

Rationale for the Initiative

Developing an Entrepreneurial capacity and competency at an individual level is nurtured throughout the European Union using the ‘[EntreComp Framework](#)’ as a platform on which to engage and build an entrepreneurial mind-set, as a life skill.

While the intention of policy can be created at a hierarchical level, the engagement with practice must be nurtured, explored, and expressed at a “local” level. TEAM Academy is a framework to capture and practice an entrepreneurial mind-set for meaningful impact and organisational expansion through international engagement. Building entrepreneurial capacity at an individual level will cause a ripple effect which influences individual and organisational growth to “pollinate” a vibrant regional socio-economic ecosystem.

Impact and Future Directions

TEAM Academy will support a partway for postgraduate students to explore their ambition in association with “live” industry and entrepreneurial environments. TEAM Academy will contribute to an overall SETU entrepreneurial environment using open education as a catalyst for wider engagement, internally and externally opening participation both from a postgraduate and staff perspective. It will offer an internationally networked environment for individuals to connect and collaborate to solve common challenges and access career opportunities, thereby supporting them to develop decision-making and solution-finding skills.

TEAM Academy is using an entrepreneurially minded digital strategy to engage with the regional socio-economic ecosystem, building a community of common purpose, self-directed learning and international expression