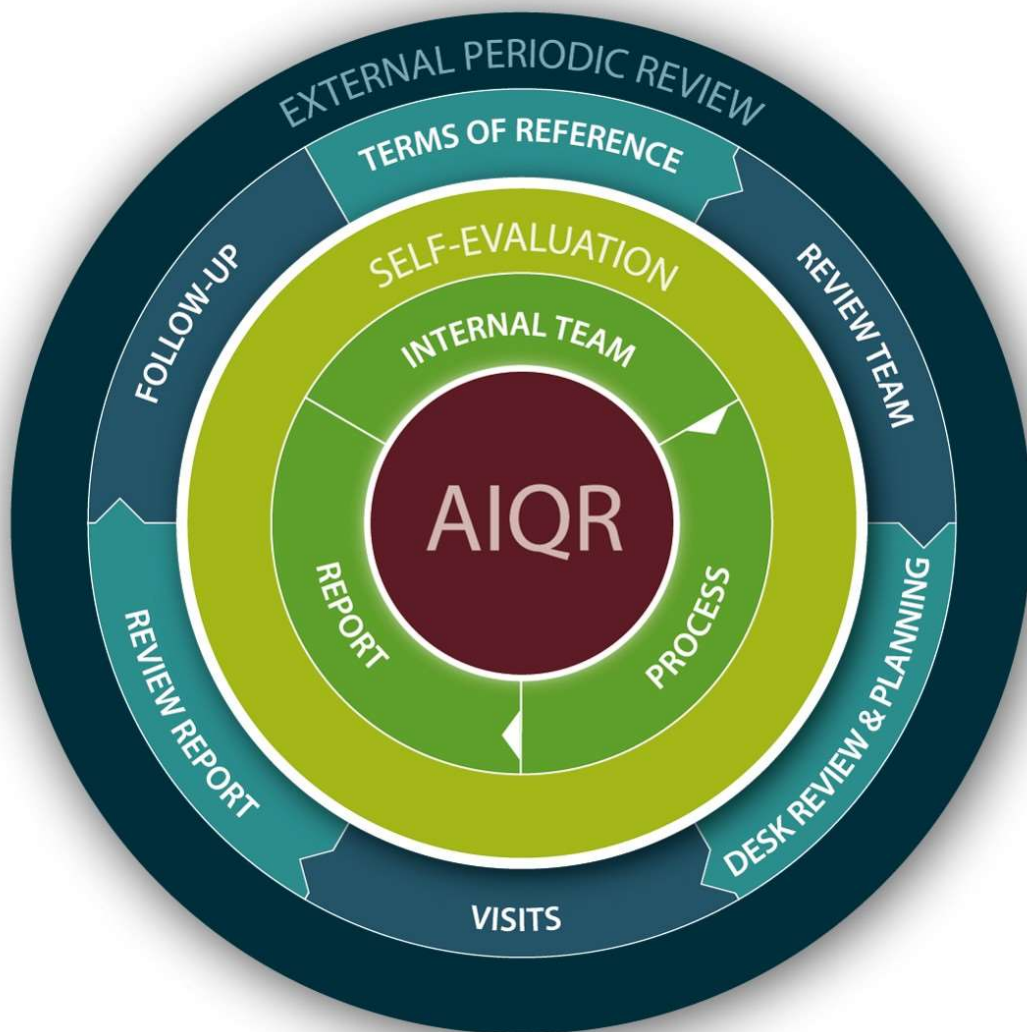


# Dundalk Institute of Technology

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2020

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019



The Cyclical Review Process

## Part 1

# Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

## Overarching institution-level approach and policy for QA (ESG 1.1)

### 1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

Founded in 1971, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is an autonomous Institute, established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992. DkIT has ensured a central role for quality assurance and enhancement in its Strategic Plan 2017-19, which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in underpinning strategic objectives and continuing to enhance DkIT's reputation.

DkIT is strategically positioned mid-way along the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, on the border with Northern Ireland. Within a 90 minute drive time from the campus there resides an estimated population of 3.29 million, which in 2011, accounted for approximately 52% of the population of the entire island (*A socio-economic profile of the DkIT catchment, AIRO, 2012*). This presents unique challenges and opportunities for the Institute economically, socially and culturally.

The demographic profile of DkIT's regional catchment area shows educational attainment to degree level among the population in a number of counties to be at low levels when compared to the State average of 16.4% (*A socio-economic profile of the DkIT catchment, AIRO, 2012*). While unemployment in the region has decreased, the labour force participation rate for the Border region is the lowest in Ireland at 56.5% (*Regional Skills Bulletin, 2016*). Deprivation indices indicate some of the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland are located in this region. Additionally, the region encompasses rural and urban communities.

DkIT was founded in 1970 and recruits 89% of its learners from the region. As the leading Higher Education Institution in the North-East, DkIT is a major contributor to the educational, economic, social, and cultural development of the region. With circa 5,200 learners, 500 staff and an impressive 90 acre campus and the recent addition of state-of-the-art sports facilities, the Institute is a vibrant learning community.

Through its excellence in learning and teaching, research and engagement, the Institute continues to be a transformational force.

To date, the Institute, through the Strategic Plan, has put particular emphasis on ensuring that the Institute differentiates itself within the sector in a sustainable manner by:

- Strategically positioning itself within the national HE landscape;
- Placing the learner at the centre of its strategy with a particular focus on flexible and lifelong learning provision, while continuing to deliver on its existing provision across all disciplines;
- Growing STEM provision;

- Enhancing the regional agenda and becoming the first port of call for employers and the community to support regional development with accredited and higher level CPD and training;
- Branding and marketing itself as an agile, innovative and responsive Institute.

A core focus in the heart of the DkIT 2017-19 Strategic Plan is on learners. DkIT will continue to facilitate meaningful learner engagement and work with learners as partners. DkIT will provide learners with both discipline-specific and employability skills required for the working world. In particular the Institute will have a clear focus on attracting and supporting a more diverse range of learners. This will require on-going innovation in curriculum development, delivery and assessment. This will be reflected, for example, in the development of common entry level programmes to support the transitions agenda from Further Education (FE) to Higher Education (HE). It therefore requires a holistic and integrated approach to learning and teaching, research and engagement within a flexible, adaptive and responsive organisational structure.

See: <https://www.dkit.ie/presidents-office/documents-policies>

DKIT has carried out an exercise in **Programmatic Portfolio Planning** for the period 2018 to 2028. The portfolio strategy supports the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career-oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise. The consultation process will guide the Institute towards the development of a set of prioritised actions in the context of ensuring programme design and delivery is relevant to market needs. The competitive position both nationally and internationally will be established and opportunities for clustering will be recognised as we move forward.

We are working towards ensuring existing programmes are relevant in meeting the needs of business and society and developing and delivering programmes, directly and in collaboration with relevant sectoral partners, to meet specific industry and professional needs.

The overall objective is to work towards developing and aligning a suite of programmes in DkIT that is relevant to future needs while simultaneously supporting a distinctive practice-based, research-informed learner experience.

## 2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

A brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora

**The Academic Council** at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amendments. The Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality. The President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar are respectively, Chairperson and Secretary of the Academic Council. Academic Council approves action plans following reviews and these plans are then assigned to relevant academic and administrative/service areas for operationalisation.

The membership of Academic Council consists of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership currently standing at 54. See the Constitution of the Academic Council at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/academic-council>

Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings. Where urgent matters arise, these are brought to the attention of the Governing Body by way of a special motion to facilitate Governing Body approval prior to the formal adoption of the minutes.

The Academic Council has the following sub-committees:

1. Standing Committee;
2. Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee;
3. Academic Quality Sub-Committee;
4. Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee;
5. Research Sub-Committee;
6. Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) (see Section 13)

All of the above sub-committees contribute to the development of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures at Institute level. In addition to Sub-committees of Academic Council, working groups are regularly established to scope out best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies (and/procedures). This practice ensures that quality assurance and enhancement is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute.

DkIT continues to strengthen its strategic alliance with Dublin City University (DCU) through the further development of the DCU-DKIT Graduate School. During 2015/16 the Terms of Reference for the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) were changed to increase the membership from Academic Schools, with a view to facilitating cross departmental learning and collective experience. The composition of the committee is now in line with the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB). Both DCU and DkIT also have representatives on the other Institution's GRSB. The sharing of best practice with DCU has served to enhance research quality assurance at DkIT. This has also involved further development of the institute's postgraduate research degree regulations in line with those at DCU and taking into account external developments in terms of national policy development.

Details can be found at <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgraduate-students-registered-dcu-awards>

The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of these quality policies rests ultimately with the Leadership Team and falls particularly within the remit of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The Leadership Team ensures that activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken.

At School and Departmental level, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring quality policies and procedures.

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

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

In 2017/18 DkIT continued to ensure that Quality Assurance and Enhancement was firmly embedded within the day to day aspects of work at the Institute to ensure that a quality culture underpins all of its activities. All staff within the Institute contribute to the culture of quality and there is acceptance that this is a ‘continual process’ as new challenges and new ways of educating students and developing faculty and staff continue to be central to the work of the Institute. The publication of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in 2015 supported this premise and provided support for the important roles of external stakeholders in addition to internal stakeholders. The role of higher education within society and as a platform for development is elucidated which is useful in the regional and national remit of Institutes of Technology (IoT).

## Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

### 1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

DkIT has two separate policies on programme approval and programme monitoring, to reflect the distinctness of these elements within the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 2015. The two policies are as follows:

1. Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes
2. Policy on the Annual Monitoring of Programmes

See <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approvalprogrammes>  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy>

As DkIT has placed strategic importance on the development of part-time programmes, the Registrar's Office developed guidelines on the development of part-time Programmes. These guidelines provided extensive support on the generation of new programme offerings through the utilisation of appropriate existing modules. The guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approvalprogrammes>

Policies and criteria for review of programmes for the 2018/19 School Programmatic Reviews were agreed by Academic Council in 2017 and can be viewed at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/programmatic-review-handbook>

## **2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

Programme validation documentation is required to present a teaching and learning strategy and an assessment strategy. This ensures that assessment is student-centred and presented within the programme in a manageable way to ensure learners are equipped to competently succeed within their programme of study with adequate time allowed for assessment preparation. Associated statistics on student progression within programmes are also reviewed annually and barriers to progression are discussed at programme level by Programme Boards.

A Group-work framework and guidelines were developed by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) in 2016 and the effectiveness of these guidelines and associated supports is constantly under review. The Group-work Framework and Guidelines can be found at: [https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork\\_framework\\_guidelines\\_2016.pdf](https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework_guidelines_2016.pdf)

The Assessment and Learning policy was completely reviewed in 2016 to establish five principles which are the basis for all student assessment at DkIT. The Institute's Policy on Assessment and Learning 2017 can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/assessment-learning>

A working group was set up by Academic Council in mid-2017 to develop a policy on Student Retention. As this work evolved, the working group decided to develop a Student Success Strategy. The development of this strategy is in line with the recommendation in the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Higher Education System Performance Framework (2018-2020) (<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/managing-performance/system-performance-framework/>) that HEIs put in place an Institute wide Student Success Strategy which embeds 'whole of HEI' approaches to student access and completion. The aim of the strategy is to develop a holistic, student-centred approach across all dimensions of the student experience to foster measurable improvements in: Retention, progression and completion rates, Student achievements, Student engagement and Graduate outcomes. The strategy can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/student-success-strategy>.

### 3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

At DkIT research students can achieve a QQI award if registered prior to September, 2014 and they are governed by separate policies and procedures from students who registered post September 2014.

For students who are submitting for QQI Research Awards, see: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgraduate-students-registered-qqi-awards>.

Since September 2014, registered postgraduate research students are studying for DCU awards through the DCU/DkIT Graduate School. The regulations applying to these latter awards are aligned to DCU regulations for postgraduate research awards. These regulations are regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with DCU regulations. XXXX

At present 95% of all registered postgraduate research students will receive a DCU award and are registered through the joint DCU/DkIT Graduate School. In terms of the development of structured PhD provision, the DkIT Graduate Studies Office in collaboration with the academic schools and the Graduate Research Studies Office in Dublin City University (DCU), are currently developing a suite of discipline and generic skills modules which will allow all of the Institute's postgraduate cohort to attain structured accredited training during their postgraduate research studies. A themed approach has been adopted for the development of these structured awards tied to the research areas of strength within the Institute.

In line with QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines published in July 2016, DkIT ensures an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its research activities and has a very successful track record in relevant metrics and peer review, especially in terms of research funding secured and the number and associated citations of peer reviewed publications. In addition, discipline specific outputs in non-STEM research areas are on the increase since the establishment of a Creative Arts Research Centre.

The research strategy of the institute (2017-2019) is founded upon three strategic imperatives, associated actions and a set of key performance indicators. Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to driving research excellence in a number of prioritised areas including Health, Ageing and ICT, Energy and the Environment and the Creative Arts. A crucial strategic objective is to ensure that learning and teaching on taught programmes remains research informed. This aligns with the overall vision of preparing learners for the working environment whereby learners are informed of the latest thinking and innovation within their discipline area and its application to the real world. To achieve this, DkIT must encourage and empower its staff to excel in their discipline area through engaging in research. In this way staff, are not only engaged in new discovery but also work directly with industry in applying new technologies and innovations with real world impact. In addition, the Institute will seek to increase the number of staff with PhDs through its learning and teaching supports and its recruitment strategy. DkIT's Research Strategy has been aligned to the Institute three year Strategic Plan launched in 2017.

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

DkIT continues to build its research supervision capacity through staff development to PhD qualification level. Standing at 34% DkIT exceeded the sectoral average of the proportion of full-time academic staff with NFQ Level 10 qualifications in 2016/2017. This figure stands at nearly 45%. In 2019 with the completion of doctoral studies by further staff across the schools. In addition, the Institute was the first across the sector to roll out the national pilot programme in research supervisory development and professional training. To date in excess of 85 academic members of staff have completed this formal research training programme.

The primary benchmark employed for measuring the impact of the Institute's research was the Scopus database (<https://www.scopus.com>). The institute is still ranked 4th in the sector in terms of total citations.

Information on the DkIT Graduate Studies Office can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/research/>

#### 4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

DkIT aims to provide an efficient and student-friendly service on a range of matters from Admission through to Conferring and Transcripts Provision. A range of policies apply to these areas:

For **Admissions Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policies-and-Guidelines/Admissions/DkIT-Admissions-Policy.pdf>

<https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration>

For **Transfer and Progression Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/transfer-progression-policy>

For **Recognition of Prior Learning Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/recognition-prior-learning-rplpolicy-practice>

For **Equal Access and Participation Policy** see:

[https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Access\\_Policy\\_v2.pdf](https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Access_Policy_v2.pdf)



For **Student Supports** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit>

In order to extend the range of supports provided by DKIT to students with particular needs, the Academic Council adopted the Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the granting of reasonable accommodations in examinations to learners with disabilities. Also, DKIT are now participating in the DARE scheme (<https://accesscollege.ie/dare/>) in relation to access. See <https://www.dkit.ie/staff-portal/disability-office>

For **Child Protection Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/child-protection-policy>

For **Children on Campus Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/policies/Children%20on%20Campus%20Policy.27May2015.pdf>

For **Social Networking Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/communicating-online-use-socialnetworking-sites-policy>

For the **Research Ethics Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/ethics-policy>

For the **Academic Integrity Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-integrity-policyprocedures>

The procedure incorporates a penalty grid to improve consistency of penalties across academic schools.

For the **Examinations and Assessment Policy** and Procedure, see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/documents-policies/examinations-policy>

For the **Student Voice Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/student-voice-policy>

For **Exit Awards Policy** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/exit-awards-policy>

For **Conferring** see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/study/awards-office/graduation.html>

### **5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has adopted a learner-centred approach to its educational provision, aimed at enhancing the student learner experience and supporting learners through the adoption of innovative learning and teaching strategies. See the Institute's Strategic Plan (2017-2019) at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/dkit-strategic-plan.html>.

Recruitment and training of staff, including teaching staff, is managed through DkIT's Human Resources Department (<https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource>). Teaching staff are recruited in line with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992, Section 11 (1) (b). Additional detailed information is given to Selection Boards on Conflict of Interest and detailed Selection Procedures for Institute and Appointment Process of Staff following Selection Board. All managers are routinely updated on these procedures and their adherence to (a) The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004; (b) The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 and as amended and (c) The Protection of Employee (Fixed Term) Act, 2003.

The Institute is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and actively promotes continuous professional development (CPD) in this regard. The Institute through the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT) offers a Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching and to date.

DkIT is committed to ensuring that learning and teaching remain research informed. Staff associated with the Institute's Research Centres teach on undergraduate programmes, supervise postgraduate students and engage with undergraduate research projects ensuring they are at the forefront of their field of knowledge. Standing at 44% DkIT exceeds the sectoral average of the proportion of full-time academic staff with a NFQ Level 10 qualification in 2019 (up to the reporting period in August 2019). This supports the strategic goal of achieving academic and research excellence.

### **6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning is a constantly evolving activity at DkIT supported by the Institute's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). CELT provides online and face-to-face learning and teaching advice and supports for staff and students. See <https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching>

DkIT continues to prioritize continuing professional development (CPD) for teaching staff. Master Classes and Professional Development events in Learning and Teaching are organised each semester in the academic year.

Learning and Teaching enhancement activity in 2018/19 was focused on assessment, feedback, professional development of staff and preparation for Programmatic Reviews. Considerable work has been undertaken to enhance assessment across the institute. This work emphasises 'assessment for learning' and the importance of a programmatic approach to assessment.

DkIT has been/is a lead or partner in a number of National Forum funded enhancement projects concerned with enhancement of assessment and feedback. The projects have focused primarily on the use of technology in enhancing transition and student assessment. The outcomes of these projects are now both informing policy and enhancing practice. This is evident in the Assessment and Learning Policy ([https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/assessment\\_learning\\_policy\\_23-05-17.pdf](https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/assessment_learning_policy_23-05-17.pdf)). This policy emphasises the importance of programmatic approaches to assessment and considerable work has been undertaken in promoting and supporting this.

A notable development in this area is the DkIT Framework for Assessed Group Work [https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork\\_framework\\_guidelines\\_2016.pdf](https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework_guidelines_2016.pdf), approved by Academic Council in December 2016. It was developed in response to student feedback and is informed by significant consultation. It has been recognised as an example of good practice and features as a case study on leading change in assessment in the National Forum's resource on programme approaches to assessment <http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Final-Programme-Assessment-Resource-with-doi-and-author-290617-1.pdf>. Funding, under the National Forum's 2017/18 seminar Series, was also granted for a workshop exploring how to implement this framework <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/t-l-scholarship/national-seminar-series/national-seminar-series-20172018-list> and it was also be presented to the SEDA Spring Assessment Conference 2018. The implementation of this framework was evaluated during 2017/18 and a proposal to report this to the journal *Higher Education Pedagogies, Special Issue on Transforming Assessment* has been accepted.

DkIT has a long standing commitment to the professional development of staff in learning and teaching. The impact of the accredited Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching has been recognised nationally.

DkIT was awarded funding under the National Forum's 2016 Enhancement fund for two projects concerned with applying the PDF. L2L, led by DkIT, is exploring professional development in learning and teaching for librarians who teach: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/l2l-librarians-learning-to-support-learners-learning/>.

The ATLAS project, <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/atlas-aligning-teaching-and-learning-across-the-technological-sector>, is concerned with mapping and aligning existing accredited provision, including the Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching, to the PDF framework. Two DkIT staff members were partially seconded to the National Forum to work on implementing pilots to test the PDF <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/national-professional-development-framework-for-all-staff-who-teach-in-higher-education/> and their experience will inform future development.

Two applications (School of Health and Science and Department of Hospitality) from DkIT to the National Forum's DELTA awards <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/awards/delta-awards/> were successful in getting to the second stage and the Department of Hospitality were successful in achieving the DELTA award.

The Institute's Policy on Assessment and Learning may be found at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/assessment-learning>

### **7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

To the best of its resourcing ability, DkIT seeks to ensure that learning environments and resources are suitable for both individual and group learning and that learners have access to resources for effective study and to resources which increase educational opportunity. Full details of resources and supports are provided to students at induction when they first arrive to study at DkIT. Institute Open Days also inform prospective students of the supportive learning environment they will experience. Supporting learning is continually reviewed and upgraded despite budgetary constraints because it is seen as the central aspect of the functions of the Institute. Robust feedback channels are in operation to ensure that any deficiencies in service to learners are brought to the attention of the relevant manager in a timely manner. DkIT provides supports to students in line with section 7 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016).

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

- Purchasing, collecting and categorisation of resources in various formats, for which a suite of search options is provided;
- Making material available to borrow for varying amounts of time;
- Providing areas for study;
- Helping learners find resources through the Library Information Desk or Library Subject Support Team;
- Offering Information Literacy training;
- Developing online library guides;
- Providing guidance on how to avoid plagiarism by referencing. The library also offer an introduction to the Mendeley Reference Manager.

Many of these supports are available on line to ensure learners can avail of what they need out of hours. Extensive databases are made available to learners to again support out of hours learning and revision in preparation for examinations. The library extends its opening hours in the two weeks before examination sessions to again support learners and also ensures that core text books can only be borrowed for shorter periods, ensuring maximum sharing of resources. See: <https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-library/support/support-learning>

Additional study support for numeracy and literacy and ICT is provided by the Student Academic Support Services. See: <https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit/student-academic-support-services>. The Institute also provides access to a variety of student supports to promote and

support learning and ensure student wellbeing. Information on student supports can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit>.

The procedure for programme-based funding is managed at a School level. Heads of School currently manage non-pay budgets within their areas and allocate funding on a per programme basis. This model of support, agreed at the Leadership Team, ensures that learners on every programme within the Institute can avail of the relevant resources to underpin their programme of learning (including specialist training days, site visits, learning support materials (e.g. on-line logins for specialist activities), software licences for programme-specific software (e.g. SAGE for Accounting Students).

The Institute strives to maintain its position among the top three performing IoTs within the sector in terms of research funding. It is as a direct result of this funding that the Institute can successfully deliver its strategic research objectives aimed at meeting its three year vision. The Institute currently has strong research collaborations with its counterparts in Northern Ireland and Scotland through its engagement in the EU INTERREG Programmes.

DkIT is committed to driving research excellence in a number of prioritised areas to include Health, Ageing and ICT, Energy and the Environment and the Creative Arts. The formation of these “Research Clusters” has come about through an internal strategic prioritisation exercise and is in line with the National Research Prioritisation exercise and the ambitions set out in Innovation 2020. The strategic development and support of the research agenda at DkIT is led by the Head of Research and supported through the Graduate Studies Office. The supports and resources available to all staff across the institute include:

- Suite of internal support funding schemes;
- Suite of targeted training programmes for staff, career researchers and postgraduate students;
- Advice and guidance on research proposal writing;
- Career framework development for all career researchers;
- Support and guidance to all postgraduate researchers during the lifecycle of their degree;
- Suite of research related policies and procedures governing research.

The Graduate Studies Office offers a number of supports to emerging and established researchers and information relating to activities, initiatives and supports can be found at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-support>  
<https://www.dkit.ie/research>

## **8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

Dundalk Institute of Technology has published a set of IT Policy documents to provide advice and direction to its user base in the use of, and the management and delivery of IT systems and services that hold information and data relating to the business of the Institute. These policies have been prepared to advise users on the various governance aspects of using the Institute’s IT services and the effective operation and delivery of such IT services. See: <https://www.dkit.ie/computer-services/policies-procedures>

DkIT utilises a number of software systems which support education provision including:

- Banner (student management system);
- Akari Document and Publish (Curriculum Management and Publishing);
- Digitary CORE (European Diploma Supplement);
- Core (Human Resources);
- Agresso (Finance);
- Koha (Library).

The management of information within the Institute is shared across a number of databases, systems and via the DkIT website.

- Data on student registration, progression, awards and withdrawal is held on Banner.
- Student feedback is collected, analysed and published using the EvaSys surveying tool (See: <http://www.evasys.co.uk>). Student experience feedback is also collected using StudentSurvey.ie (formerly the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)).
- Curriculum information is provided using Akari Document (design and development) and Publish (courses.dkit.ie). See <http://www.akarisoftware.com/>.
- At student registration, the Institute carries out the Equal Access Survey on the socio-economic, ethnic/cultural and disability background of new entrants on behalf of the HEA. This information provides for the funding of services and support for students. It also supports the HEA and institutions in fulfilling their core equality functions as set out in legislation.
- Each year the Careers and Employability Office surveys graduates using the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey (<https://hea.ie/statistics/information-for-institutions/graduate-outcomes-survey/>). This provides the Institute with information on graduate employment and further training.

Management of DkIT's website is the responsibility of the Marketing and Communications Office who work closely with IT Services. <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/marketing-and-communications-office/>

Obligations under Data Protection legislation are regularly updated and notified to all internal users to ensure compliance with requirements. This is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 8.7.

At Institute Leadership level in 2018/19 work continues to strengthen the user-friendliness of data outputs for executive decision making. This will be an ongoing focus underpinned initially by the appointment of a Data Officer but in tandem with realignment of IT systems to ensure current and robust data searches are easily undertaken. It is proposed to provide, in time, synchronized data to all levels of Institute management to that there is a greater awareness of key metrics within the Institute.

For research, the institute employs a research management system ([https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s\\_Login.jsp](https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp)). The primary roles of this system are as follows:

- Tracks all research related proposals from development through to post award.
- Tracks the progress of each postgraduate research student through their online annual progress monitoring.
- Embeds the research track records of active researchers.

### 9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

**Programme Boards** monitor programme delivery. Programme Boards:

- are focused on critical self-reflection;
- make decisions based on the facts derived from the operation of the programme in the preceding period, including quantitative data relating to, for example, student recruitment and performance;
- identify issues which have been critical in the delivery of the programme that year, in particular any operational issues which are significant and/or unresolved;
- show how any issues raised by external examiners or by other external bodies have been addressed;
- identify mechanisms by which student feedback has been gathered, addressed; and communicated back to students (or if not addressed, the reason why); contain student representatives within their membership
- facilitate input from external stakeholders/employers etc., as appropriate
- report on the outcome of actions undertaken as a result of previous reports;
- provide an action plan for the future, as appropriate.

See <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy>

The Institute also works with **External Examiners** to quality assure all forms of assessment. For the DkIT policy on External Examiners, see:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/external-examiners-duties-procedures>

**Programmatic review** is a quinquennial quality review process which gives the Academic Schools an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation and review of their programmes. Such review is a core statutory obligation for the Institute under Section 28(2) of the Qualifications, Education and Training Act. It is intended to be a positive, supportive and open process and results in the production of a five year plan for the School and should align with the Institute's Strategic plan.

The self-evaluation process, with inputs from experts and stakeholders (internal and external), involves the production of a self-study report (SER). The self-evaluation comprises a critical evaluation of all aspects of each programme being reviewed – its strategy, learning outcomes, modules, assessment, resources etc. in keeping with current best practice. Review of the SER by external peers results in a Programmatic Review Report which includes a set of conditions and/or recommendations. The School provides a response to this report and both the report and the response are published on the Institute website.

The Institute also undergoes cyclical **Institutional Review** by QQI. The most recent Institutional Review took place between 2017-2019 and the final report (and associated documentation was published in

June 2019 (<https://www.qqi.ie/Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx>) .

Programme validation reports, Programmatic Review reports and Institutional Review Reports are available at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement>

In 2018 the Institute undertook a Programmatic Portfolio Planning exercise which was designed to support the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise. This consultative process explored national and societal needs and shaped DkIT's programmatic planning and future portfolios. The outcomes of the portfolio planning exercise also informed the School Programmatic Reviews which took place during 2018/19 and were completed in June 2019.

Internal self-monitoring of learner satisfaction is moving increasingly towards the use StudentSurvey.ie reports (previously the Irish Survey of Student Engagement). While response rates vary annually, this survey is seen as an important benchmarking tool for DkIT to gain insight into learner feedback on a comparative basis. It is important to note that through concerted efforts on the part of the Institute, participation rates increased from 13% in 2016 to 38% in 2017, 32% in 2018 and 30% in 2019. Feedback from ISSE surveys is presented at Academic Council and recommendations for enhancement are agreed at this level where the academic community can debate and support each other in these efforts. From time to time external experts in specific aspects of education provision are invited to present to Academic Council to ensure knowledge of best practice is continually enhanced. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 11.2.

For the research agenda there are several key elements in self-evaluation and monitoring the institute's research performance, these include but are not limited to:

- Research Centre annual reports;
- Research centre and group designation processes;
- Establishment of research cluster governance structures centred around the prioritised research themes;
- Intellectual Property and research committees;
- Research centre review committees;
- Benchmarking of research dissemination through employment of the SCOPUS database;
- On line surveys to researchers and postgraduate students with respect to training.



## 10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

**Engagement with stakeholders** is a central part of DkIT's Strategy. Such engagement is integral to ongoing programme development and delivery. Each School has an Industry Advisory Board which meets annually (and as required) to exchange information and to feed into the curriculum. Industry and Community Stakeholders/Practitioners are always consulted when programmes are being developed and it is a requirement that an industry representative/practitioner sits on validation panels and programmatic review panels. See the Institute Policy on Programme Design and Approval at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes>

The DkIT Careers and Employability Centre (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/>) coordinates the work placements of over 900 students per year within academic programmes in the Schools of Business and Humanities, Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts and Engineering. Work placement is a partnership between the student, the host organisation and the Institute. The Placement Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/placement-office.html>) is the central point of contact for each of these parties in relation to the preparation, logistics, administration, management and on-going development of work placement.

Policies and procedures relating to placement (code of conduct and terms and conditions (approved by Academic Council in May 2016)) can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/careers-and-employability-resources-and-policies.html>, .

Guest speakers enhance student learning. The Institute leverages off its strong engagement with industry through the hosting of its Industry Day and Careers Fair on campus. This provides opportunities for industry to meet with students and potential graduate recruits and for academics to meet with industry to discuss future skills needs and thus provide an additional avenue to feed into programme development. The academic schools at DkIT are increasingly engaging with Industry and Community organisations in the execution of 'live' student projects.

Similarly the value of tangible links to industry is also reflected in the makeup of interview panels for academic recruitment. Contemporary knowledge in the subject field is tested by industry experts to ensure learners are facilitated in their learning by suitably qualified and experienced academic faculty members.

The Regional Development Centre (RDC) at Dundalk Institute of Technology acting as the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industrial, commercial and business life of the region has been an engine for regional economic growth and development since 1989. See: <https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business.html>. During 2018, the RDC had an average occupancy rate of 96%. Client satisfaction surveys are conducted annually at the RDC. For 2018, survey results were very positive with the RDC rated 94.7% average across all categories.

The RDC continues to utilise our in-house entrepreneur support programme called the “Ideas Foundry” which is based on “So what? who cares? why you?®” - a proven, systematic methodology to explore the value proposition for business ideas. The methodology is based on more than 20 years of academic and entrepreneurial expertise; and is used by researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs and organisations across 17 countries - including use as a proposal assessment tool by the European Space Agency. This methodology can be tailored for one-to-one or group workshops and has been used most recently in a group format in conjunction with the Creative Spark Community Enterprise Centre.

The primary enterprise development programme offered by the RDC is however Enterprise Ireland’s New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (NFP) which supports up to 60 regional entrepreneurs on a Phase 1 annually and 13-14 entrepreneurs on its Phase 2 annually. The RDC supported 45 entrepreneurs/start-ups during 2018 and 29 student entrepreneurs. These included regional ‘spin-in’ entrepreneurs from across the North East region via the Enterprise Ireland funded New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme, general incubation clients from the region and our spinout companies from research incubating with us, and our collaboration with Creative Spark “virtual incubation” programme.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has been identified as a leading exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship in higher education both Nationally and Internationally. In 2017 the collaborative approach of the Regional Development Centre and School of Engineering to delivering on the Level 8 Engineering Entrepreneurship degree resulted in a significant acknowledgement being awarded National Winner of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards in the category of “Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills”. A number of graduates from this programme have gone on to win national entrepreneurship awards and are regular recipients of the DkIT annual Presidents Award for Entrepreneurial Student of the Year.

In 2017, DKIT staff members from the Regional Development Centre, the Life Long Learning Centre and the School of Business and Humanities were founding members of the “North East Lean Network”. DKIT representation also allows DkIT to be represented in shaping how the network evolves over the coming years and gives us the opportunity to promote DKIT offerings such as the Lean Six Sigma programme to its membership. The formation of this network is a significant initiative and lines up with a national drive for business operations excellence across the country, heavily endorsed by the state agencies Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Local Enterprise Offices.

In 2018 the RDC facilitated 24 Innovation Voucher engagements with industry and 6 Intertrade Ireland Fusion Project engagements with Industry. Two of the Fusion projects developed by School of Engineering staff in DkIT and supported by the Regional Development Centre have been awarded exemplar status by Intertrade Ireland. Of a total of five projects which received awards two of them were from DkIT.

### 11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (details of specific engagements should be provided in the online section of the form).

Dundalk Institute of Technology formed a strategic alliance with **Dublin City University (DCU)** in 2012. In 2014 the DCU-DKIT Graduate School was established and DCU became a linked provider of postgraduate research awards at DkIT. DkIT is also a partner with DCU in the DCU-led consortium under the national TTSI2 programme (Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative, Cycle 2).

DKIT is a member of the **Dublin Leinster II Cluster** (also known as the **MEND Cluster**) together with Dublin City University, Maynooth University and Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT). The Cluster has made considerable progress in implementing objectives agreed by the Cluster HEIs with the HEA. These objectives are designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and improve access and transition. They comprise a number of components, namely:

- Coherence of provision: the analytic and preparatory work required to enable a more co-ordinated provision, through mapping of existing provision, development of protocols for collaboration, and preparing for interoperable student records systems;
- Collaboration with Further Education: a network of FE providers, a regional 'one stop shop' portal, a comprehensive mapping of progression paths, and foundation courses to assist transition;
- Enhanced Student Learning Supports: enhanced supports for student learning and retention through increased resourcing and leveraging of complementary expertise across the cluster.

Following the very positive assessment by the Higher Education Authority which reported that *"the cluster has both achieved the minimum outcomes and has moved beyond that to deliver more ambitious outcomes"*, the MEND Cluster was considered a best practice exemplar for the sector.

DKIT is currently working towards or actively participating in a number of access initiatives which have been rolled out by MEND, including Path 2 and Path 3.

Dundalk Institute of Technology is a founder member of the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (**NEFHEA**) (<https://www.dkit.ie/north-east-further-higher-education-alliancenefhea>), which is a regional higher and further education initiative comprising higher and further education institutions in the North East. Other members include Drogheda Institute of Further Education, Monaghan Institute, Cavan Institute, O'Fiaich College, Dunboyne College of Further Education and Beaufort College. The Alliance were joined by the Southern Regional College (SRC), as part of a long term strategy to engage more intensively with collaborative partners in Northern Ireland.

Formed in 2007, NEFHEA is under-pinned by a Memorandum of Understanding. Members are committed to working together to enhance progression opportunities for students from further to higher education; to collaborating on course design and development in response to regional needs and to sharing expertise and resources. NEFHEA has particularly focussed on enabling more students from further education institutes to join DkIT academic programmes. In general these progression arrangements enable students from further education institutes who have successfully completed their programmes to join the second year of specific DkIT programmes.

## **12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

The Institute's Policy on Public Information can be found in *Section 3.8: Public Information* in the DkIT Quality Manual (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>)  
The current manual was approved by the Academic Council in June 2019.

## **13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.

DkIT has a linked provider agreement with Dublin City University (DCU) in relation to postgraduate research awards through the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.

Linked Providers are legally independent organisations who enter into formal arrangements with a designated awarding body, under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all of the prerequisites for an award by the designated awarding body. DCU considers that it has one relationship which constitutes that of a Linked Provider, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). DCU currently accredits all postgraduate research awards at NQF Levels 9 and 10 through the DCU-DkIT Graduate School (cross referenced with DCU's AIQR submission in 2019).

As a linked provider of DCU for postgraduate research awards, DCU takes the following approach in meeting the requirements meeting the requirements of the QQI Act (2012) and QQI Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies (2016).

### **Approval of the Quality Assurance Procedures of Linked Providers**

The 2015 'Linked Provider Schedule for Dublin City University and Dundalk Institute of Technology' agreed by both institutions contains detailed information on the agreed QA and procedures for operation of the programmes. As such, this signed agreement constitutes formal approval of the QA procedures by DCU for postgraduate research programmes delivered by DkIT.

### **Monitoring of Programmes**

Currently DkIT report annually on the implementation of postgraduate research programmes to the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB). Further, there is membership of the DkIT's Head of

Research as the DkIT representation on DCU Graduate Research Students Board, and the membership of the DCU Dean of Graduate Studies on the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB). DCU considers that this oversight meets the requirements for ongoing monitoring of postgraduate research programmes in the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.

#### **14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)**

Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

The Institute's Quality assurance Framework is designed to support the DkIT's authority delegated to it by QQI to make awards at NFQ levels 6 to 9 (taught provision). The Institute's policies and procedures can be found in the Quality Manual (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

The Institute has robust procedures in place for the approval of programmes, aligned to QQI's Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes, and for the assessment of learners, as laid down in the sectoral conventions and protocols documented in QQI Assessment and Standards, 2013. The Institute operates with due regard to the quality assurance approach to, and guidelines on, research degrees at NFQ level 9 as set out in the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under delegated authority from QQI (2015). It should be noted that DkIT's postgraduate research degrees are now awarded by DCU in a linked provider arrangement through the DCU-DkIT Graduate School (see Section 13). The Institute also has due regard for the quality assurance approach to, and guidelines on, making joint awards under the NFQ, as set out in the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards (2014) (see Section 15).

### 15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

DkIT has a number of collaborative partnerships which includes:

#### **Collaborative Provision:**

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

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

Higher Education provision with others is carried out in accordance with the institute policy on Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Awards, <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/collaborative-provision-transnational-provision-joint-awards>

#### **Articulation Agreements**

DkIT has articulation arrangements (with MoUs) with the following international partners: (to date 2017-2018).

- Langfang University China
- Shanxi Agricultural University China
- Wuhan Institute of Technology China
- Beijing Union University China
- TAR University College Malaysia
- Molloy College, New York

There are currently 77 Erasmus bilateral agreements in place with EU partner HEIs.

**16. Additional Notes**

Any additional notes can be entered here.

Not applicable for the reporting period.

**17. Internal Review Schedule**

The internal reviews schedule or cycle at the level of unit of review within the institution. The units of review can be: module; programme; department/school; service delivery unit; faculty. The cycle will usually run over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

Year	2017/18 and 2018/19
Areas/Units	<b>Institutional Review</b>
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	Final Report and Implementation Plan <a href="https://www.qqi.ie//Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx">https://www.qqi.ie//Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx</a>

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	<b>Programmatic Reviews:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School of Health and Science</li> <li>• School of Engineering</li> <li>• School of Informatics and Creative Arts</li> <li>• School of Business and Humanities</li> <li>• Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)</li> </ul>
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	Completed by June 2019

Year	2019/2020
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Areas/Units	Library
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	To be completed by June 2020

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	Research Institutes are due for their research centre designation
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications	To be completed by June 2020

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	HR Excellence in Research Award to be externally reviewed.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	To be completed by June 2020

Year	2020/2021
Areas/Units	<p>Student Services (provisionally will include):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access Office;</li> <li>• Chaplaincy Service;</li> <li>• Counselling Service;</li> <li>• Disability Service;</li> <li>• Health Service;</li> <li>• School Liaison;</li> <li>• Sports and Societies;</li> <li>• Careers and Employability.</li> </ul>
Number	8
Link(s) to Publications	Not complete



## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2022/23
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2013/24
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

## 18. Engagement with Third Parties

Details of engagement with third parties, including:

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies
2. Collaborative Provision
3. Articulation Agreements

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

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	10
Awarding Bodies	0
QA Bodies	2

Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Engineers Ireland ( <a href="https://www.engineersireland.ie/Professionals">https://www.engineersireland.ie/Professionals</a> )
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	All engineering programmes accredited
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	April 2018
Next Review Year	2022

Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) ( <a href="https://www.rics.org">https://www.rics.org</a> )
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science (Hons) Building Surveying
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	Oct 2017
Next Review Year	May 2020

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) ( <a href="https://www.scsi.ie/">https://www.scsi.ie/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Science (Hons) Building Surveying
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	Oct 2017
<b>Next Review Year</b>	May 2020

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Chartered institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) ( <a href="https://ciat.org.uk/">https://ciat.org.uk/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	Application to be made in 2021
<b>Next Review Year</b>	Not applicable

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) ( <a href="https://www.ciob.org/membership/grades">https://www.ciob.org/membership/grades</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	Application to be made in 2021
<b>Next Review Year</b>	Not applicable

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) ( <a href="https://vci.ie/">https://vci.ie/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	2015
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2020

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) ( <a href="https://www.nmbi.ie/Home">https://www.nmbi.ie/Home</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing (formerly Psychiatric Nursing)</li> <li>• Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing</li> <li>• Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing</li> <li>• Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery</li> <li>• Higher Diploma in Midwifery</li> </ul>
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	First quarter of 2018
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2023

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	CORU - Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals ( <a href="https://www.coru.ie/">https://www.coru.ie/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Social Care
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	2020
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2025

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) ( <a href="https://www.accaglobal.com/ie/en.html">https://www.accaglobal.com/ie/en.html</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Finance
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	2016/2017
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2021/2022

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Teaching Council ( <a href="https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/">https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Arts
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	Each student applies directly; not DkIT
<b>Next Review Year</b>	Not applicable

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	QA Body
<b>Name of Body:</b>	NSETS ( <a href="https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/">https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Youth Work
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	2014/2015
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2019/2020

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	QA Body
<b>Name of Body:</b>	Sports Ireland ( <a href="https://www.sportireland.ie">https://www.sportireland.ie</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport, Exercise with Enterprise</i>
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	2019/2020
<b>Next Review Year</b>	Not applicable

<b>Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):</b>	QA Body
<b>Name of Body:</b>	National Hygiene Partnership ( <a href="http://www.nhp.ie">http://www.nhp.ie</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	All Hospitality programmes
<b>Date of Accreditation or Last Review</b>	Not applicable

<b>Next Review Year</b>	Not applicable
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## Collaborative Provision

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
Joint Research Degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative Programmes	2
Franchise Programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

<b>First Collaborative Provision (Joint Research Degree or Joint/double/multiple awards or Collaborative Programmes or Franchise Programmes or Linked providers [DABs only]):</b>	Collaborative Programme
<b>Name of Body (bodies):</b>	Teagasc, Ballyhaise College, Co. Cavan ( <a href="https://www.teagasc.ie/education/teagasc-colleges/ballyhaise/">https://www.teagasc.ie/education/teagasc-colleges/ballyhaise/</a> )
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture</li> <li>• Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food</li> </ul>
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2019
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2024

<b>Second Collaborative Provision:</b>	Collaborative Programme
<b>Name of Body (bodies):</b>	Monaghan Institute ( <a href="https://monaghaninstitute.ie/">https://monaghaninstitute.ie/</a> ).
<b>Programme Tiles and Links to Publications</b>	<i>Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours)</i> - first 2 years of programme are delivered collaboratively.
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2019
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2024

<b>Second Collaborative Provision:</b>	Collaborative Programme
<b>Name of Body (bodies):</b>	Cork College of Commerce ( <a href="https://corkcollegeofcommerce.ie/">https://corkcollegeofcommerce.ie/</a> )
<b>Programme Tiles and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2019
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2024

### 3 Articulation Agreements

<b>Articulation Agreements - Total Number</b>	0
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## Parts 2-6

### Institution-led QA – Annual Information

Parts 2-6 are completed annually with information pertaining to the reporting period (i.e. the preceding academic year only).

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## Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

Part 2 provides information relating to institution-led quality assurance for the reporting period.

### Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

**1.1** The evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems in support of strategic objectives in the reporting period.

#### Changes to Academic Quality Governance

There were no substantial changes to the quality assurance and enhancement system (QAES) in the reporting period 2018/2019. The QAES continues to support the Institute's *AMBITION Planning Framework*.

The overall AMBITION is to set out a vision and plan for the Institute which evokes a sense of common purpose and determined resolve to build on the Institute's unique achievements and position the Institute as a force in the economic, social and cultural development of the distinctive region in which it serves. In recognising DkIT as a key driver of change and a major player in the development of the region, a core value is to foster and evoke "buy-in" and participation from all our internal and external stakeholders.

The overarching vision is for the Institute to deliver higher education level to meets the needs of the region its serves and to be recognised as a cross-border Higher Education Institute. The pre-condition for Institute Strategy is a vision for Higher Education for the region – one which provides for distribution and access to HE across the entire region in a collaborative and compelling way. There are a number of core principles underlying the AMIBITION framework:

1. **Serving our Region:** The Institute's region is a cross-border region encompassing the North Leinster-South Ulster region to include Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath, North Dublin, Armagh and Down, along the Belfast – Dublin Economic Corridor.
2. **Deepening our engagement in Northern Ireland:** The Institute aims to strengthen existing relationships and build new alliances with key partners in Northern Ireland.
3. **Building Strategic Partnerships:** This is key and the Institute will build on and leverage its existing alliances and harvest new ones.



4. Serving our Students: The Institute will retain its track record and expertise in improving the lives of students and their families through facilitated access to higher education.
5. Serving our Employers, Enterprise and Community: The Institute will retain and build on its track record and expertise in its engagement with employers, enterprise and community in the region.

While the Institute continues to deliver on its overall strategic goals in teaching and learning, research and engagement, the immediate “whole-of-the-organisation” strategic focus is on:

- Northern Ireland
- Part-time/Flexible Provision and Upskilling with industry.
- Implementation of the Findings of the Institutional and Programmatic Review Processes.

**Other noteworthy quality assurance activities in 2018-19 (see AIAR Part 1, Section 17. Internal Review Schedule and Part 6: Periodic Review):**

- Institutional Review
- Programmatic Review

## 1.2 Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

### Changes to Policies and Procedures

#### Quality Manual

The quality manual was revised extensively in the reporting period in order to improve its usability and accessibility. A revised manual was approved at Academic Council Meeting No 160 on 23rd November 2018. Dr Breda Brennan (Assistant Registrar) gave a presentation at Academic Council Meeting No 161 on 1st February 2019. The final revised manual was approved at Academic Council Meeting No 163 on the 17th May 2019. The Quality Manual can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>

#### External Examiners Duties and Procedures

The revised policy and procedures were approved at Academic Council Meeting No 160, 23rd November 2018 and can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>

#### Student Success Strategy

The strategy was developed following the recommendation in the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Higher Education System Performance Framework (2018-2020) (<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/managing-performance/system-performance> framework/) that HEIs put in place an Institute wide Student Success Strategy which embeds ‘whole of HEI’ approaches to student access and completion. The aim of the strategy is to develop a holistic, student-centred approach across all dimensions of the student experience to foster measurable improvements in: Retention, progression and completion rates, Student achievements, Student engagement and Graduate outcomes. The

strategy was approved at Academic Council Meeting No 162 on 1st March 2019 and can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/student-success-strategy>

#### **Programme-Specific Policies**

A number of policies were approved at Academic Council Meeting No 164 on 20th June 2019 in support of the *Bachelor of Arts(Hons) in Social Care's* validation by CORU (professional body that regulates health and social care professionals; <https://www.coru.ie/>):

- Social Care Students Attendance Policy;
- Social Care Placement Attendance Policy;
- Fitness to Practise Policy;
- Statement on Fitness to Practise for Social Care Workers;
- Equal Opportunities Policy for Student Admissions;
- Social Care Placement Policies and Procedures;
- RPL and Garda Vetting Policies (approved by Standing Committee).

#### **DkIT Work Placement Procedures**

Academic Council approved amendments to the DkIT Work Placement Common Procedures at the Academic Council Meeting No 164 on 20th June 2019. The procedures are used by staff in the Careers and Employability Office and are not publically available.

#### **Policy on the Management of Research Data and Records**

This new policy was developed by the Graduate Studies Office and was approved at Academic Council Meeting No 159 on 28th September 2018. The policy can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/research-policies-and-guidelines.html>.

#### **Other noteworthy quality assurance activities:**

##### **Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery**

The Institute is approving an increasing number of venues for off-campus delivery (in line with strategic objectives). The Cavan Innovation and Technical Centre (<https://www.cavanitc.ie/>) was approved during the reporting period (Academic Council Meeting No 162, 1st March 2019) for the delivery of the Certificate in Lean Sigma (Green Belt).

### **1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.**

Six scheduled meetings of **Academic Council** were held during the reporting period 2018/19, with one additional meeting being called to deal with the Institutional Review Self Study. Regular items for Academic Council meetings included ratification of student results, ratification of programme validation reports, consideration of reports from subcommittees, consideration of annual programme monitoring report and recommendations, approval of external examiners, approval of conferring prizes, changes to entry requirements for specific programmes and ongoing work in relation to routes of entry for Northern Ireland candidates. Presentations were made by colleagues with a view to keeping Academic Council informed of academic issues of relevance, e.g. student feedback (StudentSurvey.ie, etc.), academic portfolio planning and Institutional Review. There were some minor changes to the

membership of the Academic Council due to changes of staff in the academic Schools. The item “Student Voice” was added as a standing item on the agenda for the Academic Council. New academic policies and procedures approved by DkIT Academic Council in 2018/19 are outlined in Section 1.2.

Four to five meetings of each of the six **Academic Council subcommittees** were held during 2018/19, giving a total of **28** subcommittee meetings.

Meetings of **Leadership Team** were held approximately once every two weeks. Thirteen meetings of the Institute **Governing Body** were held during 2018/19: 24th Sept 2018, 22nd Oct 2018, 19th Nov 2018, 10th Dec 2018, 20th Dec 2018, 28th Jan 2019, 4th March 2019, 28th March 2019, 7th May 2019, 27th May 2019, 24th June 2019, 23rd July 2019 and 2nd Aug 2019.

Three meetings of the **Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)** were held during 2018/19. Topics discussed included: CAO Deadlines, International Students Admissions Process and attendance, Recognised Prior Learning Policy and Procedures, Repeat and Attend students, Retention of Student Electronic Assessment Materials, Broadsheet Changes, Update on Catering Services , Part-time Student Supports, Student Feedback (ISSE), Student Access to Moodle and link to Fees, Data Breaches and Use of Shared Drives and the Institute Calendar. The terms of reference of the committee were also considered.

Five meetings (9th October 2018, 27th November 2018, 5th February 2019, 2nd April 2019, 14th May 2019) of the Institute **Academic Heads Forum (AHF)** were held in 2018/19 to discuss issues such as Technological University, Student Induction, Timetabling, Examination Scheduling, Staffing Issues, Moodle VLE access for respeat examination only students, Technical Support for Online Students, Canteen facilities, Resources (furniture and fit out of offices and classrooms), External examiners (dealing with shared modules), Attendance for international students, GDPR and Communications and Updates to QA procedures. Some of these topics were also referred to IMPC. There were also presentations to the committee by the Head of Careers and Employability (Placement Process and Employability Statements).

## Section 2: Reviews in the Reporting Period

### 2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

#### 2.1.1. Academic Programme Development, Approval and Review:

##### Programmatic Review

As indicated in AIQR Part 1, 17. Internal Review Schedule Programmatic Reviews were completed in the following Schools/Areas:

- School of Health and Science
- School of Engineering
- School of Informatics and Creative Arts

- School of Business and Humanities
- Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)

The schedule for the external panel site visits was as follows:

- Week 11<sup>th</sup> February: School of Health and Science / Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching;
- Week 11<sup>th</sup> March: School of Engineering;
- Week 8<sup>th</sup> April: School of Informatics and Creative Arts;
- Week 6<sup>th</sup> May: School of Business and Humanities.

Each panel was chaired by an external Registrar and comprised academic and industry experts to cover all of the disciplinary areas within the School. The DkIT Assistant Registrar or Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar and an external learner were also members of the panel. One day was devoted to a review of the School Self-Study (SER), including meetings with School staff and learners, other institute support staff where relevant (e.g. Placement Office, CELT) and appropriate external stakeholders (e.g. collaborative provision partners, clinical partners). Following this, the programme re-validations took place in parallel sessions over two or three days and each session was chaired by an external Registrar or external Head of School. Reporting templates were agreed by Academic Council and the final reports and responses were presented to the Academic Council at the scheduled May and June 2019 meetings. The following programmes were re-validated:

**School of Health and Science (Academic Council Approval: Meeting No 163, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020)**

**Department of Agriculture Food and Animal Health:**

- Master of Science in Agricultural Biotechnology
- Postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Biotechnology
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture (common entry with 2 awards):
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sustainable Agriculture
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food Production
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Food Production
- Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing
- Certificate in Animal Biotechnology
- Certificate in Food and Feed Biotechnology
- Diploma in Food Supply Chain Operations
- Diploma in Food and Agri-Business
- Certificate in Food Supply Chain Operations
- Certificate in Food and Agri-Business

**Exit Awards:**

- Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Agriculture
- Bachelor of Science in Agri-Food Production
- Higher Certificate in Science in Agriculture

**Department of Life and Health Sciences:**

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Physical Activity
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Science (common Entry with 2 awards):
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Bioscience
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Bioscience
- Bachelor of Science in Applied Bioscience
- Bachelor of Science in Bioscience
- Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Science

**Exit Awards:**

- Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Activity
- Higher Certificate in Science in Health and Physical Activity
- Higher Certificate in Science
- Higher Certificate in Science in Applied Bioscience
- Higher Certificate in Science in Bioscience
- Higher Certificate in Science in Pharmaceutical Science

**Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years:**

- Bachelors of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Management and Leadership for the Early Years Sector
- Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies
- Certificate in Contemporary Palliative Care Practice
- Certificate in Leadership, Management and Quality Initiatives in Intellectual Disability Services
- Certificate in Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse

**Exit Awards:**

- Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Studies
- Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Studies

**School of Engineering (Academic Council Approval: Meeting 164, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019)**

- Master of Science in Renewable Energy Systems
- Certificate in Renewable Energy
- Certificate in Wind Energy
- Certificate in Bio-Energy
- Certificate in Solar Energy
- Certificate in Ocean Energy
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) (Common Entry)
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Systems
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Engineering Entrepreneurship
- Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering
- Certificate in Applied Electrical Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Project Management
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architectural Technology

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management
- Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology
- Bachelor of Science in Construction Management
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying
- Bachelor of Science in Building Surveying
- Certificate in Building Energy Management
- Higher Certificate in Property and Facilities Management

**Exit Awards:**

- Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Renewable Energy Systems
- Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Systems
- Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering Systems
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering Systems
- Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Studies
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Civil Engineering Studies
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Civil Engineering
- Higher Certificate in Science in Architectural Technology
- Higher Certificate in Science in Construction Technology
- Higher Certificate in Science in Building Surveying

**School of Informatics and Creative Arts (Academic Council Approval: Meeting 164, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019)**

**Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music:**

- Master of Arts in Music Technology
- Master of Science in Music Technology
- Master of Arts in Traditional Music Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio and Music Production
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Media
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communications in Creative Multimedia
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film and TV Production
- Bachelor of Arts in Audio and Music Production (V)
- Bachelor of Arts in Creative Media
- Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Film Practice
- Diploma in Composing for Games
- Certificate in Sound Design and Implementation for Interactive Media
- Certificate in Irish Traditional Music Studies
- Certificate in Digital Imaging and Data Wrangling
- Certificate in Entrepreneurship for the Creative Industries

**Exit Awards:**

- Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Music Technology
- Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Traditional Music Studies

- Bachelor of Arts in Music
- Bachelor of Arts in Film and TV Production
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Music
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Audio and Music Production
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Film and TV Production
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Creative Media
- Higher Certificate in Theatre and Film Practice

**Department of Computing Science and Mathematics:**

- Master of Science in Computing
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Cloud Computing
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Cloud and Data Centre Operations
- Higher Diploma in Science in Computing
- Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics
- Bachelor of Science in Computing
- Certificate in Foundations of Cloud Computing
- Certificate in Cloud Architecture (V)
- Certificate in Data Analytics
- Certificate in Mathematical and Computational Finance
- Certificate in Blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technologies
- Certificate in Programming
- Certificate in Networking and Systems Administration

**Exit Awards:**

- Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Computing
- Higher Certificate in Science in Computing

**Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing:**

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Software Development
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development
- Higher Diploma in Science in 3D Computer Animation
- Higher Diploma in Science in Augmented and Virtual Reality Development
- Certificate in 2D and 3D Digital Animation Production
- Certificate in Universal Design

**Exit Awards:**

- Bachelor of Science in Computing in Software Development
- Bachelor of Science in Computing in Games Development
- Higher Certificate in Science in Computing in Software Development
- Higher Certificate in Science in Computing in Games Development

**School of Business and Humanities (Academic Council Approval: Meeting No 165, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019)**

- Master of Business in Entrepreneurship and Marketing
- Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Entrepreneurship and Marketing
- Higher Diploma in Business in Business and Marketing
- Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) (Part-time)
- Bachelor of Business Studies (Part-time)
- Higher Certificate in Business Studies (Par-time)
- Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Digital and International Business
- Bachelor of Business in Business and Management
- Bachelor of Business in Business and Technology
- Higher Certificate in Business in Business and Management
- Higher Certificate in Business in Business and Technology
- Certificate in Lean Six Sigma (Green Belt)
- Certificate in Business in Digital Marketing and Digital Media Management
- Certificate in Employment Law
- Certificate in Business Strategy
- Certificate in Data Analytics for Business
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
- Bachelor of Business (Honours)
- Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours)
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Public Relations
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Global Marketing
- Bachelor of Arts in Digital Marketing and Public Relations
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Youth Work
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport, Exercise with Enterprise
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Arts
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Arts International
- Bachelor of Arts in Arts International
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care
- Bachelor of Arts in Community Youth Work
- Bachelor of Arts in Sport, Exercise and Enterprise
- Bachelor of Arts in Social Care (Exit Award)
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Sport, Exercise and Enterprise
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Studies
- Higher Certificate in Arts
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Youth Studies
- Certificate in Foundation Studies
- Certificate in Foundation Studies with Intensive English
- Certificate in Pre-Sessional English
- Certificate in Cultural Landscapes
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hospitality Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Culinary Enterprise



- Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management
- Bachelor of Arts in Event Management
- Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Culinary Arts
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Hospitality Studies
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Front Office Management and Business Administration
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Event Studies
- Certificate in Applied Business Development for Food Tourism

**Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (Academic Council Approval: Meeting 164, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019)**

- Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching
- Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Learning and Teaching
- Certificate in Arts in Learning and Teaching
- Certificate in Assessment and Feedback
- Certificate in Higher and Professional Learning

#### **New Programme Validations**

The following new programme validations were completed during 2018/19.

#### **Full Validation (New Programmes):**

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science (including Exit Award, Bachelor of Science (Pharmaceutical))
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Bioscience (including Exit Award, Bachelor of Science (Environmental))
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Culinary Arts (Apprenticeship consortium programme developed and validated by IT Tralee)
- Bachelor of Arts Culinary Arts (including Exit Award, Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts)
- Bachelor of Arts in Musical Theatre
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Musical Theatre
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Augmented and Virtual Reality
- Bachelor of Science in Augmented and Virtual Reality (Exit Award)
- Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics
- Higher Certificate in Science in Augmented and Virtual Reality (Exit Award)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Management of Aggression and Violence
- Master of Science in Data Analytics
- Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics
- Master of Science in Management and Leadership

**Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards:**

- Certificate in Financial Services
- Certificate in Data Analytics for Business
- Certificate in Management (Level 6; 10 credits)
- Certificate in Communication Skills (Level 6; 10 credits)
- Certificate in Introduction to Digital Marketing (Level 6; 10 credits)
- Certificate in Accounting (Level 6; 15 credits)
- Certificate in Marketing (Level 6; 15 credits)
- Certificate in Management Fundamentals (Level 6; 20 credits)
- Certificate in Culinary Skills (consortium programme validated by LyIT and put forward by a consortium of Institutes for Springboard funding)
- Certificate in Applied Electrical Engineering
- Certificate in Psychosocial Interventions for Contemporary Professional Practice
- Certificate in Understanding Athlete Monitoring Technology
- Certificate in Perinatal Mental Health
- Certificate in Adult Respiratory Nursing Practice
- Certificate in Nursing, Health, Assessment and Interventions for Persons with an Intellectual Disability
- Certificate in the Professional Management of Aggression and Violence in Health and Social Care Settings
- Certificate in the Fundamentals of the Professional Management of Aggression and Violence
- Certificate in Fundamentals of Food Production Management
- Certificate in Health and Safety (Manufacturing Industry)
- Certificate in Sound Design and Implementation for Interactive Media
- Certificate in Distributed Ledger Technology
- Certificate in Mathematical and Computational Finance

**Single Modules:**

- Heat Pump Installer.
- DkIT Work Placement (see Section 4.1.3.3 Careers and Employability Centre)

**Programme Changes**

In addition to the above a number of minor changes to modules and programmes were approved by the Academic Council Programme Evaluation Subcommittee (PEC) for implementation in 2018/19.

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

**2.1.2. Annual Programme Reviews (Programme Monitoring):**

All DkIT taught programmes were reviewed by the relevant Programme Boards and reported in the Annual Programme Board reports for 2018/19. Submission of these reports commenced in December 2019 and is ongoing. To date (as off 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020) 33 reports covering 52 programmes have been submitted to the Registrar's Office. A summary of the reports will be reviewed by the Academic Quality Subcommittee and from there will be presented (with recommendations) to the May meeting of DkIT

Academic Council. All reports were submitted using a new template which has been adopted by Academic Council. The Programme Board Report template can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy>.

### 2.1.3. Activities involving PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

In the School of Health and Science there were no reviews with Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). Annual reports were submitted to the Nursing and Midwifery Board and the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI).

In the School of Business and Humanities awards for the following programmes were endorsed by the relevant PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies:

<b>PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b>	<b>Programme</b>
<b>CORU</b> ( <a href="https://www.coru.ie/">https://www.coru.ie/</a> ) As the profession moves toward statutory regulation the Institute applied for CORU registration.	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Care</i>
<b>NSETS</b> ( <a href="https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/">https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/</a> ) Consulted as part of Programmatic Review.	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Youth Work</i>
<b>The Teaching Council</b> ( <a href="https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/">https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/</a> ) On a student case by case basis	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Arts</i>
<b>ACCA</b> MOU signed in 2018/19.	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Accounting and Finance</i>
<b>Sports Ireland</b> ( <a href="https://www.sportireland.ie">https://www.sportireland.ie</a> )	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport, Exercise with Enterprise</i>

(Note: see Section **Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies** in the AIQR Part 1).

**2.2 Profile of internal approval/evaluations and review completed in the reporting period.**

Number of new <b>Programme Validations/Programme Approvals</b> completed in the reporting year	12 New Major awards (excluding Exit Awards)  22 Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose awards
Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	144 programmes (Programmatic Reviews)
Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	10 Annual report plus report for linked provider (DCU-DKIT Graduate School)
Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	4 School Reviews
Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations</b> completed in the reporting year	0 for the reporting period; currently developing

**2.3 Profile of reviewers and chairs internal approval/evaluations and review for reviews completed in the reporting period.**

<b>Composition of Panels</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal	10
National	75
UK	10 (Northern Ireland)
EU	0
Student	5 Students sat on the panel reviewing the SER

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Other	-
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<b>Chair Profile</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal	0
Similar Institution	95
Different Institution	5
International	0

### Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

**3.1** A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

#### **3.1.1. Student Feedback**

Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to the enhancement of the student experience and the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms place a significant emphasis on the voice of the student in line with European Standards and Guidelines (2015). The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experience in the Institute.

The following formal feedback mechanisms were employed during 2018/19:

1. Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE);
2. Programme-level student feedback: All students were invited to provide online feedback after each semester using the QA3 programme level feedback survey (administered using the EvaSys Suite (<https://en.evasys.de>) and resulting programme-based reports were generated for Heads of Department;
3. Annual survey of Mature Learners.
4. Student Services Survey to ascertain awareness and level of satisfaction with services provided;
5. Survey of users of the services of the Disability Office.

The data collected by these surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. The feedback from 1 and 2 above is considered by Programme Boards in each Department and actions plans are formulated. These form a constituent part of the annual Programme Board Reports. The reports are summarised and presented to the Academic Quality Sub-Committee of Academic Council. Reports from 3, 4, and 5 are used by relevant functional areas to enhance the services and supports provided to learners.

#### **Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)**

An analysis of the DkIT data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement 2019 was carried out and presented to Academic Council. The response rate was slightly lower than the previous year at 30% compared with 32% in 2017. The rate was in line with the sector-wide average of 29% but lower than the technological sector average of 35%. Scores on the engagement indices were comparable to both the overall and technological sector rates. The student feedback was comparable to previous years and indicated that students valued small classes, active learning and approachable, supportive lecturers. The feedback received was very similar to previous years and generally very positive, with most respondents expressing satisfaction with their DkIT experience. Free text comments were provided to the relevant schools for review by Programme Boards (and incorporation into Programme Board

Reports as appropriate). Two infographics were developed, summarising key findings and responses for students.

Some of the results are summarised as follows:

- 85% of respondents rated their educational experience as excellent or good (82% in the reporting period 2017/2018; IoT sector 80%; overall sector 81%).
- 81% of respondents said that they would definitely or probably choose the same institution again.
- As in previous years, students valued good teaching, small classes, the positive relationship with lecturers and the practical focus/balance theory and practical at DkIT. The following is a representative sample of qualitative comments on what DkIT does best to engage students in learning:
  - *'Small number in classes and course, helps you get to know your lecturer and feel comfortable to ask them questions and makes them more approachable'*
  - *'Getting everyone involved both in class and out of it. Making it feel like a family and not a job'*
  - *'They make the lecturers interesting and engage our interests, we talk through things and get our heads around what is expected or what we need to know'.*
  - *'Practical work, small class sizes and friendly approachable lecturers help to engage students in learning'*
  - *'Group projects and class discussions'*
  - *'Academic help, outside class tutorials and help'*
  - *'Encouragement, support facilities and academic guidance'.*
  - *'By sending emails regarding help available if it is needed by students'*
  - *'It provides an excellent library service, along with fantastic academic tutorials that improve the quality of work that students produce'.*
  - *'Encouragement to go for extra help such as the ITLC (Information Technology Learning Centre) or the MLC (Mathematics Learning Centre) and made us feel welcome'*
- The following feedback was received in relation to how DkIT could promote student engagement:
  - *'Try to help students get along well with each other...rather than leaving people out'*
  - *'Help with language barriers'*
  - *'Have 1:1 sessions with each student, especially those who are migrant or first year'.*
  - *'Extra help when we're falling behind'*
  - *'Have more discussions during lectures. It's hard to stay engaged when the lecturer is continually reading from a PowerPoint'.*
  - *'Lecturers could come to class on time and communicate to students when they are absent'*
  - *'More interaction'*
  - *'More feedback on results and assessments.'*
  - *'More 1:1 feedback'*
  - *'More CA (Continuous Assessment), but less group CA'*
  - *'Spend more time explaining difficult topics'.*
  - *'Give our timetables in advance of term to allow more planning of family time'.*
  - *'Provide more work related experiences'*
  - *Listen to the student when group work does not work'*
  - *'More practical work'.*

- DkIT compared well to other institutions in relation to student support and feedback but there was some room for improvement in these areas.
- Responses to the questions on learning outcomes indicated improvement on 2018 and compared well with to technological sector (TS) averages.
- Responses to questions on **assessment and feedback** also indicated improved and relatively good performance although there is still room for improvement
  - 60% of respondents said that prompt and detailed feedback was provided quite a bit or very much, up from 49% in 2018. The 2019 average for the technological sector was 50%.
  - 36% said that they work on assessments that informed them how well they were learning quite a bit or very much. This was in line with the technological sector average of 35% but there is clearly scope to improve this.
- Responses to questions on **student support** are generally positive:
  - 66% of respondents felt that DkIT emphasised 'Providing support to help students succeed academically' quite a bit/very much. 58% respondents felt that DkIT emphasised 'Providing support for overall wellbeing quite a bit/very much. These compared to TS averages of 59% and 50% respectively for these questions.
  - The SU and Student Support Services collaborated to raise awareness of supports available in semester 1 2018/19. StudentSurvey.ie data suggests that this had some impact: 64% of respondents felt that DkIT emphasised 'using learning support services' quite a bit/very much. This was an increase from 59% in 2018 and compares to a TS average of 53%.

Other sources of informal student feedback included student representation on Programme Boards School/Faculty Boards and Academic Council.

### **HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey**

The Careers and Employability Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/>) participated in the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey in 2018/19. The most recent data available is for the class of 2018 (academic year 2017/2018):

- 57% response rate;
- 94% of which were in employment or further study;
- 89% Employed within the Region;
- 5% Completed an accredited placement
- Average Salary is €28,175

The School-level data from the survey was communicated to the relevant areas for use in the Programmatic Reviews. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) prepared a report on the 2017 Graduate Outcomes Survey, of which the Careers and Employability Centre contributed an insight piece entitled,



*Regional Employability, SMEs and Graduate Outcomes Survey*  
[,http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/02/HEA-Graduate-Outcomes-Survey.pdf](http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/02/HEA-Graduate-Outcomes-Survey.pdf)

### **3.1.2. Student Progression Data**

Student progression data for all students was produced for 2018/19 on a School, Department, programme, stage and NFQ level basis and circulated to Programme Boards for consideration. The overall progression rate for all students for the reporting period was 82%, which was the same as 2017/18 (79% in 2016/2017) 79%. The first year progression rate was the same as 2017/2018 at 78%. The institute continues to focus on the first year experience and learning support. Progression data is discussed by Programme Boards and reported in the Annual Programme Board Reports.

### **3.1.3. Academic Planning**

Under the leadership of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, the Institute embarked on an academic portfolio planning exercise during 2017/18 (reported during reporting period). The portfolio strategy supports the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise. DkIT is increasingly working towards ensuring existing programmes are relevant in meeting the needs of business and society and developing and delivering new offerings, directly and in collaboration with relevant sectoral partners, to meet specific industry and professional needs. The overall objective is to work towards developing and aligning a suite of programmes in DkIT that is relevant to future needs while simultaneously supporting a distinctive practice-based, research-informed learner experience.

At the conclusion of the planning exercise, each School presented a Portfolio Plan to Academic Council. The plans were also presented to staff who have responsibility for programme promotion (e.g. Marketing Office, Schools Liaison and International Office). The plans informed the Programmatic Reviews (that took place during 2018/2019) and School strategic plans for programme development and validation over the coming years.

A detailed analysis of CAO application data, intake and progression on all awards (major and minor) is conducted on a periodic basis by the Registrar's Office with a view to determining the sustainability of existing programmes and plans for programme revisions and new programme development going forward.

## **3.2 Factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period.**

Nothing to report under this section for the reporting period.

**3.3** A description of other implementation issues.

Nothing to report under this section for the reporting period.

## Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

**Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.**

### 3.1 Effectiveness

Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

#### 3.1.1 Institutional Review

The Institutional Review was completed in the reporting period 2018-2019 (see AIQR Part 1, Section 17. Internal Review Schedule). The final report and implementation plan can be found at: <https://www.qqi.ie//Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx>. While the review team found that there is a robust and comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement system in place there were a number of recommendations made in relation to the QAE system (final report, Section 3.3 Objective 3 – Quality Enhancement, pg. 32):

- **Recommendation 18:** The Review Team recommends that DkIT conduct an integrated review of all policies and procedures, possibly linked to the ongoing review of the Quality Manual. This would entail a significant rationalisation of the many policies and procedures and a review of their fitness for (more than one) purpose.
- **Recommendation 19:** The Review Team recommends that DkIT simplify the remaining policies and procedures and streamline them in a logical and traceable scheme. The Review Team advises the Institute to use the mission, vision and strategic plans as a basis for that scheme. In particular, the Team sees AMBITION, the update of the strategic plan for 2018-2023, as the starting point for a QA and quality enhancement framework (see also Recommendation 3).
- **Recommendation 3:** The Review Team recommends a reconsideration of DkIT’s framework for the governance of QA in light of how far it currently supports the objectives in DkIT’s new strategic plan and in AMBITION. This includes consideration of the role of AC and its sub-committees and whether anything is missing from the framework that could further support the implementation of the strategic plan.
- **Recommendation 17:** The Review Team recommends that the Institute provide external examiners with advance briefing on the expectations of the role and clearer guidance on reporting.

An overarching institutional review implementation group is being established to plan and oversee the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Institutional Review. This work will be ongoing over the period until the next review.

### **3.1.2 External Examiners:**

External Examiners are approved by Academic Council with a term of office of three years, which may be extended by one year in exceptional circumstances. External Examiners report annually to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar and copies of these reports are circulated to the relevant Heads of Department and Programme Boards for consideration, action and feedback. In some cases the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar may append comments to those of the External Examiner.

Feedback from External Examiners was generally positive and in many cases examiners commended specific examples of good practice. In particular, positive comments were made regarding the variety of assessments and use of innovation and technology. The standard of work produced by students was regarded as appropriate for the programme level, stage and outcomes and the marking of student work was consistent and fair. Some suggestions were made regarding changes to administration of assessment, including the presentation of information to examiners, the time allocated to meeting staff and the process for communicating responses to feedback. These were considered as part of the review of the procedures.

## **3.2 Impact**

Evidence of the impact of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

### **3.2.1 Annual Programme Board Reports**

An analysis of Annual Programme Board Reports for 2018/19 is currently being carried out by the Registrar's Office and will be presented to the Academic Quality Sub-committee of Academic Council in the near future. The sub-committee will prepare recommendations based on the report, which will be submitted to Academic Council in May 2020. Analysis of the reports to date suggests that the Programme Board structure is working well and in accordance with the Institute Monitoring of Programmes Policy. All Departments are using a standardised reporting template which includes the presentation of an action plan for the coming year and a discussion regarding the previous year's plan. Issues discussed and reported by Programme Boards included the following:

- Sources of evidence and information (student feedback, external examiner reports, data on intake/progression/graduation, industry feedback, graduate feedback);
- Programme entry requirements, content, learning outcomes, delivery modes and teaching/learning/assessment strategies;
- Administrative issues such as timetabling, student attendance and work placement;
- Engagement with external stakeholders such as industry, regulatory bodies and the community;
- Engagement with the Erasmus programme.

- Learner academic supports;
- Individual student performance / attendance;
- Quality assurance compliance and enhancement issues;
- Resource issues (e.g. accommodation, facilities, staffing, staff development).

Analysis of the reports to date suggests that students are generally satisfied with and enjoying their programme and described lecturers as enthusiastic, approachable and committed. Students seem generally happy with the mix of assessment types employed and the balance between theory and practice. Both staff and students find the provision of a schedule of continuous assessment at the start of each semester very useful in assisting with workload management on both sides. Both staff and students expressed strong satisfaction with student supports, in particular new student induction, the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) and the provision of Programme Directors and Year Convenors. Students were highly satisfied with the number of opportunities to engage externally, including work placements. Students were also very positive about the using of technology in teaching and assessment.

Issues of concern to students were in the main around timetabling and management of work-loads, particularly the volume of assessment. This is an issue that was addressed in the Programmatic Reviews through the requirement for programme teams to develop a programme-level assessment strategy (in line with based practice (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/enhancing-programme-approaches-to-assessment-and-feedback-in-irish-higher-education-case-studies-commentaries-and-tools-2/>)). There are still concerns about group work management and assessment in some areas.

Programme Board reflections demonstrated that there are still a number of facilities and other resource issues which need to be addressed, particularly in the older parts of the campus, though many reports mentioned that they had recently experienced IT upgrades. Teams were generally very satisfied with the quality and range of learning, teaching and assessment types on the programmes. There is continued evidence that technology enhanced methods of learning, teaching, assessment and feedback are being used on programmes and that the level of this is continuing to increase. There is a high level of engagement with industry, the community and other collaborative partners, including internationally (see other sections of this report for examples).

### **3. Themes**

Analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

#### **3.1 Enhancement Theme: Feedback**

Considerable work had been undertaken to enhance assessment and feedback practice in 2017/18 and earlier and the focus in 2018/19 was to build on this. Our quality enhancement processes were identified among the top four commendations made by the CINNTE Institutional Review panel (Recommendation 4: The Review Team commends DkIT's quality enhancement achieved through informal and formal processes of collecting feedback, responding to it, and monitoring results').

All Programmatic Reviews in 2018/19 and consequently, this was the main focus for both enhancement and professional development in learning and teaching. The Programmatic Reviews offered an opportunity for programme teams to critically consider and review the learning, teaching and assessment strategies for all programmes. In particular, programmatic approaches to assessment were encouraged. Programmes formally embedded the principles agreed in recent years, in particular, via the Assessment and Learning Policy and Assessed Group Work: A framework and Guidelines (<https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching/learning-teaching-resources/group-work>).

- The Assessment and Learning Policy was adopted in 2017. [https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/assessment\\_learning\\_policy\\_23-05-17.pdf](https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/assessment_learning_policy_23-05-17.pdf). This was informed by the work of the enhancement projects DkIT has been involved with, particularly Y1 Feedback <http://y1feedback.ie/> and TEAM <http://teamshp.ie/> and there is a strong emphasis on feedback (Principle 2).
- DkIT developed a framework and guidelines for assessed group work [https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork\\_framework\\_guidelines\\_2016.pdf](https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework_guidelines_2016.pdf) in response to feedback from students and staff. These were approved in 2016/17. They have been recognised as an example of good practice. An initial evaluation indicated some positive impact (see <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rhep20/4/1?nav=toclist>).

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) offered and recruited to the Certificate in Assessment and Feedback for the first time. This is a module from the Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching that is also available as a standalone Special Purpose Award. While the Masters programme is more popular, and is likely to remain so, this offers greater flexibility in addition. It also provides an opportunity for staff to undertake a shorter programme of accredited professional development, focused specifically on assessment and feedback.

Work continued to raise awareness of feedback among students and promote assessment literacy. As in 2017/18, as part of induction incoming first-years received a guide to using feedback adapted from the DEFT toolkit developed by the University of Surrey (see <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft>). As part of the central induction provision, students had a short presentation on the role of feedback both from the Institute to students and from students to the Institute. The DkIT *Information Literacy Prize for Use of Feedback* ran again in 2019. It was developed in 2015 as a collaboration between the library, CELT and lecturers as part of the Y1 Feedback Project and plays a role in DkIT's efforts to promote assessment literacy among students (Principles 2 and 5 of the Assessment and Learning Policy). An account of the project has been published in the journal *Practitioner Research in Higher Education* and is available here <https://ojs.cumbria.ac.uk/index.php/prhe/article/view/466>

## Part 4: Quality Enhancement

Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.

### 4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period

Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

#### 4.1.1 Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT):

##### 4.1.1.1 Staff Training and Professional Development:

###### Accredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

The Certificate/Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching continued to be successful however, as it runs on a 2.5 year cycle there were no graduations for 2018/19. Six DkIT staff graduated with an Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching in November 2018 (2017/18). The programme recruited a new intake of 22 (12 DkIT staff) in January 2019. A further 16 (7 DkIT staff) continued on the programme. A total of 60 DkIT staff members have now completed the Masters programme and 13 have completed the Certificate in Learning and Teaching. One of the modules on the Masters programme was also offered as a 15 ECTS credit Special-Purpose Award, the *Certificate in Assessment and Feedback* for the first time.

The programmes were reviewed and revised as part of the Programmatic Review (see Section 2: Reviews in the Reporting Period). This included drawing on the work of the National Forum funded ATLAS project (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/atlas-aligning-teaching-and-learning-across-the-technological-sector>), to map and align the programmes to the new Professional Development Framework.

###### Unaccredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

A programme of seminars and workshops was offered in 2018/19 with particular emphasis on preparing for Programmatic Review. There were 231 attendances at these support sessions. DkIT also hosted EdTech (<https://ilta.ie/edtech-conferences/>), the annual conference of the Irish Learning Technology Association (ILTA), in May 2019. The conference was attended by over 180 delegates including over 20 DkIT staff.

###### Masterclasses

The following masterclasses were held during the reporting period:

- Staff-student partnership workshop. **Facilitator(s):** Cat O'Driscoll, NStep;

- Getting Started with Digital Badges. **Facilitator(s)**: Wayne Gibbons, GMIT;
- Promoting student engagement. **Facilitator(s)**: Dr Carina Ginty, GMIT;
- Recognition of Prior Learning: The MyExperience Toolkit. **Facilitator(s)**: Dr Carina Ginty, GMIT;
- Student Success. **Facilitator(s)**: Dr Lee O’Farrell, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning; delivered as part of a Programme Director/Stage Convenor training morning;
- Programme Director and Stage Convenor workshop. **Facilitator(s)**: CELT staff.

### **Support for Programmatic Reviews**

The following support workshops/sessions were held during the reporting period:

- Identifying programme priorities (ran four times);
- Reviewing your module (ran four time);
- Using the Curriculum Management Tool–Programmes (Akari Document and Publish (<http://www.akarisoftware.com/index.cfm/page/solutions>) (in conjunction with the Registrars’ Office);
- Using the Curriculum Management Tool–Modules (in conjunction with the Registrars’ Office).

### **Sharing Practice Events:**

- School of Informatics and Creative Arts Sharing Learning and Teaching Practice (annual event);
- EdTech Annual Conference.

### **Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL):**

The following TEL workshops/sessions were held during the reporting period:

- Turning Point Classroom Response System Demonstration;
- Introduction to Moodle;
- Using Mahara;
- Feedback on Moodle;
- Moodle attendance and progress bar.

#### **4.1.1.2 Enhancement Projects**

DkIT secured funded under the HEA’s 2018 Innovation and Transformation fund (<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/innovation-call/>) for the ‘Gateway to Success’ project. This is an internal collaboration between CELT, Student Services, the Library, the Students Union (SU), IT Services and the School of Informatics and Creative Arts to develop an online hub for student support. The aim of the hub is to provide greater access in a flexible way to student support. It will benefit all students but is likely to be particularly beneficial to commuting and part-time learners.

DkIT also secured funding under the National Forum's 2018 Enhancement Funding for the project 'Partners in Employability' (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/partners-in-employability-a-student-staff-collaboration-to-develop-an-award-to-recognise-the-skills-developed-by-active-student-engagement/>). This project is an internal collaboration between the Students' Union, CELT and Student Services that aims to develop a framework to support student engagement and recognise its role in promoting employability.

#### **4.1.2. Research and Graduate Studies Office**

Following the funding successes of the previous year, a total of 23 new research postgraduate students were admitted in 2017/18, the highest number for an academic year to date. The year 2017/2018 also witnessed a further enhancement of the institute's reputation as one of the leading research intensive institutes of technology. During this academic year:

1. The total research income was approximately €5M.
2. The Institute's success rate at securing European funding through the Horizon 2020 programme was above the sector norm.
3. The postgraduate research base grew to in excess of 75 students.
4. 85 research supervisors to date were formally trained through the Institute's structured research supervisory training programme and 10 more to complete in 2018/19.
5. There was further dissemination of the Institute's research output with the Institute was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> across the sector in terms of citations in 2017/18.
6. There was growth in research space to an excess of 3000m<sup>2</sup>.
7. There was growth in the Institute's career researcher base with further recruitment of postdoctoral and research fellows.

During 2018/2019 the institute secured landscape funding in to the value of €650K for year 2 with an emphasis on:

- Growing the number of staff with level 10 qualifications (e.g. 6 academic staff being supported to complete their PhD by May 31<sup>st</sup> 2020)
- Recruitment of a further 11 PhD research students
- Increasing the number of support staff within the Graduate Studies Office

The funding secured is for a three period subject to performance and will enable the institute to recruit 32 PhD researchers and ensure the institute increases the number of staff with level 10 qualifications beyond 45% FTE.

The Research Integrity Officer was appointed in the Research Office. The role of this officer is to ensure the development and adherence to research integrity policies and procedures which align with national policy. Related to this was the Institutional rollout of online research integrity training through the Epigeum platform.

#### **Athena SWAN**

DkIT signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter in May 2018 and initiated the process of preparing a submission for an Athena SWAN Bronze application. The Athena SWAN Charter



(<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/>) recognises commitment to eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff. The assessment process includes:

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

The Institute made an application for the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in November 2019 and are currently awaiting results. The Institute acknowledges that this date is outside the reporting period but wanted to indicate that the work commenced in 2018/2019 and is ongoing.

#### **4.1.3 Entrepreneurship and External Engagement**

##### **4.1.3.1 Regional Development Centre (RDC)**

The Institute plays a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of the region. DkIT is part of a wider business and local community and the multi award winning Regional Development Centre and Lifelong Learning Centre continue to provide support to the business and general community. The Regional Development Centre plays a pivotal role in supporting enterprise development including engagement with regional and national stakeholders and agencies such as the Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland, Chambers of Commerce and the IDA.

In 2018/19 (academic year) the RDC had 17 companies in full incubation employing 74 people, with 3 companies graduating from the centre. The RDC also offers hotdesking space to start-ups on the New Frontiers Programme and also to Spin Ins. This provides a mechanism to create and maintain a pipeline into incubation proper with 9 clients currently. In total 38 participants (21 Male and 17 female) were recruited onto the New Frontiers Entrepreneur Programme, 24 entrepreneurs/SMEs were also assisted through applied research engagement with DkIT facilitated by innovation vouchers, Innovation Partnership Programme, consultancy arrangements and Intertradelreland Fusion projects.

During the period a new DkIT Consultancy policy and a new Conflict of Interest Policy was developed and approved.

DkIT and medical cybersecurity specialist and spin-out company from research, Nova Leah have received almost €4 million (€3.7 million) to support two industry projects aimed at driving disruptive innovation in the areas of medtech and connected health cybersecurity through the Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has been identified as a leading exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship in higher education both Nationally and Internationally with another accolade being presented with the 'Creating the Entrepreneurial Spirit' award for the development of its Community Entrepreneurship module which is delivered as part of the BA in Community Youth Work programme. The RDC was also named Enterprise and Innovation Centre of the Year at Irish Enterprise Awards 2019. DkIT are also strategic partner's in a successful project for the North East Focused Engineering Network DAC awarded funding through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund with a plan to grow the network and collaborations between engineering companies in the North East.

In 2019 DKIT launched two initiatives, The DkIT Emerging Technology Fund and the DkIT-Sponsored Postgraduate Scholarship with Industry aim to increase collaboration with regional industry and to augment the Institute's track record for success in the areas of research and innovation.

In May 2019 the RDC and Research Office hosted an industry engagement showcase with over 100 delegates attending which launched the ABP MoU. The event was opened by Minister Heather Humphreys and had Enterprise Ireland CEO Julie Sinnamon as a guest speaker.

In June 2019 the RDC, Research Office and three Research Centres, Netwell CASALA Research Centre, Smooth muscle Research Centre and the Regulated Software Research Centre, launched the newly formed Institute of Connected Health and Wellbeing (<https://www.dkit.ie/news/dkit-launches-new-research-and-innovation-institute-of-connected-health-and-wellbeing.html>) .

The RDC is also the key architect of the DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme, a key strategic initiative aimed at providing a structured framework for the Institute to work with high profile organisations across industry, community and professions in the region. To date DkIT has signed partnership agreements with STATSports, Creative Spark and ABP Food Group and Cargotech Ireland.

#### 4.1.3.2 Academic Schools:

Academic Schools undertake consultative activities with industry and business through Industry Advisory Boards and other activities such as placements, guest lectures and participation in external discipline-specific events. Some examples are outlined below.

**'Live' student projects** with industry and other external stakeholders are also becoming more common in all schools. For example:

- A number of student projects in the School of Engineering were carried out in collaboration with local industry, e.g. Anord, Multihog, Herr Ltd., Glen Dimplex.
- In the Department of Visual and Human Centred Computing, building on collaborative partnerships developed during work placements, industry representation has been imbedded in final year projects (e.g. project proposals, technical advice, attendance at presentations, etc). These relationships will in turn be used to strengthen the Departments Industry Forum

Schools also engaged in **collaborative international partnerships**. For example, students from the Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing participated in the following projects in 2018/19:

- **September 2018:** A group that included students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development student, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing and Higher Diploma in Science in 3D Computer Animation took part in an intensive game-app building project in Lodz, Poland. This multi-disciplinary project involved 67 students from seven European countries (Poland, Ireland, Belgium, France, Portugal, Slovenia and Ukraine) from diverse areas including Games, Computer Science, Business, Teacher Training, Tourism, Multimedia and Digital Media.
- **January 2019:** The Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing hosted a group of 25 students from the French college Institut Universitaire Technologie de Lens. While in DkIT, the French students worked with DkIT students on a web-application development project. The primary function of the workshop was to teach the French and Irish students new, cutting-edge,

web development technologies. The French embassy's Science Attaché, Dr Marc Daumas, paid a visit to DkIT during the workshop.

- **March 2019:** Eleven 2nd year students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing travelled to France to participate in a week-long intensive coding project (building an app for a quiz) with 11 students from the University of Lodz (Poland) and 22 students from the French host college (IUT de Lens).
- **March 2019:** Ten second-year students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development took part in a ten-day intensive project in the city of Antwerp, Belgium. The project called "GENIUS: Innovative Interdisciplinary Contextual Education Using Games Development" is fully funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme. The project involved five European third-level colleges: DkIT, Artesis-Plantijn Hogeschool Antwerpen (Belgium), Centria University of Applied Sciences (Finland), University of Lodz (Poland) and Instituto Superior Politécnico Gaya (Portugal). A total of 50 students from the five colleges participated in the project. During the ten days of the project, each student team was required to build a prototype of a serious mobile game app.
- **Anti-Racism Secondary School Game- CitizenSchool:** CitizenSchool is an EU funded project funded under the Erasmus+ sub-programme "Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practice" under the action of "Strategic Partnerships for school education" (project reference is "2016-1-FR01-KA201-024157"). The project is a collaboration of three non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and three third level colleges. The three NGOs are Le Partenariat (France), Studio Globo (Belgium) and Stedenband Haarlem-Mutare (Netherlands). The three higher education institutions are Dundalk Institute of Technology, Artesis - Plantijn Hogeschool Antwerpen (Belgium) and ISPGaya - Instituto Superior Politécnico (Portugal). CitizenSchool is a serious game that enables teachers to conduct classroom discussions relating to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in a neutral and unbiased manner.
- Students from *Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Applied Music* participated in an Erasmus Strategic Partnership programme on STEAM education in Porto and presented at the STEAM conference along with students and staff from partner institutions in Portugal, Norway, Wales and Holland.
- Students on the *Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Film and Television Production* attended and screened projects at the Fest Film Festival in Portugal.
- The Schools of Business and Humanities continues its collaborative partnership in the *Master of Business Studies in Entrepreneurship and Marketing* with Heilbronn University, Germany (The School were presented with two awards to the Irish Education Awards in 2018).

Staff from across the Institute represent DkIT on external committees and boards, including the following (representative sample):

- National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and Higher Education (Íontas Alliance);
- Irish National Water Forum;
- All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE);
- Steering group of FACiLiTATE ( national problem and enquiry based learning network);
- Midwifery National Competency Development Group;
- SJOG Human Rights Committee;
- Genesis Programme management committee;
- Louth Healthy Ireland Consultation Group;
- Ardree Food Hub Steering Committee;

- VCI Veterinary Nursing Educators Group;
- National Childhood Network.

Staff members across the Institute also act as external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the sector and in HEIs across Europe and internationally.

#### **4.1.3.3 Careers and Employability Centre**

In 2018/2019 the Institute's Careers and Employability Centre continued to consolidate, develop and enhance its work to support the employability of students and graduates with student work placement being a core aspect of its work. Through the work of the Placement Office, the Centre continued to manage its demanding work programme of undergraduate student placement programmes.

**Career Guidance:** Qualified guidance counsellors provided one-to-one advice, group workshops and information on career profession opportunities. A total of 479 student one-to-one guidance sessions were provided in 2018-19 which was an increase of 20% on 2017-18.

**Placement:** Dedicated placement officers supported and managed the student placement process, including personal and professional profiling, CV and interview skills, work place culture and etiquette training, and ongoing guidance and support to students, host sites and academic supervisors throughout the placement experience. A total 24 placement programmes across all 4 Academic Schools were successfully managed. In total 742 students were placed in 2018/19 and 76 placement preparation workshops were delivered by the Placement Office.

**DkIT Placement Module:** The Careers and Employability Centre in conjunction with the Registrar's Office developed a 30 ECTS credit Placement Module for applicability across all disciplines and was validated in June 2019.

**Placement Awards:** The Placement Office were finalists in the category for Career Impact Strategy Award in the Irish Times Education Awards 2019 with the paper "Work Placement Model, Embedding Employability in Dundalk Institute of Technology".

#### **Springboard Placement and Careers Support:**

In 2018 / 2019 the Careers and Employability Centre provided support to 58 Springboard students across 6 different programs: Certificate in 2D/3D Animation; Higher Diploma in 3D Animation; Higher Diploma in Computing; Certificate in Entrepreneurship for the Creative Industries; Certificate in Digital Marketing and Digital Media Management; Diploma in Food and Supply Chain Management. Due to the change in the eligibility criteria for these programmes whereby a large percentage of students were already in employment, industry based projects complimented traditional work placements. This is a reverse of the traditional Springboard work placement model where on average 70% of students completed work placement. As a consequence of this 33% of this cohort engaged in traditional work-placements and 67% completed industry based projects either with their current employer or specific projects designated by programme directors.

**Induction:** First year students were provided with a dedicated briefing session during induction. A key focus was to target student retention and to encourage students who are contemplating leaving their programme to consult with the Careers Officer.

**DkIT Careers Connect** (<http://www.careersconnect.dkit.ie>): This dedicated and integrated Careers portal for students, graduates and employers established in 2017, saw an increased usage by students to book appointments and by employers, with 203 jobs advertised. DkIT staff were also given access to the portal in 2018-19.

**Careers Section on Moodle:** Development of Moodle Page with dedicated Careers resources accessible by all students and staff.

### **DkIT Careers and Industry Fair**

Two Careers Fairs were held in DkIT in 2018/19:

- Annual DkIT Careers and Industry Fair in November 2018 with a spotlight on work placement. Over 65 exhibitors attended the Fair and the Placement Office presented on their work placement model and the value of partnership and sustainable relationships.
- Hosted Cross Border Careers Fair in conjunction with EURES Cross Border Partnership.

### **Graduate Outcomes Survey**

DkIT participated in the HEA Graduates Outcomes Survey. See 3.1.1. Student Feedback.

### **Employer Workshops and Guest Speakers**

A total of 17 Employer Presentations, and 5 Careers Insights Events took place in 2018-19 including; Beyond General Practice – To Boldly Go... - Veterinary Nursing Alumni speaking on their career development experiences.

### **DkIT Open Events**

- DkIT Open Day - - CEC organised and facilitated “The Future of Employability” – guest speakers from PayCheck Plus, Prometric and Tekenable speaking alongside current placement students and DkIT graduates employed in their companies
- DkIT Open Doors Event - CEC organised and facilitated the session “Building the Region Together” and invited guest speakers from pharma and engineering industry – CombiLift and WuXi Biologics and final year and post grad students from Engineering, Science, Youthwork and Event Management.

### **Funding – Partners in Employability**

The Careers and Employability Centre is a partner a project which has been funded by the National Forum Enhancement Fund 2018. The project called ‘Partners in Employability’ (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/partners-in-employability-a-student-staff-collaboration-to-develop-an-award-to-recognise-the-skills-developed-by-active-student-engagement/>). This project is an internal collaboration between the Students’ Union, CELT and Student Services that aims to develop a framework to support student engagement and recognise its role in promoting employability (see Section 4.1.1.2 Enhancement Projects also).

#### Collaborations and Networks:

- **GradIreland:** DkIT is a partner with GradIreland and is actively engaged with key activities and ensuring DkIT student/graduate access to the GradIreland Career Fair, the National Student Challenge and GradIreland Live. A representative from the Placement Office was on the adjudication panel for the Best Internship Programme (intake up to 50 annually).
- **AHECS:** DkIT Placement Office has a representative on the national Work Placement Task group with AHECS. The task group is committed to developing best practice policy and guidelines for work placement learning and to creating a forum for the sharing of expertise and experience among work placement practitioners. The Task group are currently conducting research to document the national status on work placement in HEIs.

#### 4.1.4 Community Outreach

DkIT has an important role to play in engaging with the local community and beyond. Some of the DkIT community outreach initiatives for 2018/19 are listed below:

- As part of the summer undergraduate research programme in DkIT, students from both science and creative arts worked to develop workshops for primary school students. These workshops encompass STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) objectives in that they use creative methods to teach scientific concepts. Two workshops have been developed thus far: *Space Cadets* and *Pollinators*. So far, both Space Cadets and Pollinator workshops have been run as part of DkIT Science week in 2018. Both workshops have also travelled to schools in Monaghan and Meath. Space Cadets is designed to teach children (6-12 years old) to explore Life on Earth, Microorganisms and Life on the Moon through the medium of the Arts. During the duration of this workshop, participants learn about the fun facts of space through art, drama and activities. In the Pollinators workshop, students learn all about the importance of pollinators. Taking various examples of pollinators in everyday life, the role of pollinators are examined through science and arts. The workshop includes experiences of art inspired by pollinators, making a greenhouse and exploring the science behind how these things work.
- Every November DkIT offers a range of activities for Science week. For example in November 2018, DkIT opened its laboratories to more than 1,200 primary school children from across the North Leinster-South Ulster region as part of Science Week. Students from third to sixth class took part in a variety of interactive demonstrations and lab classes aimed at encouraging them to explore science in their everyday lives, ask questions and find out how science explains the world around us. The Science Week programme was coordinated by the Department of Applied Sciences at DkIT and other researchers from within the Institute.
- The *Fun Move Play* project is a collaboration between Louth Local Sports Partnership and DkIT (Stage 4, *Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Health and Physical Activity* students) and is supported by Sport Ireland and Coaching Ireland. The project involves 7-8 year old children from multiple primary schools in the County Louth area undertaking a fun based physical activity intervention, rolled out by DkIT students. The project runs over 8 weeks. The study has 3 strands, all inextricably linked. Strand 1 focuses on a six week Fundamental Movement Skill (FMS) intervention on children's gross motor skill development. Because a child's participation in

physical activity (PA) is heavily influenced both by parents and teachers, strands 2 and 3 investigate and explore parents' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions of physical activity participation and its' promotion in children.

- The challenge of supporting students in the development of their professional practice skills and assist in the integration of theoretical knowledge to their practice is achieved through the novel and creative development of a *Parent and Toddler group* in Stage 4, semester 1 of the *Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies* programme each academic year. Providing a unique learning opportunity, this approach requires the student group to set up and run their own service in the form of a parent and toddler group, within the supportive confines of the college campus, where the lecturing staff are always present to guide (and assess) the students in the integration of theory into their practice. It provides an opportunity for students to link learning and plan, carry out, monitor and evaluate a programme of activities for young children while working in collaboration with their parents /carers. Participating families (up to 20 each year, consisting of local parents /carers and their young children) gain insight into the value of working with early years professionals. For parents / carers, the resulting impact on their relationship with their children, their understanding of the value of play and their confidence in engaging in play with their young children is generally very positive. This took place in Semester 1 2018/2019.
- Scifest took place in May 2019 where over 300 second level students in attendance.
- The Dublin North, North East Recovery College <http://recoverycollege.ie/> is an exciting new mental health initiative working throughout the Dublin North, Louth and Meath areas. The Recovery College takes an empowering community based approach to mental health with a focus on health and wellness. They aim to create a culture of recovery in the community by providing transformative and recovery based educational courses, resources and creative spaces that are accessible to anyone who wants to learn about mental health recovery, including service users, their supporters and mental health professionals. The Recovery College takes a Co-Production approach which includes people with lived experience in the development and delivery of much needed community based education initiatives. This programme is being facilitated by the mental health nursing team in DkIT in collaboration with the HSE, DCU, The Irish Advocacy Network, Advancing Recovery Ireland and Respond Housing. Each year the Recovery College hosts a summer and winter festival which provides a platform to celebrate the recovery colleges achievements, offer members of the community an opportunity to experience a taster session of a recovery college class and to promote the recovery college to the wider community. DkIT has hosted the winter festival each year. An EOLAS Education Programme is also facilitated within the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies each term. This is run in collaboration with the HSE Louth/Meath Mental Health services and offers an 8 week education programme for services users who have experience of a series of mental health difficulties and a separate 8 week education programme for service user's family and carers. Each education programme is co facilitated and works on a partnership model of delivery.
- The *Genesis* Programme is a consortium of over fifty Partner Organisations that is delivering the Incredible Years® suite of programmes and other evidence-informed interventions to children, families and communities in Dundalk and Drogheda in County Louth as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme. The ABC Programme is a cross-departmental initiative

co-funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies. It is jointly managed by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) and Pobal. The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It aims to break “the cycle of child poverty within areas where it is most deeply entrenched and where children are most disadvantaged, through integrated and effective services and interventions” in the following areas: child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage. The Partner Organisations of The Genesis Programme are made up of Early Years Settings, Schools, Community Groups, Louth Children’s and Young People’s Services Committee, Louth County Childcare Committee, Dundalk Institute of Technology, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Educational Disadvantage Centre at St. Patrick’s College, Irish Primary Principals’ Network (IPPN) as well as a range of departments within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Tusla – the Child and Family Agency. Louth Leader Partnership is the lead agency.

- The *Changing Lives*, a community based Initiative, is a cross border project to support families with children at risk of ADHD. The initiative is being supported by an award of €2.7m by the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and will be focused on County Louth, West Belfast and the Argyll and Bute region in Scotland. The programme is set to benefit over 2,000 families in these regions. As many as 5 to 6% of school aged children are affected by ADHD. It aims to create a better understanding about ADHD and provide an intervention programme for families with children (3-7) experiencing behaviours consistent with ADHD. As well as working with families the programme will provide training for those working with young children, in particular teachers and early years professionals. The programme will provide internationally recognised good practice models of intervention for children with ADHD. The new Initiative will be delivered across County Louth, Colin/West Belfast, and the Argyll & Bute region of Scotland. There are five partner organisations involved: Archways (lead partner), Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, Dundalk Institute of Technology, The Genesis Programme (Louth Leader Partnership) and NHS Highland. The project will be delivered locally by The Genesis Programme. The NetwellCASALA Research Centre (<https://www.netwellcasala.org>) in the School of Health and Science is a partner.
- Students in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts are actively involved with outreach activities, particularly the members of the ACM Chapter (<https://acm.comp.dkit.ie>; DkIT is one of only three chapters in Ireland). The Association of Computing Machinery (ACM’s) Professional and Student chapters worldwide serve as hubs of activity for ACM members and the computing community at large. They provide seminars, lectures, learning forums and networking opportunities with peers and experts across the computing spectrum.
- The School of Informatics and Creative Arts ran two *Transition Year (TY) Computing Camps* in January and May 2019 and welcomed students from second-level secondary schools to experience life as a third-level Computing student in DkIT.
- The School of Informatics and Creative Arts participated in the *The Hour of Code*. This is a global movement by Computer Science Education Week and Code.org reaching tens of millions of students in 180+ countries through a one-hour introduction to computer science and computer programming. The event runs in early December each year and DkIT has been a part of this



initiative for each of the past four years hosting the global event with our ACM chapter driving the initiative locally.

- **VEX Robotics@DkIT:** DkIT launched this initiative in 2018/2019 having received funding from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), in collaboration with Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). VEX Robotics is program where school children from 8-18 years learn about Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) while having fun. They design, build, program and compete with a robot in a competition. The competitions are run locally, nationally and internationally (<https://www.vexrobotics.com/competition>). In addition to STEM, students acquire other skills such as project management, presentation, teamwork, leadership skills and much more. There are two divisions of the competition being run in Ireland, VEX IQ and VEX EDR. VEX IQ is aimed at primary school level while VEX EDR is post-primary school level. This is a collaborative initiative between the Schools of Informatics and Creative Arts and Engineering.
- **Summer Computing Camps:** This long-standing initiative has been running in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts since 2010 with a variety of different camps conducted with an aim to introduce 12-16 year olds to Computing. In 2018 eight summer camps were held catering for students (81 in total) from 11 to 17 years of age. DkIT ran the first Animation camp and also held a camp off site in Castleblayney.
- The Department of Creative Arts Media and Music hosted a number of events for the public including the following:
  - Traditional Music concert 'Ceol Oirghialla' featured performances by the DkIT Traditional Music Ensemble and students as well as the Ensemble-in-Residence, the Oriel Traditional Orchestra (Nov 2018)
  - Performance by Theatre and Film Practice Students of Caryl Churchill's play 'Love and Information' (Nov 2018)
  - Annual Christmas concert 'Carols and Lullabies' in St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Blackrock (Dec 2018)
  - Performance of Huis Clos by Jean-Paul Sartre, produced by students on the BA Theatre and Film Practice (Feb 2019)
  - Traditional music performance by the Johanson Band from Estonia in the Fr McNally Recital Room (Feb 2019)
  - DkIT Traditional Music Ensemble performed in the Royal Meath Accordion Orchestra Variety Concert in Drogheda (Feb 2019)
  - Performance of 'Strings' by DkIT Musical Theatre Ensemble (Mar 2019)
  - Recording of Céilí House in DkIT Recital room (Apr 2019)
  - An Evening of Choral Music featuring the DkIT Choir, Dkit Classical Group and Cór Chairlinne in Carlingford Heritage Centre (Apr 2019)
  - Film Showcase in the IMC Cinema (May 2019)
  - Fís – Graduate Showcase (June 2019)
  - A number of staff and students organised and participated in a variety of events at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Drogheda, which garnered significant positive media attention, promoting both the department and the Institute at a national level. Students from Applied Music, Production of Music and Audio and Film and Television Production gained valuable industry experience working with a range of companies at

the Fleadh including Fleadh TV, Red Shoe Productions and Boggler Productions, while others facilitated workshops and were members of the Programme Committee at the Fleadh.

- Students and staff from the Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music facilitated Creativity and Innovation workshops funded by Creative Ireland to local school children in the area of audio, badge making, STEAM, storytelling and composition.
- The School of Engineering organised Engineer's Week in February 2019. The School contributes a range of events to the national programme in the form of talks and activities to primary and secondary schools within the region. Examples include: Solidworks Experience, An Introduction to Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Robots on the move (Lego Mindstorms), and an Open Lecture on Energy contained in Ocean Waves. The School also holds events to encourage students and particularly female students to study STEM subjects at secondary level.
- The School of Business and Humanities hosted its Annual Accounting Lecture on in November 2018. The lecture was delivered by well-known Economist, Mr. Jim Power (owner/manager, Jim Power Economics Limited, Economic and Financial Consultancy). The topic focused on the challenges and implications of Brexit.

#### **4.5. Internationalisation**

In 2018/19, DkIT was one of the leading institutes in the sector for international learner recruitment. A total of 435 international students were registered on full time programmes in DkIT in 2018/19 and 5 MoUs were recently signed in relation to articulation agreements with international partner colleges. Staff and student engagement with Erasmus was very positive across the institute. In 2018/19, DkIT received 108 Erasmus students from partner colleges across Europe, 25 DkIT students participated in Erasmus work placements and 17 participated in Erasmus study abroad. 9 DkIT staff were afforded teaching and work-shadowing opportunities in Europe. DkIT currently has 77 Erasmus bilateral agreements with European HEIs.

**International projects and initiatives at DkIT that positively impacted students and staff in 2018/2019 included:**

- For the first time students from the *Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing* conducted Erasmus placement as part of their programme.
- Five Master student Erasmus mobilities were conducted at Hochschule Heilbronn Germany. It was the first time that DkIT Master of Business Studies (MBS) students went on Erasmus. This built on the Residential hosted in Heilbronn annually which is embedded in DkIT's MBS programme.
- Development of Nursing traineeships for DkIT students with IPS Setubal Portugal.
- Establishment of a bilateral agreement with the Jagiellonian University Medical College Krakow for the purpose of staff collaboration in the field of Mental Health Nursing.
- Completion of audits of clinical learning sites in March 2019 for DkIT Psychiatric Nursing students going on Erasmus Traineeships to UCL, Denmark.
- New industry placement at Rittal GmbH, through DkIT's partner university Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen.

**Engagement in Erasmus Strategic Partnerships:**

- Participation in STEAM Intensive Project at Artesis Plantijn University, Belgium (November 2018). Staff from DkIT's Applied Sciences Department and Creative Media Department participated in this week-long intensive project on the theme of Climate. 150 students and staff from up to 9 European Higher Education Institutions participated in the programme, focusing on educational outputs to inform and enhance educational practice (referenced in Section 4.1.3.2 Academic Schools).
- Erasmus STEAM project in Porto (April 2019). Students and staff from DkIT's Music Department collaborated on this intensive programme with colleges in Norway, Belgium and Portugal. Outputs from the programme's workshops included STEAM recipes devised for teaching Music to children. The students worked in transnational groups and collaborated with three primary school settings in the city of Porto to test their creative outputs in a classroom setting. As part of the project DkIT students collaborated with Irish, Belgian and Norwegian students to develop a STEAM app called NEPTUNE for use in the classroom.
- Participation in CitizenSchool Antwerp (April 2019). DkIT Games Development students successfully created an Anti-Racism Game in 2019 called CitizenSchool which was presented at University of Artesis Plantijn Conference in April 2019. CitizenSchool was a collaboration between three NGOs and three third-level colleges: DkIT, Artesis Plantijn (Antwerp) and ISP Gaya (Portugal) and Le Parternariat (France), Studio Globo (Belgium) and Stedenband Harlem-Mutare (Netherlands). The development of the game resulted from an intensive project on the theme of Serious Gaming for a Better Europe, exploring themes connected to Citizenship, anti-Racism, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants. The game was designed to enable teachers to conduct classroom discussions around civil society and is designed for use for Transition Year students at High School (referenced in Section 4.1.3.2 Academic Schools).
- Facilitation of Intercultural Language Exchange Visit (February 2019) to the Institute's partner universities in The Catholic University of Lyon (ESDES School of Management) and the Fondation Sup'La Mache, Lyon. Now in its tenth year, the purpose of the language exchange is to encourage DkIT students to consider study abroad to France and to develop intercultural and French language competence.
- Embedding of Erasmus Study an/or Placement in a range of programmes within the Department of the Built Environment. These include: the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology, the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Building Surveying, the Bachelor of Science(Hons) in Construction Management, the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Surveying and the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Civil Engineering.
- Promotion of Social Inclusion on Campus and in the Community Event (April 2019): The Institute participated in an Erasmus-funded intensive project with the cross-border Southern Regional College Newry called the Learning for Living Together Project. Other partners included RIC (a Latvian NGO dedicated to promoting social integration through art and creativity; Kettle of Fish, a social film production company from Northern Ireland, and CONFORM S.C.A.R.L, Italy who develop research projects and classroom e-learning resources. A Social Inclusion and Diversity

training course to educators across the EU supporting integration and promotion was designed by the partners of the project, to promote integration and diversity at an EU level.

- Intercultural Informatics Workshop- IUT Lens and DkIT (April 2019). The Institute's Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing facilitated an intensive project in collaboration with its French partner college, IUT Lens, on the development of a web-application project. The purpose of the project was to teach the students new web development technologies (referenced in Section 4.1.3.2 Academic Schools).
- The Institute hosted a visit from the French Ambassador to Ireland in April 2019 to celebrate its longstanding links with France and its promotion of French language and culture within the Erasmus context. The visit was focused around a culinary event to mark Gout de France-Ireland month with students from the Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management participating.

### **World Erasmus Day Celebration at DkIT (November 2018)**

DkIT International Office, in tandem with the School of Informatics and Creative Arts celebrated a Day to mark Erasmus and international engagement at DkIT. The Day had a cross-community element, through partnership with the Carlingford Heritage Trust Committee in County Louth, who facilitated a tour of the Greenore Railway Museum showcasing Co. Louth's Victorian heritage, followed by a workshop on the Irish language, and instruction in Irish Ceili Dance. The event was targeted at a mixture of Erasmus and International and local students across the Institute as an educational opportunity to learn about and connect with the local heritage of County Louth and Irish culture and heritage generally.

### **Volunteering and Integration Opportunities**

DkIT International Office engaged community representatives to inform Erasmus and international students on Volunteering Opportunities within the region. These include positions as language assistants, and engagement in a community weekly English language class as part of Louth's Migrant-Welcome Initiative. The Dundalk Tourism Office was invited to International Welcome Days at DkIT to promote discovery of culture and tourism within the northeast region of Ireland. The DkIT Music Ensemble invited participation from Erasmus students in weekly rehearsals, providing students with an interest in Music to be integrated into the community through performance and events.

The International Office commissioned an International Intern to support Erasmus and International Students during the semester by organising social integration events on- and off-campus. This included the hosting of Culture Cafe fortnightly for cultural exchange and visiting students in their halls-of-residence weekly for social outreach. Erasmus students were encouraged to engage in the wide array of clubs and societies on offer at DkIT. Many of these societies proved popular with Erasmus students, particularly the Irish Dancing Society and the Photographic Society, which organized guided social excursions in the East/Northeast regions.

The Institute was successful in being awarded 4 additional Staff Mobilities under the Erasmus Call in 2018/2019

4 new Bilateral Agreements were concluded in 18/19 with the following universities:

- University of Aveiro;
- IPS Setubal;
- Erasmus Hogeschool Brussels;
- University of Aydin, Turkey

## 4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights

Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

### 4.2.1 Development of a Framework for Student Engagement: A Student-Staff Partnership

The National Forum funded project '*Partners in Employability*' is a collaboration between the SU, CELT and Students Services. The project aims to:

- Develop a framework to support partnership with students and recognise their contributions to the life of the institute,
- Establish structures and processes to support student engagement,
- Highlight the role of engagement in developing key graduate attributes and enhancing employability.
- Empower students to recognise and evidence the skills gained through active engagement.

The project began in January 2019. The initial phase focused on consultation with students, staff and employers as well as capacity building. In the second phase, seven student interns collaborated with the project team to develop a framework for student engagement that supports the development of employability skills. This included co-designing the curriculum for a 10 credit Special Purpose Award to accredit engagement.

The project has continued into 2019/20. The framework was endorsed by Academic Council in November 2019 and the first phase, the DkIT Elevate Award (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/centre-for-excellence-in-learning-and-teaching/dkit-elevate-awards/>), launched in January 2020.

## Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019).

### 5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans

Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

#### 5.1.2 Development and Review of Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are updated on a periodic basis in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule.

The following work in relation to policy development and review is planned for 2019/20:

- Review of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures.
- Review of the Learning and Teaching Policy (this will be subsumed into the Assessment and Learning Policy).
- Review of the Technology Enhanced Learning Policy.
- Review of the Student Voice Policy.
- Updating of the DkIT Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis to ensure that they are aligned with DCU's regulations.
- Develop quality assurance policies and procedure relating to collaborative partnerships (specifically articulation agreements).

There are a number of additional goals set for the period 2019-2020 contained in the Quality Manual (<https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/policies/Quality-Manual-May-2019-2024.pdf>)

#### 5.1.3 Learning and Teaching

The objectives of CELT, in collaboration with the DkIT academic community are as follows:

- To revise the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- To continue to support the implementation of the Assessment & Learning Policy, particularly in relation to feedback and student assessment literacy.
- To support implementation of the Framework for Student Engagement.
- To develop more flexible and accessible learner support for all students.
- To develop a Digital Learning Policy and continue to develop digital capacity among students and staff.
- Develop quality assurance policy and procedures for blended learning (to compliment current programme approval policies and procedures; To incorporate QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes.

#### 5.1.4. Research

The objectives of the Graduate Research Office are as follows:

- Continue to build its research capacity with a view to achieving the metrics required for Technological University (TU) status.
- The research supervisory development and professional training programme will continue as will other training and supports for staff and students.
- As a linked provider for DCU, DkIT will continue its work on building the quality assurance arrangements and administrative structures for the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.
- Develop quality assurance policies and procedures relating to the provision of Structured Masters programmes.
- Implement the National Researcher Career Framework (<https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/>).
- Implement the Research governance structures around the Research Institutes.
- Implement the action plan detailed in the Institute’s recent Athena Swan Bronze award application.

#### 5.2 Review Plans

A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

#### 5.2.1. Programme Validations

The following programme validations are planned for 2019/20:

Validation of the following **new** programmes:

##### School of Business and Humanities

Department	Programme Title (provisional)	Validation Type	NFQ Level	Award Class (Major, Non-Major)	ECTS Credits
Business Studies	<i>Master of Science in Management and Leadership</i>	New	9	Major	90 ECTS
Hospitality Studies	<i>Bachelor of Science in International Tourism Management</i>	New	8	Major	180 ECTS

Management and Financial Studies	<i>Higher Diploma in Accounting</i>	New	8	Major	60
Management and Financial Studies	<i>Certificate in Applied Taxation</i>	New	8	Minor	10 ECTS
Management and Financial Studies	<i>Certificate in International Trade- Import- Export/EU Law and Authorised Economic Operator</i>	New	8	Special-Purpose	25 ECTS

**School of Engineering**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Programme Title (provisional)</b>	<b>Validation Type</b>	<b>NFQ Level</b>	<b>Award Class (Major, Non-Major)</b>	<b>ECTS Credits</b>
Department of Electronic and Mechanical Engineering	<i>Certificate in Digital Design and Fabrication</i>	New	6	Special-Purpose	30

**School of Health and Science**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Programme Title (provisional)</b>	<b>Validation Type</b>	<b>NFQ Level</b>	<b>Award Class (Major, Non-Major)</b>	<b>ECTS Credits</b>
Agriculture, Food & Animal Health	<i>Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Advanced Veterinary Nursing</i>	New	8	Major	60
As above	<i>4 minor awards</i>	New	8	Minor	10
Agriculture, Food & Animal Health	<i>Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Part-time)</i>	New	7	Major	60
Nursing, Midwifery & Early Years	<i>Master of Science in Nursing</i>	New	9	Major	90



	<i>(consortium programme , led by IT Tralee)</i>				
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in Advanced Comprehensive Health Assessment</i>	New	9	Special-purpose	10
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in Nursing Midwifery Medicinal Product Prescribing</i>	New	8	Special-purpose	30

### School of Informatics and Creative Arts

Department	Programme Title (provisional)	Validation Type	NFQ Level	Award Class (Major, Non-Major)	ECTS Credits
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Drama (joint programme development with School of Business and Humanities)</i>	New	8	Major	60 (Add-on)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Master of Arts in Music for Screen</i>	New	9	Major	75
Computing Science and Mathematics	<i>Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Computing Systems and Operations</i>	New	8	Major	240
Computing Science and Mathematics	<i>Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Mathematics and Computer Science</i>	New	8	Major	240

#### Note(s):

The listings above are in line with the outputs of the Academic Portfolio Planning exercise completed at Institute level (most recent exercise completed in 2018). The list may be subject to change as needs and requirements change. Additional programmes may be developed in the period 2019/2020.

**5.2.2. Regulatory Bodies:**

- The *Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Building Surveying* will be submitted to SCSi (Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland; <https://www.scsi.ie/>) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) (<https://www.rics.org>) for accreditation in 2020.

**5.2.3. Research Centres:**

- DkIT's six research Institutes are due for their research centre designation in 2019/2020.
- HR Excellence in Research Award is due to be externally reviewed in 2019/2020.

**5.2.4. Service Unit Reviews:**

- The DkIT library is planning to carry out an external peer review of all of its services and activities in 2019/20.

**5.3 Other Plans**

Not applicable.

## Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

### 6.1 The Institution and External Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

The CINNTE Institutional Review was completed in 2018/2019 (see AIQR Part 1, 17. Internal Review Schedule; Section 3.1 Effectiveness).

The Final Report and Implementation Plan can be found at:

<https://www.qqi.ie//Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx>

An overarching institutional review implementation group is being established to plan and oversee the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Institutional Review (this will include the formulation of goals, objectives and KPIs). This work will be ongoing over the period until the next review.

### 6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review.

The Institutional Review process facilitated a full reflection on Institute activities relating to quality assurance and enhancement. The review indicated that DkIT has developed a framework of quality assurance policies and procedures that ensure compliance with ESG and QQI requirements. There has been a move from a culture of quality compliance to one of enhancement in the nine year period since the last review. There is a focus on promoting learner-centredness and in working with learners as partners.

The role of programme boards in quality assurance is evolving and assuming greater importance in the development and delivery of programmes.

Enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment has been a key driver and has resulted in DkIT winning a number of national awards and developing capacity in scholarship in this area. The focus on professional development in learning and teaching has had a transformative effect on the culture within the institution.

Schools are increasingly engaging with external stakeholders, ensuring that programmes are relevant and that learners have 'real world' opportunities.

The Institute is a leading member of a large number of collaborative partnerships including the MEND cluster, DCU/DKIT Graduate School, NEFHEA Alliance, collaborative delivery arrangements with Teagasc, Monaghan Institute and Cork College of Commerce, Erasmus agreements, international articulation agreements and a number of formal MoUs with local industry partners.

The Institutional Review identified a number of thematic areas for future focus including staff professional development, enhancing learning support, improving internal and external communication processes, enhancing support for policy implementation and evaluation and driving strategically focused research and innovation.

The Institute will also progress systematically the outcomes of the programmatic portfolio review, ensuring that all programmes are fit for purpose and address the challenge of establishing a strong presence in part-time and bespoke programmes.

### **6.3 Themes**

Developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review.

1. Strategic targeting of Northern Ireland and defined International student markets.
2. Student academic feedback and assessment literacy.
3. Continued enhancement of digital capacity and flexible learning modes.
4. Building capacity in relation to both postgraduate research students and supervisors.
5. Increased provision of part-time and flexible programmes.

Participation in national and cluster-based access initiatives.

## AIQR 2018-2019-Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

### Case Studies

<b>Case Study No:</b>	1
<b>School/Dept/Area:</b>	Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
<b>Contact:</b>	Dr Moira Maguire (Head of Learning and Teaching)
<b>Title:</b>	Case study: Providing more flexible student support.
<b>Case Study Description</b>	
<p>DkIT provides a wide range of supports for learners. Evidence indicates that they are effective. However, the changing profile of students, including increasing numbers of commuting and part-time students, mean that there is a need to ensure equitable access to support. This means developing more flexible and accessible support provision to complement the current, largely face-to-face offerings and offer opportunities to increase learner support capacity in ways that will cater for a student body which accesses learning in ever more diverse ways.</p> <p>DkIT secured funding under the HEA's 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund to develop a digital student support hub. A comprehensive needs analysis formed the first phase the project. This included focus groups with students, a student survey, interviews with key staff and individual service reviews. In addition, other relevant data was drawn upon, including studentsurvey.ie, the INDEx survey, VLE logs etc.</p> <p>The findings indicated that students are very satisfied with the support they receive and feel that generally it meets their needs very well. While support is perceived as accessible this is less true out of term and in the evenings. Other barriers include working, commuting, timetables and awareness. The VLE, Moodle, was preferred as the home for the hub but accessibility via a mobile phone is a priority. While students would welcome additional virtual support, particularly learning support, they considered this complementary to the core face-to-face services. They valued face-to-face support and relationships with staff and were very clear that they did not want these to be replaced by online support. Lecturers play a key role in raising awareness of supports and encouraging students to use them.</p> <p>The needs analysis enabled identification of three core principles to structure the design of the virtual student support hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The hub should facilitate and support positive relationships.</li><li>• The hub should promote engagement with support services.</li><li>• The hub should be accessible and increase access to support.</li></ul> <p>All providers of student support currently are interpreting these principles within the context of their aims and contexts to provide the framework for virtual service provision. This framework will then guide the final development of the hub.</p>	

<b>Case Study No:</b>	2
<b>School/Dept/Area:</b>	Regional Development Centre (RDC)
<b>Contact:</b>	Mr Aidan Browne, Head of Innovation & Business Development
<b>Title:</b>	Industry & Academia, Stronger Together
<b>Case Study Description</b>	
<p>Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of industry and Higher Education engagement has seen the development of a strategic and structured framework to support that cause at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). The <i>DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme (CPP)</i> was developed as the vehicle and framework to facilitate that enhanced engagement process and has become the informed bridge for mutual access to expertise and knowledge between external organisations and DkIT.</p> <p>The CPP is encapsulated within a formal, but non-legal binding, agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting out a range of agreed and specified time-bound activities between DkIT and the partner. The CPP is leveraged as an enabler for exploration and development of ideas across strategy, teaching and learning, research, innovation and broad engagement targeted at the needs of the partner, and supports the Institute in the delivery of its strategic and regional remit, ultimately contributing to the economic, social and cultural development of the region.</p> <p>DkIT endeavoured to identify and target progressive organisations to become members of the DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme. To date five such progressive organisations across agri-food, heavy engineering, the creative sector, construction and sports technology have signed up to the process, each seeing engagement with third level educational organisations an integral part of their respective strategies. For each the engagement through the CPP has developed a tailored three year agreement and MOU to facilitate engagement traversing areas such as strategy development, programme design and development, access to talented students and graduates and access to research and innovation collaborations.</p> <p>Since its inception the CPP has delivered in a number of key areas such as supporting DkIT in the development of the Institute’s new Strategic Plan 2018-2020, co-development of undergraduate course modules and access to specific industry technology, co-development of bespoke course and outreach delivery of same, guest lecturing of CPP organisation staff, brokered specific access to students adding value to the organisations prospective employee talent pipeline, access to applied research student projects and research and innovation collaboration projects both national and EU funded.</p> <p>While the DkIT CPP innovative initiative is at an early stage the rewards are evident from all sides. The teaching and learning experience for both DkIT staff and DkIT students has been greatly enhanced. At operational level, this initiative has facilitated greater coherence and integration of approaches and activities between Schools and Functional Areas within the Institute. External organisations have been afforded a bridge to access fantastic resources in a Higher Education Institute in a “whole of the organisation” approach. As such there is a strong pipeline of organisations in discussions regarding membership of the DkIT CPP. Further development of the initiative will undoubtedly come as we learn forward.</p>	