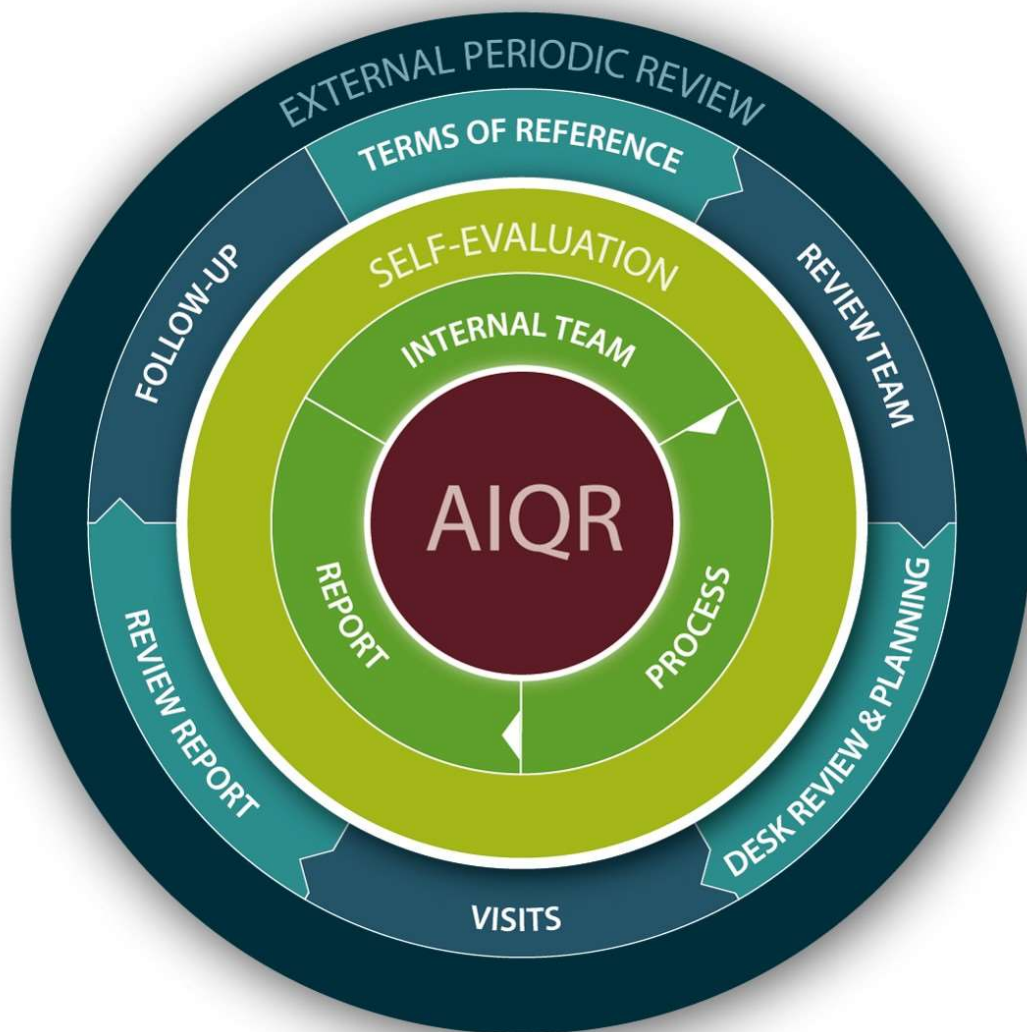


# Institute of Technology, Tralee

## 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

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## 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.

The Institute of Technology, Tralee is a publicly-funded higher education institution established by statute.

The Institute, originally designated Tralee Regional Technical College (Tralee RTC), was established in 1977 under the control of the Town of Tralee Vocational Education Committee (VEC). Tralee RTC became an autonomous Institution in 1992 under the Regional Technical Colleges Act (1992) with its remit being:

‘To provide vocational, technical education and training for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the college.’

Tralee RTC was designated as the Institute of Technology, Tralee in 1997. The new designation more closely reflected the modern mission of the Institution. The mission of the Institute is to ‘excel in teaching, research and development work for the benefits of students, industry and the wider community’.

In 2004, the Institute was delegated the authority, from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, then HETAC), to make awards for its undergraduate programmes and taught masters programmes. The Institute provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, full and part-time, at NFQ Levels 6-10. In 2017, the Institute was granted delegated authority from QQI in the making of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ level 9 in areas where the Institute already had approval. The Institute already had Research Approval from QQI to deliver Postgraduate Research Degrees at NFQ Level 10 in particular research areas. The range of programmes has led, not only to a wide geographic spread of Irish students, but to a Higher Education Institution with a broad international appeal.

The Institute has currently in excess of 70 nationalities pursuing programmes of study across the three Schools: School of Business, Computing and Humanities; School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; & School of Health and Social Sciences. The Institute is now home to approximately 400 staff (including academic staff and academic management) and 3,000 students with programmes being offered across a range of disciplines. The Institute supports a thriving

research community of over 150 researchers including academic staff, research professionals and postgraduate students.

Linked to the Institutes three schools, IT Tralee has developed three research centres of scale, whose missions align with national and global research and innovation priorities **Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre (Shannon ABC)**, the **IMaR Research Centre**, and the **UNESCO Chair Research Centre 'Transforming the Lives of People with Disabilities, their Families and Communities, through Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation'**. In addition, across the three schools, a number of research groups are developing scale and capacity in strategic research areas e.g. the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (CEED), the Centre for Language and Intercultural Studies (CLIS) and the Irish Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (IAHT).

The Institutes sixth Strategic Plan was developed in 2017, entitled: 'Strategic Plan - A Vision to 2021'. This plan was developed cognisant of the overall national policy framework for the Higher Education sector as outlined in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. Recognising that the Institute by itself cannot facilitate the development of a dynamic and entrepreneurial region, in developing this plan the Institute incorporated the relevant aspects of county, regional and national development policies. In particular, the following plans significantly influenced this Strategic Plan:

*County/Regional:*

- Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021;
- Kerry County Council - Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021;
- South West Region Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017.

*National/European:*

- Winning Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019 IDA Ireland;
- The Action Plan for Jobs 2017;
- Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2017-2020;
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019;
- National Skills Strategy 2025;
- Innovation 2020;
- Europe 2020.

In carrying out the Institutes activities, and in developing plans for the future, the Institute is guided by a number of core principles, which were re-stated in the new Strategic Plan:

- Excellence - aim towards excellence in all aspects of our efforts, inside and outside the classroom;
- Integrity - act as one in an open and transparent manner;
- Inclusivity - celebrate diversity and strive to ensure that our communities have access to our programmes, campus and facilities;
- Collaboration through connectedness - working together within and outside of the Institute to advance Knowledge and grow the organisations reach and impact;
- Creativity and Innovation - be a responsive, solution-driven institute that embraces change.

The vision for the Institute has been recalibrated within the new strategic Plan as ‘IT, Tralee will play a transformative role, within the region and beyond. This will be achieved through the creative pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation. This will be realised within an environment of sustainability, fellowship and inclusivity’. To ensure the Institute succeeds as a collective in realising this vision, the Institute has identified five key Strategic Goals, namely:

- Sustainability and Growth;
- Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness;
- Research and Innovation;
- Fellowship and Inclusivity;
- The establishment of the Munster Technological University.

The Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4, and the Compact agreed with the HEA, informed this new Strategic Plan.

A new Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021 was developed in 2017, which firmly underpins the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and builds upon the Institutes research performance over the period of the previous Research and Innovation Strategic Plan ‘Connecting Knowledge Globally’, which was published in 2013. The new Research and Innovation Strategic Plan established the following priorities to strengthen the Institutes reputation for excellence in research and innovation:

- Research Excellence: Internationally Benchmarked and Externally Evaluated;
- Research Impact through Innovation;
- Enhance Research Linkages and collaborative Research Activities;
- High Quality Research Degree Provision to Level 10;
- Enabling and Supporting Research Activity across IT, Tralee.

IT, Tralee is firmly committed to continuing to perform high quality research that will strengthen our relevance as a strong driver of economic and social growth. Only excellent research will secure IT, Tralee’s reputation as a high performing research engaged education provider.

In carrying out its activities, and in developing plans for the future, the Institute is committed to demonstrating the highest quality standards, to continuous quality improvement and enhancement and to the creation of a quality culture through a quality assurance system covering all of its operations. In the development of this quality assurance system, the Institute, as required by the Education and Training Act 2012, has regard to the QQIs Quality Assurance Guidelines, QQIs Policy on Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area and the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (published April 2017). The Institutes internal quality assurance and enhancement system is focused going forward on applying the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (THEQF) Principles of Internal Quality Assurance and Enhancement:

- Academic and Student-centred Values;
- Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom;
- Quality Culture;

- Informed Practice and Stakeholder Engagement;
- Proportional Implementation;
- Comprehensive, Transparent and Publicly Accountable Procedures;
- Measurement;
- Consistency with Policy and International Effective Practice.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual Section A1: Introduction and Section A2: Mission and Vision, Governance and Management, Sub Section A2.1 Vision and Mission.

The Institutes Quality Assurance Manual (and supporting documentation) is available to both staff and students internally and publically via the IT, Tralee website at [www.ittralee.ie](http://www.ittralee.ie)

The Institutes Strategic Plan - A Vision to 2021 is available internally and publicly through the IT, Tralee website at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

The Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact 2014 is available publicly through the HEA website at: [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie)

The Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021 is available internally and publically through the IT, Tralee website at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

## **2. Quality assurance decision-making fora**

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

Under the IOT Act 2006 and RTC Act 1999 (Baseline Act), the Institute is led by a Governing Body, the roles and functions of which are described in the IOT Act 2006. The Institutes Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and over-seeing of the educational work of the Institute, and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the college. The Academic Council is accordingly the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality. The President and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar are respectively Chairman and Secretary of the Academic Council. Once adopted, relevant decisions of Academic Council meetings are tabled for discussion/decision at Governing Body meetings. The Academic Council has the following Sub-Committee structure:

- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee;
- Research and Development Sub-Committee;
- Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee;
- Student Affairs Sub-Committee.

All of the above Sub-Committees contribute to the development of quality assurance policies and procedures at Institute level. Student representatives are members of the Governing Body, Academic Council and all of the Academic Council Sub-Committees. In addition to Sub-Committees of Academic Council, working groups are 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 is relevant, current and embedded Institute-wide.

The responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with these quality policies and procedures rests ultimately with the Executive and particularly within the remit of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The Executive ensures the activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that the elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken. The President is the Institutes Chief Officer, and is assisted in the management of the Institute by three Vice Presidents (Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar, Vice President Corporate Affairs, Vice President Research, Development and External Engagement) and the broader Executive team which includes three Academic Heads of School and the Head of Strategy. The General Management Team is comprised of the Executive, Academic Heads of School and Departments, Academic management and Central Services management.

At School and Department level, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Course Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality assurance policies and procedures. The academic management of the department's programmes is the responsibility of Head of Department and the Course Board. Opportunities for enhancement of quality assurance policies and procedures are frequently identified through Course Board feedback (student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Course Board ensuring the student voice is heard at this level) and

School Board feedback (which consist of academic staff, school management and school administration).

The service units of Human Resources, Estates Management, Information Technology and Systems, External Services, Academic Administration and Student Affairs, Library and Finance, all report to their line management within the Executive Team. Feedback received through the local staff teams contribute to management decisions with respect to quality assurance and quality enhancement.

The Institute, as a publicly funded body, is accountable to the HEA, and as such is subject to external audit of its finances and its activities. PwC on behalf of THEA, have been engaged to carry out internal audits of the Institute activities at both local and national level.

A Quality Assurance Dissemination Strategy firmly embeds quality assurance and enhancement within all of the operations across the Institute and provides for an open, transparent and accountable system of quality assurance and enhancement. This system, co-ordinated by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar, records and tracks decisions of the Academic Council and Sub-Committees and provides for a facility to record when decisions are to be acted upon, by whom and when they have to be completed. It also provides a facility for managing agendas and minutes of meetings. The online publication of the Institutes Quality Assurance Manual and the Institutes Reports and Plans has contributed to this open, transparent and accountable system. All staff and students contribute to this quality culture within the Institute. Staff, students and all relevant stakeholders are formally updated with respect to new and updated quality assurance procedures, and are formally asked for their feedback on the operation of quality assurance procedures. Feedback received is processed formally through the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee.

The Institutes Quality Assurance Manual (relevant sections referred to below) describes the Governing Body, Academic Council and other governance, management and decision making fora with respect to quality assurance and enhancement.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Sub Section A2.2: Governance , Sub Section A2.3: Management, Sub Section A2.4: Standing Orders of the Academic Council, Sub Section A2.5: Management of Agendas and Minutes of Meetings of Academic Council, Sub Section A2.6: Governing body Membership, Sub Section A2.7: Role and Function of the Academic Council, Sub Section A2.8: Role and Function of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee, Sub Section A2.9: Role and Function of the Research and Development Sub-Committee, Sub Section A2.10: Role and Function of the Institute Postgraduate Committee, Sub Section A2.11: Role and Function of the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee, Sub Section A2.12: Role and Function of the Student Affairs Sub-Committee.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>



## 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.

Programmes are designed in line with the mission, values, core principles and strategic objectives of the Institutes Strategic Plan and the Strategic Dialogue Compact with the HEA, involving students and other stakeholders, and in response to regional need and national policy objectives of government and governing bodies and in the context of the efficient use of resources. The programme design and validation process is carried out in accordance with the Institutes quality assurance procedures outlined below. Programme validation is granted for five years, after which time a review of the programme (Programmatic Review) is completed to establish eligibility for validation renewal and/or retirement. Programmatic Review is normally carried out per academic school, for all programmes of that school, in consideration of the programme, the department, school and Institute strategy. A formal register (Order in Council) of validated programmes is maintained by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules, Sub Section A4.1: Overview of Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules, Sub Section A4.2: Procedures for the Design and Validation of New Programmes, Sub Section A4.3: Procedures for Modifications to Validated Programmes, Sub Section A4.4: Procedure for Module Development, Modification and Validation and Sub Section A4.5: Appendices, including the following items: Item 1: New Programme Proposal Form for Major Awards; Item 2: New Programme Proposal Submission; Item 3: Assessors Guide for New Programme Evaluation; Item 4: Internal School Panel Review Report (New Programmes); Item 5: External Expert Assessors Report; Item 6: External Expert Assessors Report (Desk Review); Item 7: External Panel Review Report (New Programme); Item 8: Programme(s) Validation Report; Item 9: Programme Proposal Template for Minor/Supplemental/Special Purpose Awards; Item 10: External Expert Assessor's (Desk Review) guide for Evaluation of Proposed Major Modification-Restructuring of Validated Programmes; Item 11: Update to Module Descriptors-Major Changes; Item 12: Update to Module Descriptors-Minor Changes; Item 13.1: Desk Review/ External Panel Nomination Form; 13.2: Declaration of Interest Form; Item 14: Time Schedule for Planning of External Panels/Desk Reviews; Item 15: Tracking Log of Amendments to a Programme subsequent to External Panel/Programmatic Review; Item 16: Roles and Responsibilities for Desk Reviews/External Panels; Item 17: School Audit of Programmes Validation Process; Item 18: Template for changes to current Approved Course Schedules.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>



## **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.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights areas for focus over the period to 2030. The mission of the Institute, along with the Institutes stated vision and values within the Institutes Strategic Plan, form the bedrock for the goals highlighted within the Strategic Plan which reflect the National Strategy with respect to the provision of quality student centred teaching, learning and assessment and a quality student experience. Excellent Teaching and Learning and the quality of the student experience is also an agreed strategic objective within the Strategic Dialogue Compact with the HEA.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Sub Section A5.2: Anti Plagiarism Policy and Procedure, Sub Section A5.3: Preparation and Production of Examination and Assessment Material, Sub Section A5.4a: Project and Dissertation Procedure, Sub Section A5.4b: Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline, Sub Section A5.5: Access by Candidates to Relevant Examination and Assessment Material, Sub Section A5.6a: Procedures for the Marking of Examinations and Assessments and Recording of Results, Sub Section A5.6b: Entry of Examination Results, Sub Section A5.7: Pre Examination Board and Meetings, Sub Section A5.8: Board of Examiners and Meetings, Sub Section A5.9: Recording Decisions of Boards of Examiners Meetings, Sub Section A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit, Subsection A5.9b: Classified Awards for Repeat Students, Sub Section A5.10: Amendment to a Results Broadsheet, Sub Section A5.11: Review of Provisional Examination Results, Sub Section A5.12: Recheck of Provisional Examination Results, Sub Section A5.13: Processing of Alleged Infringements related to Examinations organised by the Examinations Office, Sub Section A5.14: Processing of Alleged Infringements of Examination Regulations Relating to Continuous Assessment (CA) and Final Examination Other (FEO), Sub Section A5.15: Analysis of Examination Results, Sub Section A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures (Taught Programmes), Sub Section A5.17: Assessment and Standards Revised 2013, Sub Section A5.18: Invigilator Guidelines, Sub Section A5.19: Procedure for the Management of Certified Absence relating to CA Events, Sub Section A5.20: Solas Assessment Regulations, Sub Section A5.21: Protocol for Students Representing the Institute, Sub Section A5.22: Application for Use of a Bilingual Dictionary During Exams, Sub Section A5.23: Student Feedback on Continuous Assessment (CA), Sub Section A5.24: Staff Student Meeting Guidelines for Students and Academic Staff, Sub Section A5.25a: Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism, Sub Section A5.25b: Request for Approval to Depart from Institute Referencing System, Sub Section A5.26: Examinations and Assessments Review committee(EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC).

Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, Sub Section A6.1: School Boards, Sub Section A6.2: Course Boards, Sub Section A6.4: Course Programme Handbook; Sub Section A6.6: Students on Course Board.

Section A10: Complaints Procedure, Sub Section A10.1 Complaints Procedures.

Section A13: Learning Resources and Student Support, Sub Section A13.3: Student Charter, Subsection A13.4: Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures, Sub Section A13.6: Policy and Procedure to Support and Determine a Students Fitness to Continue in Study, Sub Section A13.7: Student Code of Conduct and General Discipline Policy, Sub Section A13.8: Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedures.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the following sections of the Student Handbook: Section B: Student Rights and Responsibilities, Sub Section 2: Academic Conduct. See Student Handbook Academic Year 2018/2019 available at: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilites.pdf>

All new programme proposals, and the evaluation and validation of same, and reviews of existing programmes (Programmatic Review), require consideration of programme delivery, with particular focus on curriculum design and teaching, learning, assessment and feedback strategies. This serves to quality assure same and support a student centred approach to same. Statistics on student progression within programmes are reviewed annually and barriers to progression are reviewed at programme level by Course Boards. External Examiners in their roles are required to review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures, range and type, and flowing from this consider subsidiary module assessment strategies. External Examiners are also required to determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. External Examiners must report their findings to the Institute and the Institute must respond to same.

See Validation Reports available at:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

See A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures at:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

### 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.

The Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021 sets out the key priorities and describes the goals to be achieved by IT, Tralee during this period. The strategy provides direction and guidance for researchers, staff and stakeholders on the Institutes research, development and innovation mission, values and targets. This strategy is in line with the mission, values, core principles and strategic objectives of the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the Strategic Dialogue Compact with the HEA. The new Institute Strategic Plan identifies 'Research and Innovation' as a core goal 'enhancing the reputation of the Institute as a research engaged institution and continue to improve standards in our delivery of research excellence that will translate into economic growth and societal development in the region we serve'.

Linked to the three academic schools, the Institute has three research centres: Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre (**Shannon ABC**); Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID (**IMAR**) and **UNESCO Chair Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation**. The Institutes prioritised research themes are driven by the three research centres. In addition, across the three schools, a number of research groups exist eg. The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (**CEED**) and the Irish Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (**IAHT**) and new research groups and alliances are emerging where staff are working jointly together across departments and schools and developing advanced competencies in multi-disciplinary areas of research. The Institute continues to identify and support emerging opportunity areas as well as supporting existing research areas. Each of the Institutes research centres has their own individual objectives and performance indicators, aligned with the Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan. The Institute monitors its research centres to ensure each centre is on the correct trajectory to meet its annual research targets and metrics. The research centres are aligned to the National Research Priority Areas and Horizon 2020.

The National Strategy of Higher Education to 2030 recommends that 'every student should learn in an environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up to date practice and knowledge' (2011, pg. 17). Embedding the research activities of the Institute within the individual academic departments is key to fostering and developing a spirit of curiosity and scholarship amongst the Institute's undergraduate students.

Maintenance of the highest standards in research and research integrity is a recognised critical responsibility of the Institute. In 2013, IT, Tralee performed a self-evaluation of its validated research degree programmes which identified key areas for advancement to enhance the leadership, management and governance structures for post graduate research degree provision at the Institute. As a result, a Research Office, now managed by a Head of Research, and an Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC) and an Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC) was established in 2014. The IPC is responsible for reviewing research degree proposal applications and monitoring postgraduate student progress. The Head of Research is secretary to this Committee. The IPC reports to the Research and Development Sub-Committee of the Academic Council, which is chaired by the Vice

President Research, Development and External Engagement. The Institutes Research Ethics Committee (IREC) facilitates the ethical review of all postgraduate research degree and professional research activities (any research not undertaken by students) of the Institute.

Ethical review of undergraduate and taught masters postgraduate research is managed at Department/School level in accordance with a minimal risk approach.

The Institute recognises the interplay between ‘research ethics’ and ‘research integrity’ in good research practice. The Institute subscribes to the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research integrity in Ireland (IUA 2014). This policy outlines four commitments in respect of research activity:

- Standards: A commitment to the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of research;
- Education: A commitment to education and promotion of good research practices as the foundations of research;
- Collaboration for continuous improvement: A Commitment to working in collaboration to reinforce and safeguard the integrity of the Irish research system;
- Action to address misconduct: A commitment to using transparent, fair and effective processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

The Institute recognises the necessity to uphold animal health and welfare in its education and research activities. As part of this obligation, and mindful of the legal regulatory requirements, the Animal Welfare Body (AWB) was established in 2018 to oversee and enforce the protection of live animals. This body is tasked with upholding the principles of Scientific Animal Protection within the Institute. The Animal Welfare Body is assisted by the Institutes Research Ethics Committee (IREC) on the ethical issues relating to research projects and educational practices.

The quality assurance framework in respect of research ethics at the Institute is informed by legislation, policy, criteria and best practice guidance established nationally and internationally.

A number of undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes across the Institute have a Research Project component. Research Project Guidelines for students completing research projects within these programmes are provided to quality assure and enhance the completion of same.

Research Quality Assurance policies and procedures at the Institute are aligned with the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for providers of Research Degree Programmes. The Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar retains responsibility for registration, examination and oversight of the implementation and compliance with all of the relevant research quality assurance procedures.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Sub Section A2.9: Role and Function of the Research and Development Sub-committee, Sub Section A2.10: Role and Function of the Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC); Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Sub Section A5.4a: Project and Dissertation Procedure; Section A11: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes, Sub Section A11.1: Introduction, Sub Section A11.2: Project Proposal Approval and Student Registration, Sub Section A11.3: Research Degree Programme Supervision and Monitoring, Sub Section A11.4: Thesis Submission and Examination, Sub Section A11.5: Procedure for the Approval of New Research Areas; Section A12: Research Ethics, Sub Section A12.1: Research Ethics Policy, Sub Section A12.2: Ethical Review of Undergraduate or Taught

Masters Postgraduate Research, Sub Section A12.3: Ethical Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes and Professional Research, Subsection A12.4: External Research Requesting Access to Research Participants at IT Tralee.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021: See

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/ResearchandInnovationStrategicPlan2017-21.pdf>

Refer to the Institutes Strategic Plan- A Vision to 2021: See

[http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic_Plan.pdf)

Refer to the Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA - available publicly through the HEA website at: [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie)

#### 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.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights areas for focus over the period to 2030. The mission of the Institute, along with the Institutes stated vision and values within the new Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021, form the bedrock for the goals highlighted within the Strategic Plan which reflect the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19, with respect to priority areas of participation, equal access and lifelong learning. The HEA has reported on the Institutes performance through the Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 and has provided feedback that the Institute is very strong in the area of equity of access. Refer to the Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA and Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 for detail on the Institute objectives agreed with the HEA with regard to Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning at: [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie)

The inclusion of Access and Lifelong Learning as one of the seven domains of the Strategic Dialogue Process has been an instrumental catalyst in the formation of IT, Tralee's response to the national priorities for access to higher education by under-represented groups. The process has raised the profile of access to higher education nationally, regionally and locally and is transforming what we do, how we do it, why we do it and how we track it. During the course of the strategic dialogue process significant progress in data processing and statistical analysis, Institute-wide, was realised together with greater alignment of Institutional priorities. In its pursuit of the specific key access commitments in Cycle 1 of this Mission-based Performance Compact, the Institute has realised a number of significant achievements and is focussing on enhanced external and internal partnership for continued success:

- To facilitate non-standard admissions: The Institute expanded its Pathfinder Access Programme to all 26 schools in County Kerry. This was informed by an evaluation of the existing Pathfinders programme and has led to the introduction of a new access programme for DEIS schools in collaboration with the Trinity Access 21 programme, which will eventually replace the Pathfinders Programme;
- To facilitate mature learners access to higher education: While the Institute continues to exceed the national targets for new full-time mature entrants, it is experiencing a year-on year decline in the intake of this cohort. Mature candidates who do not progress to registration are surveyed and IT, Tralee has committed to undertaking research in the wider community in collaboration with local partnership companies to inform relevant development;
- To support students with disabilities to participate fully in the academic life of the Institute: The Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures, and the Equity of Access and Participation Policy were approved by the Academic Council in Academic Year 2017/18, and their implementation was supported by a suite of staff CPD workshops. Through its enhanced pre-entry schools programme, the Institute is reaching out to students in a more meaningful and cohesive way. Through the National PATH Fund the Institute is working with its cluster partners in delivering an Enabling Transitions Initiative. In

ITT this project is delivering an assistive technology resources to students, teachers and parents in the DEIS schools in Kerry;

- To develop teaching and learning practices that are effective in creating a positive learning environment: The Institute has developed a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy in which it has embedded inclusive teaching practice and universal design;
- To provide fair, regular and ongoing support through the work of the ESF Student Assistance Fund: The Institute has developed an online application form for students use which has assisted with reporting requirements and streamlined the administration of the fund;
- To facilitate students from all ethnic minorities, especially members of the Travelling Community: The Institute is now delivering both a Junior and Senior Cycle Programme;
- IT, Tralee's Access Service is collaborating with Cork Institute of Technology on pre-merger initiatives to develop a model of engagement that promotes a unified student experience;
- The Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 continues to value Access and Lifelong Learning as a priority for the coming years, taking an Institute-wide approach to celebrating diversity and striving to ensure that our communities have access to our programmes, campus and facilities.

The Institutes new Strategic Plan 2017-2021, refers to integrating the goals and objectives of the national access plan into Institutional activities. It identifies the following as measures of the success of same being achieved:

- The Institutes Access Plan will be updated in line with the National Access Plan 2015-2019, specifically the following will be achieved: A bespoke access outreach programme targeting the socio Economic Groupings (Non manual worker group & semi and unskilled manual worker group) at second level; An access champion in each department; Specific monitoring of non-completion for access;
- Research to be completed to inform relevant Institutional Access Initiatives. Based on research outputs and demand, we will design and offer a tailored access Foundation Programme providing 20 new places annually;
- Track, monitor and support students of the access programme with the aim of facilitating progression and completion of a higher education award which exceeds the national target for this cohort.

During Academic Year 2016/2017, further to a review of the Pathfinders programme that had taken place the previous year, a new proposal (Access 21) was explored to replace the existing Access Pathfinders Programme. The new project explored was the Trinity Access 21 Project already running at Trinity College Dublin. Working in collaboration with Trinity College, this new project has been rolled out at the Institute to address diverse societal and educational challenges by supporting schools to develop innovative approaches to formal and informal learning.

The Review Report and Proposal for the New Access Programme, commenced in September 2017, was noted at a Student Affairs Sub-Committee of the Academic Council. The Student Affairs Sub-Committee considers quality assurance and enhancement matters related to the student lifecycle. Terms of Reference for the Student Affairs Sub-Committee are available at the following link. See A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Sub Section A2.12: Role and function of the Student Affairs Subcommittee at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>



**Access21@ ITTralee** is a project that has been running for the past two years between the Institute of Technology Tralee and four DEIS schools in Kerry.

Once again, 2018-2019 saw, what is a strong multi-tiered programme with the key core practices of **Pathways to College, Mentoring, Leadership through Service and 21st Century Teaching and Learning**, get more and more established in our partner schools. Staff and students from 2nd and 3rd years have now been deeply involved in the efficient running of this programme.

**Access21@ ITTralee**'s overall objective to fulfil key goals set up in 2017 has been reached as:

- the educational aspirations and attainment of Irish second level students from geographical areas where attendance at third level is historically low has been raised;
- partner schools have been supported to develop and promote 21st Century Teaching & Learning environments;
- the STEM/CS capabilities of teachers across the Irish second level education system have been increased;
- an evidence base that informs policy and structural change is being built.

Furthermore, as the quality assurance in implementing this programme has been rigorously ensured, very noticeable improvements have been recorded in the:

- strengthening in the Access21@IT Tralee concept;
- structuring of the delivery of this programme;
- efficiency in the delivery of this programme;
- strengthening in staff involvement;
- quality of student involvement with key subjects;
- relationship between IT Tralee students and students from our partner schools.

**Quality enhancement highlights** during the year included:

- Planning sessions with participating schools;
- Practitioner-led workshops;
- Access21@IT Tralee mentors workshops;
- School Visits (Consultation/Troubleshooting with Teachers);
- Implementation of IT Tralee Access 21 mentors mentoring in partner schools;
- Campus visits for participating schools;
- Second Access21@IT Tralee College Experience Day;
- Seminar on research findings presented to all participating schools.

Access21@IT Tralee strongly cemented its relationship with management, staff and students in partner schools by rolling out five major initiatives:

- The setting up and implementation of the ITT Getting College Ready Calendar of Events;
- The setting up of an Access21@IT Tralee Budget which has been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of the project;
- Access21@IT Tralee annual Access 21 Experience Day continues to be a success, where students from our partner schools in IT Tralee experiencing college life in IT Tralee and being

treated to a suite of tasters, as well as IT Tralee Final Year students showcasing their Final Projects;

- IT Tralee Access 21 Mentors continue to set up mentors/mentees in our partner schools;
- IT Tralee Access 21 Student Ambassadors continue to visit partner schools and engage with students;

by relating their own path to College and the many obstacles on the way particularly continues to strike a chord with DEIS students, as a noticeable engagement was recorded.

### **Certification**

The Institute consistently applies pre-defined and published regulations and procedures covering all aspects of the student lifecycle, from student admission through to certification. A quality student Induction Programme to the Institute, to the student's academic department and to the student's programme of study is also facilitated. The Institute makes and confers awards upon successful graduates, in line with the QQI National Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.

The Institute does not have one overarching set of policies and procedures/source for all of these matters, but a range of published regulations, policies and procedures apply, as follows:

All information in relation to Admission, Transfer, Progression, Recognition and Certification is available to future and current students on the Institutes homepage:

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/FutureStudents/> and select the heading Current Students at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/> , the Institutes Prospectus See:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/IT%20Tralee%20Online%20Prospectus.pdf> , the Institutes Student Handbook, See : <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/StudentHandbookSectionA.pdf> and <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilities.pdf>

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A14: Student Admissions, Progression and Recognition, Sub Section A14.1: Garda Vetting Policy, Sub Section A14.2: Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning, Sub Section A14.3: Admissions Policy, Sub Section A14.4: Progression Policy-Policy for Determining the Order in which Eligible Candidates are made Offers on Add-On Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The Banner System is the tool used to collect data with respect to student retention, progression and success. Under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a Central student Data Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination. The data is processed through the relevant Quality Assurance procedures in place to do so.

### **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.

High quality teaching is central to the success of higher education Institutes. IT, Tralee values all staff and recognises that their expertise, skills and commitment underpin the continuing success of the Institute and the accomplishment of its strategic goals. The Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA reflects both the Institutes Strategic Plan and the National Strategy in Higher Education in this regard. The Irish economic and educational landscape are changing. There is an increasing demand from learners for relevant higher education and training programmes delivered in traditional full-time/part-time modes, as well as, in the case of certain programmes, delivery through blended learning mode to facilitate distance and lifelong learning.

The Institutes E-Learning Development and Support Unit (EDSU) was established in 2013. It supports staff in the following ways: Supports staff incorporating technology into their teaching; Provides staff training and user support for Blackboard, IT, Tralee's Learning Management System; Collaborates with staff on developing and delivering online and blended learning programmes. In Academic Year 2017/2018, EDSU developed a module (blended delivery) for teaching staff on 'Teaching Online'. The module introduction session was further developed in Academic Year 2018/2019 and scheduled within the CPD Events run across the Academic Year 2018/2019. Due to staff demand the sessions were facilitated on three separate occasions.

The Employee Assistance Programme is an employee support service designed to support employees resolve personal or work related concerns, which are having an adverse effect on their health and well-being, their job or their relationships.

The Institute of Technology, Tralee is committed to a policy of encouraging and supporting the development of staff in a manner consistent with their career development goals and the strategic goals of the Institute. The level of funding available in any year will determine the extent of support which can be provided. The available budget will be apportioned between: (a) Institute-wide training organised by the Assistant Registrar and the HR Department; (b) an Institute wide competitive fund to enhance academic qualifications; and (c) Schools and Departments for individual staff training, conferences, etc. A Staff Training and Development Policy is in place which relates to staff participation in training programmes, staff attendance at conferences and the attainment of additional qualifications by individual staff. All training, courses of study or conferences must relate directly to the individuals work or be aligned to the anticipated future needs of the Institute. In order to keep up-to-date with developments in education and in the wider community, staff are encouraged to maintain links with their professional membership bodies which may include attendance at conferences and/or seminars. Of particular importance is the enhancement of professional status through the presentation of papers for publication in peer reviewed journals.

Similarly visits or links with other educational establishments and industry may be appropriate. Staff will be encouraged to share with their colleagues any interesting outcomes, research, or new developments they encounter when attending.

The Institute provides a comprehensive range of continuing professional and pedagogical development (CPD) workshops each year. The workshops, co-ordinated by the Assistant Registrar, are based on recurring topics relevant to supporting the competence of academic staff and requested topics from academic staff. These workshops dates are built into the Academic Calendar. The Institute also provides regular workshops for postgraduate research supervisors under its Supervisor Training Programme. The Research Office co-ordinates same.

In December 2017, the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee approved a proposal for the development of a part-time blended delivery MA in Learning and Teaching. The programme development team was put in place at the commencement of Academic Year 2018/2019. The programme (Single Subject Certification/Postgraduate Certificate /Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Degree), was developed and approved in Academic Year 2018/2019. The programme was designed to develop the knowledge, skills and professional competence that those with a teaching role need, both within IT Tralee and beyond, to become effective teachers. The suite of programme makes provision for applicants who aspire to gain a formal qualification in learning and teaching. In addition, it is for those who wish to develop and enrich their learning and teaching practices away from the busy work environment in the context of Continuous Professional Development.

The recruitment of staff and budget available for staff development has been impacted by the challenging fiscal environment in which the Irish HEI sector currently operates.

The following policies and procedures are in place around recruitment, support and development of teaching staff.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A8: Procedure for Selection, Appointment, Appraisal and Development of Staff, Subsection A8.1: Recruitment and Selection Procedures; Section A10: Complaints Procedures, Subsection A10.2: Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures. See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the following policies and procedures available to staff internally through the staff intranet: Induction for New Staff; Protected Disclosures; Code of Conduct; Child Protection Policy; Employment of People with Disabilities; Equality Policy; External Activities Policy; Grievance Procedures; Disciplinary Procedures; Dignity and Respect in the Workplace; Recruitment and Selection Policy; Work Against Racism; Employee Leave Arrangements; Employee Assistance Service (EAS); Circulars and Information for Employees; Staff Garda Vetting Policy; Superannuation/Pensions; Staff Training and Development.

The new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021, identifies 'Fellowship and Inclusivity' as a core goal of the Plan. See Strategic Plan at [http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic_Plan.pdf)

## 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.

High quality teaching and learning is central to the success of higher education institutes. It is imperative that strategically the Institute maintains a firm focus on quality teaching and learning as this will directly encourage educational innovation and excellence. ‘Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of Student Experience’ is identified as one of the seven domains of the Strategic Dialogue Process and the new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies ‘Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness’ as a core goal of the plan. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the students experience of teaching and learning is central to this focus, both internal and external monitoring, providing feedback from all of the stakeholders, primarily the student, to inform teaching and learning quality enhancements.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Sub Section A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures (Taught Programmes); Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, Sub Section: A6.1: School Boards, Sub Section A6.2: Course Boards, Sub Section A6.4: Course Programme Handbook, Sub Section A6.6: Students on Course Board; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes, Sub Section A7.1: Procedure and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes; Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Sub Section A9.1: Surveys and Questionnaires.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

In Academic Year 2016/2017, it was decided by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar to pilot an amended version of the previously in place Annual Course Board Report Forms (CBA 1 and 2). The amendments were based on feedback from the Heads of Department. On the basis of the pilot in Academic Year 2016/2017, and the subsequent requirement of the new Strategic Plan for the completion of Academic Department Plans, a full review of the CBA 1 and 2 took place at the commencement of Academic Year 2017/2018, co-ordinated by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar. This review was focused on the establishment of centralised data informed department level decision making and planning which resulted in the development of the online tool-Academic Department Report/Plan. This online tool was rolled out in Academic Year 2018/2019. It is centrally populated by the Central Student Data Office with the relevant data for analysis and interpretation by academic departments, to inform their development of an academic department action plan for the subsequent Academic Year. The plan is submitted to the Executive and subsequently to the Academic Council. The following are the headings included:

- Current Department Strategy;
- Current Programmes within the Department;
- Previous Annual Academic Department Report/Plan;
- Student CAO Data-Trends;
- Student Registration Data-Trends;
- Analysis of Examination Results and Progression Data –Trends;

- Student Withdrawals and Retention Initiatives;
- Student Graduation Statistics;
- Stakeholder Feedback (incl. ISSE Feedback, External Examiners Feedback, Industry Feedback, Graduate Feedback, Course Board Feedback);
- Use of Technology Enhanced Learning;
- New Programme Proposals;
- Quality Enhancements-Department activities which contribute to quality enhancements on teaching and learning;
- Annual Academic Department Plan for the next Academic Year (This section is a summary of the actions to be addressed, as outlined within each of the previous sections, and the indicators of success).

The External Examiner Policy and Procedures provide for the requirement of Course Boards to produce a 'Summary Report of Action Items/Recommendations for Improvement from External Examiners Reports and Responses by School/Department' to the Academic Council. Reference to this requirement quality assures that Course Boards consider and provide a response to external examiners recommendations for improvement in the teaching and learning experience. This requirement is embedded within the new Academic Department Report/Plan.

Student feedback on teaching and learning:

Refer to the following sections of the QA Manual-Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, Sub Section A6.6: Students on Course Board.

Structured involvement by students on Course Board(s) is through the following mechanisms: Representation on Course Boards; Scheduled Joint Academic Workshops (JAWS); Scheduled Class Tutor/Class Representative meetings.

Refer to the following section of the QA Manual: Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Sub Section A9.1: Surveys and Questionnaires.

The nationally agreed QA 1 (Survey of Student Experience by Lecturer) Questionnaires are disseminated at academic department level annually. Refer to the following section of the QA Manual: Section A9.1: Surveys and Questionnaires

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The HEA-funded Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) initiative has effectively been in operation since 2014. The Assistant Registrar co-ordinates survey-related activity and, in particular, their outputs and response to the survey findings. During the Academic Year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received. This pilot proposal was agreed for roll-out in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the Central Student Data Office. This office was established

under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance. ISSE feedback is now embedded within the new online tool-Academic Department Report/Plan.

In Academic Year 2017/2018, ISSE afforded HEIs the opportunity to embed the QA3 questions (Survey of Students Course Experience) within the ISSE Survey. IT Tralee accepted this opportunity and the questions were included within the February/March 2018 ISSE Survey and were part of the Survey in Academic Year 2018/2019.

The Student Open Forum was launched by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the Academic Year 2012/2013. A minimum of two fora are arranged in each academic year. Membership of the forum includes, Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (Chairperson), Assistant Registrar, Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (Deputy Chairperson), Students' Union executive, Student class representatives, Admissions Officer, Examinations Officer, Students Services Officer (Secretary), Computer Services Manager, Librarian and Access Officer. The objectives of the forum are to provide an open discussion platform for student experiences of Institute services and facilities, and where particular issues can be presented for resolution where possible. Minutes and matters arising are reviewed at each subsequent forum meeting.

During Academic Year 2016/2017, the Institute became one of a number of HEIs nationally to engage with the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). Student engagement is acknowledged by the Institute as a two-way process. Ultimately students are responsible for their own learning and level of engagement. However, student engagement is dependent on the Institutes culture and the Institute providing the conditions that will enable students to get involved. The Institutes implementation of this programme will have a direct impact on enhancing student engagement, and in particular student involvement in decision making processes in relation to governance and management, quality assurance and in teaching and learning.

As per the requirements of NStEP, the National Student Engagement Programme, the Institute in collaboration with the Institutes Students' Union, established an Internal Institute Student Engagement Working Group to progress the 3 work streams of the programme for the remainder of Academic Year 2016/2017 and for the new Academic Year 2017/2018:

1. National Student Training Programme;
2. Institutional Analysis; and
3. The five national projects, working to develop National Best Practice Guidelines.

In reference to 1 above, in Academic Year 2018/2019, the class representatives were trained by NStEP.

In reference to 2 above, on 17/01/2018, the NStEP Institutional Analysis was facilitated at the Institute by Cat O'Driscoll NStEP and Simon Varwell sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland). Based on the feedback from the Institutional Analysis, the Institute Student Engagement Working Group agreed an action plan to respond to the feedback, the action plan was rolled out in Academic Year 2018/2019.

In reference to 3 above, the Institute is represented on all five of the national working groups as outlined below. The working groups progressed with their work across the Academic Year 2017/2018 and Academic Year 2018/2019.



**Project 1:** The Role and Recruitment of Class Representatives (Lead by the National College of Ireland, with representation from IT Tralee's Students' Union).

**Project 2:** The Design, Review and Delivery of Programmes (Lead by NUI Galway, with representation from IT Tralee-Assistant Registrar/Head of Student Engagement Office).

**Project 3:** Student Feedback Opportunities, Data and Follow Up (Lead by Carlow IT, with representation from IT Tralee-Assistant Registrar/Head of Student Engagement Office).

**Project 4:** Students in Formal System Level Procedures, Strategy and Decision Making (Lead by Letterkenny IT, with representation from IT Tralee's Students' Union).

**Project 5:** Staff Roles and Capacity Building (Lead by CIT, with representation from IT Tralee-Assistant Registrar/Head of Student Engagement Office).

During Academic Years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 general discussions had been held at a number of Academic Council meetings in relation to enhancement of the student teaching and learning experience to support the students transition to third level, their retention, progression and academic success and provide for a quality engaged student experience.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in November 2015, the decision was made to establish a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group to develop an Institute Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. After the initial meetings of this working group it was decided to widen the focus of the strategy to include Engagement and to focus initially on the Year 1 teaching and learning student experience. Subsequently, this working group was then tasked with the development of a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement (TLAE) Strategy.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in April 2016, a decision was made to establish a sub-group of the Academic Council to progress with developing Terms of Reference for a Review of Semesterisation with a focus on Year 1. At this same meeting it was agreed that progression with the development of the Terms of Reference for a Review of Semesterisation in Year 1 and the development of a TLAE Strategy with an initial focus on year 1 are inextricably linked. Therefore, it was agreed that both groups would progress on working together. This work progressed as agreed, and at a meeting of the Academic Council in June 2017, a pilot roll-out of a yearlong de-semesterised year 1 across the Institutes programmes was approved. It was decided that this option would be explored by all Course Boards/Departments in Academic Year 2017/2018, for implementation in Academic Year 2018/2019. It was agreed that all departments would commence with the exploration as an agenda item at an early Course Board meeting in Academic Year 2017/2018. It was also agreed that this work will include a review of the teaching and learning student experience in Year 1 and consequently will contribute to the ongoing co-development of an Institute Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy. As agreed by this Academic Council, the joint Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy Working Group and the Review of Semesterisation sub-group of the Academic Council would meet to draft the Terms of Reference to support the progression of the agreed work by all course boards. At the close of Academic Year 2017/2018, one Course Board (the Health and Leisure Department) made the decision to pilot a de-semesterised Year 1 in all of its programmes in Academic Year 2018/2019. This progressed in Academic Year 2018/2019.

The TLAE Working Group progressed with the drafting of an Institute Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy. At the close of Academic Year 2017/2018, a final draft of the agreed core principles, strategies and associated actions were forwarded to the Executive for consideration. The Strategy was agreed and actioned in Academic Year 2018/2019. The Core principles are as follows:

- Excellence in teaching and learning is achieved through an Institute-wide collaborative approach which embraces the wide diversity of staff and students;
- The Institute is committed to the ongoing development and resourcing of an optimal teaching and learning experience, ensuring an inclusive, learning-centred and nurturing environment to support all to reach their full potential;
- The continuation of the historical Institute focus on the applied nature of teaching, and learning by doing, will ensure the academic, personal and social development of work-ready and civic-minded graduates;
- The Institute acknowledges the diverse prior educational experience of its students, and is committed to supporting their transition into the third level environment, particularly in their first year, through a scaffolded and developmental approach to teaching and learning;
- Lecturers are supported in their primary role as educators through the provision of continuous professional development opportunities and the promotion of a collaborative community of practice, where knowledge and reflection on practice inform the ongoing development of teaching excellence;
- Teaching and Learning practice is evidence-based and informed by stakeholder feedback, both from internal stakeholders (staff and students) and engagement with external stakeholders, so that the programmes provided and the learning achieved meets the needs of the student, industry and society.

The goals are as follows:

- Goal 1: Learning Centred Practices (including Student Supports);
- Goal 2: Assessment for/of/as Learning and Student Feedback;
- Goal 3: Design Curricula to be Engaging and Relevant to the Student, Industry and Society;
- Goal 4: Support the Professionalism of Teaching through Academic Professional Development;
- Goal 5: Learning Environment and Teaching Spaces (Developing a Physical, Social and Technological Environment that Supports Learning).

The new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies 'Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness' as a core goal of the plan to 'enable our students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the development of society via the provision of a student centred educational environment which is under-pinned by excellence in teaching and learning. Our graduates will be distinctive by virtue of their educational experience and will possess essential skills and attributes relevant to both the workplace and civic society'. The plan identifies the following as measures of the success of the achievement of this goal:

- Enhancing the standard of teaching and learning through the implementation of the TLAE Strategy 2017-2021 and delivering upon the goals contained within;
- Establishment of a Centre for Educational Development, operational in the Academic Year 2017/2018 and supported by a five-year strategy;
- Development and implementation of a rolling five-year retention strategy focusing on the

first year cohort;

- Leveraging work placement to facilitate graduate work readiness and to inform market led programmes.

At the end of Academic Year 2016/2017 a draft Year 1 Student Retention and Success Strategy was developed by the Assistant Registrar, in consultation with the Heads of Department. During Academic Year 2017/2018, the draft was circulated for input by the Central Student Data Office, Student Services, Heads of School and Heads of Department for further feedback and input. The Strategy document evolved through this process to becoming the Draft Year 1 Student Retention and Success Policy. In May 2018, the draft policy document was forwarded to the executive for final consideration and approval. The policy was approved and actioned in Academic Year 2018/2019.

Below are the key principles guiding the policy:

- Retention, progression and the academic success of students and the enhancement of a quality engaged student experience is key to IT Tralee fulfilling its responsibility as a Higher Education Institution;
- Nurturing student belonging and improving retention and success should be a priority for all staff;
- The expertise and best practice already taking place in the Institute must be acknowledged and shared throughout the Institute;
- The academic sphere is the most important site for nurturing student participation and engagement. Research shows that ongoing improvement in the overall learning experience is the best route towards supporting student retention and success;
- Support from the Student Support Services is necessary in supporting student retention and success, including but not limited to: financial support; counselling support; chaplaincy support; and support from the student Medical Centre, Access Office and Office for Learning Difference;
- A particular focus is required on the first year student experience, while recognising all stages are important;
- Withdrawal is to be viewed as not necessarily a failure of the system or the student but sometimes through a journey of discovery the student reaches the conclusion that the programme they have chosen is not for them or with the necessary support concludes this is not the right time to undertake the programme of study and return at a later time (Institute needs to be responsive to student needs in this regard);
- Interventions are more effective if they address the issues of concern and are evidence informed (local and national evidence);
- The local context must be understood (Institution, discipline, programme, module, student cohort etc.) and followed by appropriate intervention. It is important to understand the context of disciplines, programmes and modules with lower than expected rates of success. One size does not fit all. Interventions must be tailored to address the issues experienced;
- High quality Institutional data collection, analysis, reporting and review is required at Institute, School and Department level, for each programme, to each module and cohort of students. This analysis should ideally include prior year comparatives and should seek to establish patterns;
- Listen to student feedback, in particular, to what first year students have said regarding their first year student experience through the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE), the Joint Academic Workshops (JAWS) and the Student Class Representative Open Forum etc.;

- Effective interventions will have the following characteristics: ongoing rather than once off; an explicit academic support focus; delivery through mainstream curriculum; proactive and developmental; relevant; encourage collaboration and engagement with fellow students and staff; and monitored for student engagement and quality;
- While primary interventions are located in the academic context, they must be enabled and facilitated by the Institute. A process to implement and manage change must be designed and utilised, with explicit goals and timelines. Establish a cross institutional team with clear roles and an emphasis on working in a collaborative way, including students as partners. Accessible and user friendly data must be made available, and staff and students need to be supported to discuss and engage with the data to improve student retention, progression and success. An evidence informed programme of interventions must be developed, promoting and monitoring student engagement with same, and the programme of interventions evaluated. A clear focus on and review of student retention interventions will allow the Institute evaluate the success (or otherwise) of these interventions at an Institute and programme level.

This Year 1 Student Retention and Success Policy principles guide the strategies to be actioned at Institute level and department level to improve retention and progression and support student academic success and a quality engaged student experience for all students of the Institute. The development of the policy was informed by a review of relevant literature, with a particular focus on national best practice and evidence based research from the HEA, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and UK based Liz Thomas et al through her What Works 1 (2012) and What Works 2 (2017) Student Retention and Success Programmes.

The successful progression and retention of students in higher education is at the forefront of national policy frameworks. Higher education faces many challenges and in particular the difficulties students can encounter with the transition into higher education. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 emphasises the importance of a positive first year experience to achieving the goals of higher education, as ‘failure to address the challenges encountered by some students in their first year contributes to high drop out and failure rates with personal and system wide implications’ (DES, National Strategy, pg.56).

‘Every student that drops out of their higher education is a loss: a loss to their college, a loss to the future economy and, above all, a loss to the individual. Equally, students who don’t drop out but who fail to achieve their full potential also represent a significant loss to both themselves and society’ (Liz Thomas et al, 2017, pg.5).

Within the new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021, the Institute identifies one of its key goals to *‘enable students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the development of society via the provision of a student centred educational environment which is under-pinned by excellence in teaching and learning’*. One of the action items to achieve this goal has been identified as the *‘development and implementation of a rolling five-year retention strategy focusing on the first year cohort’*. The measures of success of this strategy have been identified as the setting of *specific ‘department targets for the improvement of retention and progression to be specified in academic department plans and an increase of a minimum of 10% in the Institute’s overall retention rate over the course of this strategic plan’*.

## 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.

Sources of Income and Budget allocation: The Institute as a statutory entity is primarily dependant on the core grant funding from the HEA, and student fees. The core grant funding is based on the student numbers returns through the Programmes and Budgets submissions.

The total annual income of the Institute is approximately €30m. There are a number of sources for this income. In order of value they are as follows:

- State Grants;
- Tuition Fees & Student Contribution paid by the State;
- Tuition Fees & Student Contribution paid by EU students;
- Research Grants and Contracts;
- Tuition Fees & Student Contribution paid by Non-EU students;
- Other Income.

Budgets are allocated on a bi-annual basis following consultation with the Executive. The budgets are continuously monitored using our Financial Management System Agresso.

The Institute provides a range of learning resources and student supports which meet the needs of the diverse student population:

- Access Office;
- Office for Learning Difference;
- Counselling;
- Medical Service;
- Pastoral Care Service;
- Careers Service;
- International Office;
- Sports and Recreational Facilities;
- Sports Office;
- GAA Games Development;
- Societies Office;
- Student Services Officer;
- Financial Support (Student Assistance Fund/Benevolent Fund);
- Sports Scholarships;
- Admissions and Examinations Office;
- Library Services;
- Students' Union;
- Student Orientation and Induction Programme;
- Academic department/programme support (including class tutor, peer mentoring, tutor support).

Categories of Generic Institute Supports for all first year students:

- Orientation and Induction Programme – Institute Orientation and Department/Programme Induction;
- Social Events;
- Family Information Evening;
- FYI 4-week Induction Programme.
- IT Skills Workshops;
- Sports Clubs and Societies Days;
- Refresher Student Support Information Days (pop-up stands in main student thorough fair (north and south campus) reminding students of services but also 'Ask us anything' theme);
- Student Handbook & ITT Study Skills Guide;
- Academic Writing – 'You're Actually a Good Writer' (Ahead publication);
- Library Orientation;
- Time and Study Management in preparation for Examinations;
- Targeted academic department support;
- Live ITT Pilot Health Promotion and Retention Project, launched in April 2017.

IT, Tralee's pilot Health Promotion and Retention Project was officially launched in April 2017. The project supports students (and staff) holistic health and wellbeing, promoting events and projects on campus, to ensure that the Institute as a place of study is health promoting and health enabling. Holistic health includes physical, sexual, mental, social, occupational, intellectual and spiritual health. Learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked. When students are well, they can better engage with their learning and living experience, embrace and enjoy the full student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom, and reach their full potential. Live ITT focuses on four main project areas covering all aspects of holistic health: Move ITT; Change ITT; Mind ITT; and Connect ITT.

The Institute Live ITT Health Promotion and Retention Project is working to the Institutes Strategic Plan as follows:

Section 4.2.1: 'Enhancing the work environment to support staff in their work life'; and Section 4.5 and 4.5.1: 'Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of our student campus community through the establishment of an Institute wide Health and Wellbeing Working Group developing an operational plan for the roll out of key initiatives benchmarked against the Healthy Campus Guidelines (Healthy Ireland HSE Action Plan 2013-2025)'. LIVE ITT engaged with the HSE in the formalisation and progression of the Healthy Campus Initiative. IT Tralee received a REACT Award recognising LIVE ITT's efforts to reduce alcohol related harm among students. LIVE ITT continued to provide Health and Wellbeing talks to all incoming first years and run health promotion events throughout the year.

Categories of Generic Supports for Students of the following cohorts:

- (a) Student with Disability (SWD);
- (b) Student with Specific Learning Difference (SLD); and
- (c) TA21@ittralee.

Students wishing to avail of supports in the categories above must in the first instance register with the respective service early. For students in (a) and (b) their specific needs can be assessed early and a

programme of support put in place that will help the student settle, help them explore ways that they can learn – e.g., in class support (via Individual Learning Requirements Document), explore assistive technology that will support and enhance the learning methods of the student, to provide where necessary and outside of the classroom Study Skills or Writing Skills as appropriate, to provide counselling e.g. time management, linking learning with career goals and provide suitable physical environment to support examination accommodation. All supports offered are in line with AHEAD recommended guidelines on good practice for providers of supports and services for Students with Disabilities in Higher Education. Operational practices are reviewed and discussed regularly at department and Institute level.

Enhanced generic supports Students - A parents/guardians and family information event:

- The introduction of a revised registration process and new student services materials to further facilitate greater, timely and direct engagement with support services;
- A study skills guide and academic writing guide is disseminated to students at registration;
- The use of assistive technologies and freewares is promoted to enhance access to course materials and the fulfilment of course assignments and thereby address barriers that some students were experiencing accessing Institute-based assistive technology support;
- Student Services is represented on the Institutes Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement group promoting inclusive practices and Universal Design for Learning;
- Students are referred to the dedicated Subject Librarian to avail of support with research skills.

Specific support offered to Students registering with IT Tralee Support Services (Access Office and/or Office for Students with Learning Difference – i.e. (a) or (b) category above) include:

- Family Engagement both on a one-to-one basis and also as part of the Institute generic orientation programme;
- Promoted Ahead Student Toolkit and made it available to all students online;
- Students are offered group training sessions in assistive technologies to improve access to course reading materials - 24 students availed of the training;
- Students who are not eligible for ESF funding are provided with links to freeware for home use to support their proof reading of assignments - e.g. Orato and Grammarly software. This initiative aimed to bypass barriers to accessing Institute based Assistive Technology support experienced due to family/work/life demands;
- Students are referred to a dedicated Subject Librarian/support personnel to avail of support with research skills;
- Students are offered free access to an online study skills tool currently being piloted through the Institutes - New Frontiers Programme;
- Students identified as "at risk" due to reported subject specific difficulties are referred to the relevant Head of Department for additional subject specific support. The Academic Manager is provided with information on the impact of the students learning difference and, where appropriate, possible effective teaching strategies;
- Engagement with academic staff on individual student cases around possible appropriate inclusive teaching methods to support the diverse learner;
- Students who are needs assessed as "at risk" due to difficulties with time management and/or study skills and/or academic writing are approved (by lecturer and/or Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager) for one-to-one tutor support sessions;



- High needs students are offered regular mentoring to ensure early identification of arising issues with potential to negatively impact on the learning experience - e.g. students with ASD diagnosis, physical and sensory disabilities.

Specific student supports – Students with Disability, Students with Learning Difficulty:

- A suite of re-usable learning objects in the form of YouTube screen cast videos was developed with the aim of enhancing student engagement with the service for students with learning difference;
- Students with learning difference are offered access to a new online study skills tool currently being piloted by the Institutes New Frontiers programme;
- The Institute promotes the AHEAD Student Toolkit at orientation, needs assessment and via Blackboard, its eLearning portal;
- A new electronic communication tool which interfaces with Banner was introduced to streamline the provision of information to academic staff on students teaching, learning and assessment needs. Individual Learning Requirements are now available in Self Service Banner and at a glance assigned academic staff can see their relevant students details, programme and module.

The Access Office and Office for Learning Difference, in their provision of a range of supports and services to students with disabilities, students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, mature students and pathfinders students, are supporting and promoting equity of access and participation through the provision of responsive and appropriate supports.

Prospective students are informed of the resources available to them via Institute open Days/Information Sessions, the IT, Tralee website at [www.ittralee.ie](http://www.ittralee.ie) and the IT, Tralee Prospectus, See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/IT%20Tralee%20Online%20Prospectus.pdf> and existing students are informed via their Orientation and Induction Programme to the Institute, the IT, Tralee website, internally via the Institutes VLE (Blackboard), and the Institute Student Handbook, See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/StudentHandbookSectionA.pdf> and <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilites.pdf>

The Institute library, based on both the North and South Campus, provides support to all students to support their learning experience. See the Institute library website: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/CurrentStudents/StudentLife/StudentFacilities/Library/>

The Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identified the ‘development and implementation of a Student Services Plan benchmarked against National and International Comparators’ as a core goal of the plan. As a measure of the success of the achievement of this goal, the plan identifies an ‘External review of student services to be completed within the Academic Year 2017/2018. Resultant recommendations to be implemented over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan’. The External Review did not progress in Academic Year 2017/2018, as the decision was made to postpone the review pending the Munster Technological University merger processes that are in progress. A review of the merged institutions, rather than a review of an individual pre-merger institution would be of greater value.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A13: Learning Resources and Student Support, Sub Section A13.1: Bereavement Policy, Sub Section A13.2: Substance Abuse Policy, Sub Section A13.3: Student Charter, Sub Section A13.4: Reasonable Accommodations and Support for

Students with Disability Policy and Procedures, Sub Section A13.5: Equity of Access and Participation Policy, Sub Section A13.9: Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy; Section A10: Complaints Procedures, Sub Section A10.2: Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

### **Regional Cluster South - Access Strategy**

The partner members of the Regional Cluster – South (Cork Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Carlow, Institute of Technology, Tralee, University College Cork and Waterford Institute of Technology) have a shared commitment to promoting access, widening participation and creating diverse and socially inclusive learning environments that promote equality of opportunities for individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds.

As individual institutions, the Cluster members have demonstrable track records and substantial professional expertise in promoting equity of access. All of the partners are involved in the provision of services which address the needs of non-traditional learners through outreach, post entry support initiatives, scaffolding of transitions between second and third level and further education and third level and development of flexible learning pathways that suit part-time and mature students. Key to the development and delivery of these services is the extensive network of partnerships which partner HEIs have established with relevant community stakeholders in their own geographical area. The identification in the *National Strategy for Higher Education*, of a role for regional Clusters to address local needs through co-operation and co-ordination in relation to resources, programmes of teaching and learning and the creation of greater flexibility in student pathways and progression, provides opportunities and challenges for the Regional Cluster-South. Significant opportunities exist for strategic alliances which will allow for the sharing of learning and practice across and it is acknowledged among the partner HEIs that each has particular strengths and expertise in relation to various target cohorts and particular initiatives. The partners fully embrace the ‘better together’ philosophy in relation to the development of strategies and the planning and delivery of access related initiatives. They are also keenly cognisant of the challenges involved in engaging in formal activities, not least those associated with resource allocation and governance. The strategic objective and governance framework outlined below, reflect the commitment to access and to its promotion through a regional focus while acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges associated with working at Cluster level.

To operationalise the strategy at Cluster level, a proposal was submitted to the HEA to develop four initiatives building on existing competencies. The three initiatives which have been prioritised are:

1. Travellers in Education;
2. Enabling Transitions; and
3. Connecting Communities Connecting Curriculum.

### **Initiative One: Travellers in Education**

This initiative is proposed by the Cluster on the basis of low representation of Travellers in education; 55% of Travellers leave school by the age of 15, 90% of Travellers have finished education by the age of 17. In 2011, 1% of the Traveller population (115 Travellers) had attained a third-level qualification (Census 2011). The withdrawal of Traveller education supports in 2011 has left a deficit in awareness and understanding of the Traveller culture and Traveller advocacy in the school community, and has impacted negatively on Travellers participation and progression at all levels in the education system.

A whole-school approach to addressing Traveller participation needs to be prioritised, which includes supporting staff in understanding the diverse nature of the student cohort and contributes to the creation of an environment that is conducive to employing and including Travellers on staff.

To support increased participation the following actions have been identified:

- design an accredited Special Purpose Award at HETAC Level 6 in Travellers in Education and Peer Mentoring;
- explore opportunities with partners for employment for Traveller Peer Mentors who will support Traveller students in education and their parents/guardians;
- review Traveller mentoring models across the Cluster with a view to delivering best practice in targeted geographical areas within the Clusters.

This strand aims to promote greater awareness of Traveller culture, to accredit peer mentors to support their Travellers in education and to open up pathways for progression to education and employment in line with the National Access Plan 2015-2019 and Institutional Compacts.

Additionally, role models and mentoring have been proven to be successful strategies to support young people from the Traveller community within the school and wider community.

The employment of Traveller Education Workers in each HEI will enable the delivery of the following:

1. development of a project framework to support, monitor, evaluate, disseminate and ensure additionality to existing projects and mainstreamed initiatives targeting Travellers across the Cluster;
2. promoting Traveller Cultural Awareness Training and ITM's Yellow Flag;
3. introduction of an academic and role model mentoring programme for school going children and young people from the Traveller community from 4<sup>th</sup> class in primary school through to completion of senior cycle in secondary school (through key support agencies/communities);
4. Implementation:
  - a. Provided accredited mentoring and education engagement programme;
  - b. Support the graduates to become Role Models, Mentors and Advocates;
  - c. Deliver mentoring programme;
  - d. Promote the delivering of TCAT and Yellow Flag in schools and the school communities.

### **Initiative Two: Enabling Transitions**

It has been widely acknowledged that young people with disabilities, in common with their peers without disabilities, need preparation within school to become more autonomous and develop self-determination skills (Harrison, 2006; OECD, 2011). Institutional readiness to facilitate access, transfer and progression for students with disabilities is considered a critical factor in ensuring successful transition and progression within further and higher education (Action on Access, 2008; Marriott, 2008; Thomas, 2010).

One recommendation of the Moving to Further and Higher Education Report (2013) was to consider the development of targeted access initiatives to increase the capacity of further education to support the academic and social needs of students with a disability making the transition to, and progressing through, further education.

There is a need to create a roadmap of support for students with disabilities who are starting their journey into Higher Education. Students with disabilities now make up approximately 5.2% of the total student population at third level. For students with disabilities, a huge factor in making a successful transition is knowing what support is available, how to access it and above all, knowing

what to expect and becoming informed on ways that they can make this transition as smooth as possible – e.g. using assistive technology in advance of entry to third-level education.

To address this requirement the development of a bespoke Transition Programme – “Enabling Successful Transitions” for students with a disability/medical condition is proposed. The project aims to create a more holistic transition programme across all Cluster HEI’s through the development of stronger links with schools, parents and prospective students. This programme will increase the number of students with disabilities who progress to third level education in the Southern Cluster region.

The “Enabling Successful Transitions” programme will be tailored by each HEI to optimise the impact for its specific cohort of students by building on existing structures and supports drawing on existing best practice across the Cluster outlined in the table below.

<b>PRE-ENTRY</b>	<b>POST-ENTRY – YEAR ONE</b>
Assistive Technology Demonstrations (free apps, recording software, TTRS, Smart Pen, reading software and proofreading software)	Roll out specific training according to need following their needs assessments - this can be group AT Training or individual
Assistive Technology Training (reading software, free apps, Smart Pen, TTRS, proofreading software)	Regular sessions with e.g. OT, to address balancing college life, wellness, mindfulness and organisation, time management etc.
Information on course suitability, fitness to practice, disclosure etc.	Access to sessions run by the DSS/Careers/Learning Support etc. throughout the semester
Tour of campus and taster lectures (including some practical sessions in labs, kitchens where appropriate)	
Advice on balancing college, staying “well”, managing time, organisation	
Information on how to access support in college from the DSS and the wider college	
Input from Learning Support – staying organised, taking good notes, how to study effectively etc.	

The project will be designed and delivered in consultation with Special Education Support Services, Teacher Education Centres, Institute of Irish Guidance Counsellors, Family Resource Centres, Local Partnership Development companies and youth services. The programme will be led by a dedicated Programme Supervisor in each HEI 3 days per week to develop, recruit for and evaluate the programme.

#### **Initiative Four: Connecting Communities Connecting Curriculum**

This project refers to Objective 5.3 in the National Access Plan and its commitment to developing mentoring programmes and initiatives for students in second level by regional Clusters in collaboration with second-level schools, enterprise and community, to include 75% of DEIS schools, by 2019 (see appendix two).

The aim of this project is to develop a comprehensive accredited mentoring programme. This will be developed and delivered to key influencers within the formal and non-formal education sectors and the business community. This will allow the newly accredited mentors to engage effectively with the second level age cohort to support access, transfer and progression for students from the target groups.

The accredited mentoring programme will draw from existing best practice and will comprise of four streams:

1. academic mentoring;
2. discipline-specific mentoring;
3. peer mentoring and role modelling;
4. mentoring for transitions.

This mentoring programme will focus on developing teaching and learning strategies and the transfer of information and knowledge using a mentoring model perspective. It will be rolled out as a CPD opportunity in the formal and non-formal education sectors and as a civic engagement opportunity for registered undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Cluster's HEIs. It will target:

1. teachers;
2. educational support workers;
3. youth and community workers;
4. local businesses and representatives in the school community;
5. students registered in HEIs across the Cluster.

An evaluation component will be built into this mentoring programme which will ensure live application of the material and ensure a measurement of impact and success of the programme. It is intended that the live application will be linked specifically to HEI pre-entry access programmes thus ensuring that our access students are joint beneficiaries of this programme.

Year one will focus on an audit of existing education and training provision, exploration and mapping onto the QQI Framework and engagement with school and business partners to carry out a needs analysis to inform key components of the programme e.g. UDL, Inclusive Teaching and Learning, Discipline Specific elements, ICT and AT, Culture and Diversity. In years two and three participants will achieve accreditation and a programme will be rolled out to young people within their own learning communities.

Strategic Objectives:

- To increase the capacity and responsiveness of the partner members to access and progression needs at regional level through shared strategic planning;
- To deepen partnerships, collaborations and strategic alliances among the Cluster partners;
- To build on and add value to existing expertise through the sharing of best practice in the area of access;

- To build on and learn from existing successful alliances with communities by expanding local networks across the wider region.

Governance:

The partner HEIs have agreed a framework for Cluster operation and governance to include:

- The establishment of a Cluster Steering Group;
- The creation of an MOU for operation of the Cluster; and
- Development of a co-ordinated work-plan for the implementation of agreed projects.

Targets:

- To undertake a regional mapping profile which outlines opportunities and pathways for non-traditional students and those from socio-disadvantaged backgrounds;
- To develop a Cluster wide strategic planning structure focused on responding to the delivery of national access priorities and capitalising on funding programmes; and
- To seek resources to establish the strategic co-ordination necessary to improve access practice and outcomes across the Cluster.

## **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.

The Institute has published a set of information management policy and practice documents to provide direction to the staff of the Institute in the use of, and the management and delivery of information and systems and services that hold information and data relating to the business of the Institute. These policies and practice documents are available to staff internally via the staff intranet within the icons of Computer Services, Data Protection and Finance.

In light of the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018, IT Tralee is engaging in a review of the Institutes recording, processing, storing and deleting of personal data. A Data Protection Officer, who currently oversees the Institutes data protection procedures (including Freedom of Information requests), has been deployed on a full-time basis to the area of Data Protection. A dedicated GDPR information section is available to staff internally through the staff intranet which includes detail on the GDPR legislation, associated requirements and CPD with respect to same.

Under the management of the previously appointed Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a Central Student Data Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination.

The Institute collects, analyses, and uses data for the effective management of its academic programmes and all other central services activities. The Institute uses a number of Management Information Systems to Manage Student Registrations and Academic Progress (Banner), Finance & Budgets (Agresso), Staff (Core), Library (Koha) and Timetabling (Syllabus+) as its information management tools.

The Banner System is the tool used to collect data with respect to student retention, progression and success. This data, and all other data sourced, is analysed by Institute Management, Service Units and Course Boards, in the context of the requirements of a number of relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures, and this data used to inform quality assurance and enhancement.

At student registration the Institute carries out the HEA Equal Access Survey. The HEA through its National Access Office, promotes equality of access to higher education for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers and minority groups, including the Traveller community and achieving this full equality of access to higher education is a national priority. Each year the HEA invites us to collect Equal Access information at the point of registration on the students socio-economic background, disability and ethnicity and returns it to the Higher Education Authority.

With the information that is provided, the HEA is able to measure equality of access to higher education and allocate the resources needed to support students of all backgrounds and abilities. The information gathered during registration is protected by robust data protection policies in the ITT and in the HEA, and is in full compliance with data protection legislation. The data that is returned to



the HEA is collective and students are not identified by name, address or ID number. All students are encouraged to respond to the Equal Access questions. The non-response will not affect the student's registration and enrolment, or their ability to be considered for financial support. However, it is highlighted that non-responses may have implications for the amount of State funding that is allocated to the IT, Tralee and as a result, we may then not be in a position meet the requirements of students with specific needs.

Each year the Careers Office surveys graduates using the Graduate Destination Survey. First Destination Survey offers a vision into the first destination of graduates nine months after graduation. Graduate surveys are produced to measure higher education output providing useful information to a wide selection of stakeholders such as higher education institutions, policy makers and prospective students. Results of surveys can also be used to benchmark institutional performance to similar institutions.

Section 1 of the graduate survey focuses on level 8-10 graduates whether graduates are in employment in Ireland or overseas, seeking employment, in work experience schemes or further study. Section 2 looks at the relevance or how graduates rate their qualification to the employment gained while Section 3 outlines salaries reported by graduates 9 months after graduation. Section 4 focuses on location by regional distribution of graduates with a level 8-10 qualification. Section 5 is an overview of employment sector by level, of working graduates in Ireland and overseas nine months after graduation. The final section reviews level 8-10 international graduate's first destination after graduation.

Presently the graduate surveys are created under the limitations of cross sectional data collection approach – a process which is under revision by the HEA currently. It is expected that the new survey (in early stages of longitudinal development) will include:

- Data on graduate qualifications and employment both within Ireland and overseas;
- Relevance of employment to area of study;
- Data on graduate further study;
- Data on graduate unemployment and unavailability for work; and
- Career progression of graduates through longitudinal data.

See: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/What-do-Graduates-do-2015.pdf>

Each year the library surveys students on their experience of the library services. This data is analysed by the library and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year Computer Services surveys staff and students on their experience of the IT services. This data is analysed by Computer Services, and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year student engagement and satisfaction is measured through the Irish Survey of Student Engagement.

Feedback is sought and provided from Industry to inform programme enhancement and new programme development. This feedback is sought and provided formally in the context of Programme Work Placement Guidelines and also through other engagements with industry.

### **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.

The Institute monitors and periodically reviews its programmes to ensure that they are achieving the objectives set for them and respond to the teaching, learning and support needs of the students and to the needs of society.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A6: Procedures for the Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes; Sub Section A6.1: School Boards; Sub Section A6.1: Course Boards; and Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes; Sub Section A7.1: Procedures and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes (Programmatic Review).

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Programme Validation Reports, Programmatic Review Reports, Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Reports and Institutional Review Reports, Annual Reports are available publicly on the IT, Tralee website. See Reports section at:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

Any major risk factors identified by the Executive are incorporated into the Risk Register and are monitored and reviewed. The purpose of the Risk Register is to provide a framework for management to identify, assess and rate risks, and to develop strategies to deal with risks so as to provide reasonable assurance that the Institutes strategic objectives will be achieved. In effect, the Risk Register will establish a framework to identify potential events that may expose the Institute to risk, to manage this risk, to keep it within the Institutes risk appetite and to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the Institutes objectives.

Overall responsibility for the management of risk within the Institute lies with the Governing Body. The President of the Institute has overall responsibility for ensuring that procedures and processes are in place to enable adherence to the Risk Register.

The Institutes Executive Board is responsible for:

- Implementing the Institutes Risk Register;
- Identifying and monitoring Risks;
- Ensuring that each risk has a 'Risk Owner' responsible for its management;
- Ensuring that controls identified are working, provide periodic positive assurance that they are working and/or report if they are not working;
- Ensuring that individuals understand what level of risk they are assigned to take on behalf of the Institute; and
- Ensuring local risks are appropriately managed.

The Audit Committee are a Sub-Committee of the Governing Body. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee currently include:

Financial Statements:

- To review the draft annual financial statements of the Institute of Technology, Tralee and consolidated statements, and their format, taking account of all relevant considerations and of accounting standards and legal requirements, before they are submitted to the Governing Body;
- To recommend to the Governing Body whether they should approve any accounts so reviewed by the Committee;
- To determine at least annually whether, in the Committees opinion, the Institute of Technology, Tralee has kept proper books of account.

External Audit:

- To review with the Comptroller and Auditor General, the nature and scope of the audit in progress or nearing completion;
- To discuss problems and reservations arising from the audit and any other matters requested by the external auditors;
- To review the external auditors Management Letter and all other audit letters from the external auditors and to consider management's response.

Internal Controls and Risk Management:

- To satisfy itself that the arrangements made for and resources available to Internal Audit are suitable, and to monitor performance of Internal Audit;
- To consider the system of internal financial controls and to satisfy itself that the control environment is adequate and that controls are operating effectively;
- To keep under review and advise on the operation and effectiveness of the Institute of Technology, Tralee's risk management systems;
- To provide an opinion annually on the proposed statement of internal controls and on any legal compliance requirements;
- To consider the Internal Audit annual audit programme, to review reports of the Head of Internal Audit and to consider major findings and managements response.

Other:

- To consider reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General and managements response;
- To satisfy itself that arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- To consider other topics, as requested by the Governing Body or initiated by the Committee;
- To promote co-ordination between the Institute of Technology, Tralee's internal and external auditors.

## 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 external stakeholders is a central part of both the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

See: [http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic_Plan.pdf)

and <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/ResearchandInnovationStrategicPlan2017-21.pdf>

Engagement with external stakeholders, namely academic and professional industry representatives and graduates/alumni, is embedded within the Institutes Quality Assurance policies and procedures, with respect to the procedures for the governance of the Institute, the procedures for the ongoing monitoring of programmes; the procedures for the design, validation and modification of programmes and modules; the assessment of learners; the procedures for the evaluation of programmes (programmatic review) and Institute Cyclical Reviews.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management; Sub Section A2.2: Governance; Sub Section A2.6: Governing body Membership; Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules; Section A5: Assessment of Learners; Sub Section A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures (Taught Programmes); Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes (Programmatic Review).

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Most of the programmes within the Institute now incorporate a work/practice experience component, in line with the Institutes Strategic goals *'Our graduates will be distinctive by virtue of their educational experience and will possess essential skills and attributes relevant to both the workplace and civic society'*.

In the context of same, academic departments have built established relationships with industry, with an embedded mechanism for ongoing two-way feedback between industry stakeholders and the programme/students/graduates which facilitates programme development and the enhancement of the required skill, knowledge and competency of the graduate.

**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).

The Institutes ongoing engagement with both QQI and the HEA is governed by statutory requirements and government policy. The introduction to the Institutes Quality Assurance Manual refers to the requirement of the Education and Training Act 2012 that the Institute has regard for Quality and Qualifications Ireland in the development of the Institutes quality assurance system.

Refer to the following section of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A1: Introduction.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Specific engagements are included later in this section. The engagements listed are quality assured through the quality assurance arrangements agreed formally with the particular body. With respect to programme engagement with professional bodies, the Quality Assurance requirements of the professional body are articulated, adhered to and monitored with respect to the particular programme delivery. The Institute is focused on maintaining the required professional standards of its programmes to ensure programme recognition and/accreditation in order to allow graduates apply/obtain exemptions for professional examinations, to apply for professional membership/inclusion on a professional register and ultimately be provided with the maximum opportunities for graduate progression and employability. Information and consideration of the professional recognition of a programme is required by the quality assurance procedures in the context of both a new programme proposal and a programmatic review.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and modification of Programmes and Modules; and Section A7: Procedures for the Evaluation of Programmes (Programmatic Review).

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

## **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 is committed to operating in a spirit of openness and transparency with our stakeholders, including staff, learners and the general public, through the provision of relevant and timely information in accessible formats. Refer to Quality Assurance Manual Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management; Sub Section A2.1 Mission and Vision.

See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The Institute publishes information about its activities which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible. In line with Section 9 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) and Section 1.8 of the ESG (2015), the Institute publishes information about its activities including their programmes and programme validations, research and related services; about the Institute and its quality assurance policies and procedures; and about evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations. This information is available to staff, prospective and current students, as well as graduates, other stakeholders and the public. The primary repository for public information is the Institutes website.

Information is also available publicly through the following forums:

- Course Programme Handbooks;
- National publications, for example: HEA publications; ISSE publications;
- ITT Prospectus;
- ITT Student Handbook;
- ITT Promotional Material;
- Careers Office Publications;
- Social and print media;
- Freedom of Information Officer within the Institute to deal with FOI requests.

**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.

Nothing to report.

**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.

In 2004, the Institute was delegated the authority from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, then HETAC) to make awards for its undergraduate programmes and taught masters programmes. The Institute provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at National Framework of Qualifications Levels 6-10. The Institute has Delegated authority in the making of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ Level 9 in already approved areas of research (July 2017) and has approval by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to deliver Postgraduate Research Degrees at NFQ Level 10.

**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.

Refer to the following Section of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A15: Collaborative Provision; Sub Section A15.1: Procedures for the Provision of Collaborative Programmes and for the Provision of Programmes leading to Joint Awards.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>



**16. Additional Notes**

Any additional notes can be entered here.

None.

**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	2018/19
Areas/Units	None
Number	None
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics and School of Health & Social Sciences
Number	Four external Panels – 3 ongoing at time of return
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/SchoolHSSProgrammaticReviewReport03102019.pdf">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/SchoolHSSProgrammaticReviewReport03102019.pdf</a>
Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	None
Number	None
Link(s) to Publications	Not Applicable

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	School of Business, Computing & Humanities
Number	One
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Year	2022/23
Areas/Units	None
Number	None
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

## 18. Engagement with Third Parties Section

Details of engagement with third parties, including:

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

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

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	1
Awarding Bodies	
QA Bodies	

First Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Nursing Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc (Honours) in General Nursing and BSc (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing  <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofHealthandSocialScience/NursingandHealthCareStudies/TL890BScHonsinGeneralNursing/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofHealthandSocialScience/NursingandHealthCareStudies/TL890BScHonsinGeneralNursing/</a>  <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofHealthandSocialScience/NursingandHealthCareStudies/TL891BScHonsinMentalHealthNursing/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofHealthandSocialScience/NursingandHealthCareStudies/TL891BScHonsinMentalHealthNursing/</a>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	23-05-2017
Next Review Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019

## 2. 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)	Not applicable

First Collaborative Provision (Joint Research Degree or Joint/double/multiple awards or Collaborative Programmes or Franchise Programmes or Linked providers [DABs only]):	Collaborative Provision
Name of Body (bodies):	Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI), Castel International
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate in Biomedical Sciences – International Medical Commencement Programme – Medical Stream</li> </ul> <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundation Certificate in Medical Commencement with Physiotherapy</li> </ul>
Date of Last Review	February 2019
Next Review Year	

Second Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Provision
Name of Body (bodies):	University of Bologna, Italy University of Burgundy, Dijon, France AgroSup, Dijon, France Institute of Technology, Tralee
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in International Agricultural Engineering  See validation reports for Academic Year 2018/2019 at: <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/</a>
Date of Last Review	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Next Review Year	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

### 3. Articulation Agreements

<b>Articulation Agreements - Total Number</b>	<b>39</b>
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First Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Methodist College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Care and Education  <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofHealthandSocialScience/SocialSciences/TL880-BAHonsinEarlyChildhoodCareandEducation/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofHealthandSocialScience/SocialSciences/TL880-BAHonsinEarlyChildhoodCareandEducation/</a>
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	25 May 2018
Review Year for Agreement	2021

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Second Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Sir Stanford Fleming College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Arts Travel & Tourism Management  <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofBusinessComputingandHumanities/HotelCulinaryTourism/TL720-BATravelandTourismManagement/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofBusinessComputingandHumanities/HotelCulinaryTourism/TL720-BATravelandTourismManagement/</a>
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	20 June 2017
Review Year for Agreement	2022

Third Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Durham College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Business (Honours) - Marketing Stream  <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofBusinessComputingandHumanities/Business/TL831-BBsHonsBusinessStudies/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofBusinessComputingandHumanities/Business/TL831-BBsHonsBusinessStudies/</a>  Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts  <a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofBusinessComputingandHumanities/Business/TL831-BBsHonsBusinessStudies/">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/SchoolofBusinessComputingandHumanities/Business/TL831-BBsHonsBusinessStudies/</a>
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	12 March 2018
Review Year for Agreement	2023



## 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.

The central role of quality assurance and enhancement is explicitly articulated in the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in achieving strategic objectives and maintaining and enhancing IT, Tralee's position and reputation within Higher Education both nationally and internationally.

A system was developed and implemented in the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) over the course of the Academic Year 2015/2016 that records and tracks decisions of the Academic Council and its Sub-Committees. This provides a facility of recording when decisions are to be acted on, by whom and when they have been completed. It also provides a facility for managing agendas and minutes of meetings. This system based on ongoing review has been further developed and enhanced during Academic Year 2018/2019.

An ongoing review continued of existing Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures and the Quality Assurance Manual from the perspective of their alignment with ESG 2015, QQI Policy and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines. The Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2017/2018 was reviewed in preparation for planning the Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2018/2019. Subsequently, the draft Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2018/2019 was approved by the Academic Council. The system of dissemination with respect to Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures was also reviewed in preparation for planning for the dissemination of Quality Assurance procedures in Academic Year 2018/2019. A decision was made then to further develop, and implement for the Academic Year 2017/2018, a comprehensive strategy of dissemination of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures. This updated strategy was rolled out in Academic Year 2017/2018 and further enhanced in the Academic Year 2018/2019 which included the following:

- As required by QQI, the publication on the Institutes website of the Institutes Quality Assurance Procedures, Institute Plans and Reports. The Quality Assurance Manual is only available to staff, students and the public alike through the Institute website.  
See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>
- Use of an approved template for the development of new Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures;
- E-mail notification from the Office of the VPAAR to all relevant stakeholders (including students and the Students' Union) of new and/or updated Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, reference to their location on the ITT Website and a request for feedback on the operation of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures (Template provided for this feedback). Heads of department are also asked to include any new/updated quality assurance procedures on the Course Board agenda. Feedback from individuals/Course Boards is logged in the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the template provided. Editing issues are rectified immediately, major issues are referred to the relevant Sub-Committee and minor issues are recorded for consideration at the next scheduled review of the particular procedure;
- An academic staff CPD session on the Institutes Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is held as part of each of the scheduled CPD events across the academic year (three CPD Events per year, consequently three Quality Assurance CPD sessions are scheduled each year for academic staff). Academic staff are asked and encouraged here to provide ongoing feedback on the operation of the quality assurance policies and procedures;
- Rolling agenda item placed on the agenda of each Quality Assurance Sub-Committee 'Stakeholder Feedback on the Operation Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures'. The feedback received through the Office of the VPAAR in the template document provided is processed through this agenda item. Feedback is in relation to the operation of quality assurance policies and procedures and quality enhancement of all service units across the Institute.

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

**New Management Appointments and Retirements:**

- Appointment of Acting President;
- Appointment of Acting Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar;

The list below provides details of decisions and recommendations, which were made by the Academic Council during the Academic Year 2018/2019 and are presented here in chronological order. The recommendations of the Academic Council Sub-Committees are captured and given effect in the decisions of the Academic Council itself.

**Academic Council**

- Quality Assurance Procedures/updates to Quality Assurance Procedures approved by the Academic Council:
  - A1.1 Introduction;
  - A2.5 Management of Agendas and Minutes of Meetings of Academic Council;
  - A2.7 Role and Function of the Academic Council;
  - A2.8 Role and Function of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee;
  - A2.11 Role and Function of the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee;
  - A2.12 Role and Function of the Student Affairs Sub-Committee;
  - A5.3 Preparation and Production of Examination and Assessment Material;
  - A5.4b Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline & Penalties for Late Submission;
  - A5.9 Recording Decisions of Boards of Examiners Meetings;
  - A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit;
  - A5.21 Protocol for Students Representing the Institute;
  - A5.24 Staff Student Meeting Guidelines for Students and Academic Staff;
  - \*A5.26 Examinations and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC);
  - A6.2 Course Boards;
  - A6.6 Students and Course Boards;
  - A7.1 Procedure and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes (Programmatic Review);
  - \*A10.1 Student Complaints Policy and Procedures;
  - \*A11.4 Thesis Submission and Examination;
  - A13.7 Student Code of Conduct and General Discipline Policy; and
  - A14.3 Admissions Policy.

*\* Inclusion of Postgraduate Appeal Mechanism*
- Academic Council Annual Report:
  - The Academic Council Annual Report Academic Year 2018/2019 was adopted by the Academic Council in March 2019.

- Academic Calendar and Meeting Dates:
  - The Academic Calendar for Semester 1 and Semester 2 of the Academic Year 2019/2020 was adopted;
  - Schedule of Academic Council and its Sub-Committees meeting dates for Academic Year 2019/2020 were adopted.
- Progression with Credit Deficit:
  - Progression with Credit Deficit was approved to be extended to the end of Academic Year 2018/2019;
  - Decided and agreed that a review of the Progression with Credit Deficit Quality Assurance procedure, and associated statistics, to be undertaken annually by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee going forward.
- Other Decisions:
  - Quality Assurance Work Plan Academic Year 2018/2019 was approved;
  - Revised Terms of Reference of the Academic Council and sub-committees (PPSC, SASC and QA&E SC) were approved;
  - An Institute-wide approach to the repeat assessment of module components was approved;
  - An external review panel was appointed with particular emphasis on Examination Board procedures and the role of the Academic Council in overseeing Examination Board decisions (report due to be submitted to the Academic Council in September 2019);
  - Proposal to amend the recommendations for Internal and External Postgraduate Examiners, in line with the review of Ireland's Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, was approved;
  - Revised scoring for GCE/GCSE applicants from 2019 was approved;
  - The memberships of the four sub-committees of the Academic Council were approved;
  - Agreed that programme(s) that have outline planning approval from the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee and also have Executive approval may be advertised in the CAO handbook as *under development*, subject to the proviso that if not fully approved by the 20<sup>th</sup> June of the following academic year the programme(s) must be returned to the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee for re-approval;
  - Quality assurance procedure 'A3.1 General Principles' within section 'A3 Principles Underpinning QA Procedures and Framework For Continuous Improvement' was retired;
  - Postgraduate External Examiners were approved.
- Examination Results Academic Year 2018/2019:
  - Examination Results for Academic Year 2018/2019 were approved;
  - The Department of Nursing to incorporate into their Examination Board process, the approval of students with clinical placement time outstanding.

#### **Quality Assurance Sub-Committee**

- The following items approved by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee were further approved by the Academic Council:
  - \*\*A5.2 Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures;
  - A5.4b Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline & Penalties for Late Submission;
  - A5.9 Recording Decisions of Boards of Examiners Meetings;

- A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit;
- \*A5.26 Examinations and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC);
- A6.2 Course Boards;
- A6.6 Students and Course Boards;
- \*A10.1 Student Complaints Policy and Procedures;
- \*A11.4 Thesis Submission and Examination;

*\* Inclusion of Postgraduate Appeal Mechanism*

*\*\*For approval Academic Year 2019/2020 by Academic Council*

- The following items were also approved by the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Sub-Committee:
  - Quality Assurance Work Plan Academic Year 2018/2019 as approved by the Academic Council.

#### **Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee**

- The following items approved by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee and further approved by the Academic Council:
  - A1.1 Introduction;
  - A4.2 Procedures for the Design and Validation of New Programmes;
- The following items were also approved by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee:
  - New and replacement External Examiners for taught undergraduate programmes;
  - Module descriptor changes as presented;
  - Minor programme amendments;
  - Academic Council and Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2019/2020;
  - Academic Calendar Key Dates Academic Year 2019/2020;
  - Outline plan for the Schools of STEM &HSS programmatic review processes were approved;
  - Agreed that programme(s) that have outline planning approval from the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee and also have Executive approval may be advertised in the CAO handbook as under development, subject to the proviso that if not fully approved by the 20th June of the following academic year the programme(s) must be returned to the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee for re-approval;
- The following Programmes were approved for development by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee (titles are as presented to the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee and were subject to change within the development process):
  - BSc (Hons) in International Agricultural Engineering;
  - Certificate in Tourism Destination Management;
  - Certificate in Artificial Intelligence;
  - Certificate in Business Leadership;
  - Certificate in Corporate and Leisure Travel;
  - Certificate in Content Creation for Digital Marketing;
  - Certificate in Data Analysis for Business;
  - Single Module on Problem Solving & Programming for Teachers;
  - Certificate in Tourism Destination Management;
  - Certificate in Wound Management;
  - Certificate in AgriTech Development;
  - Certificate in Industry 4.0 & Industrial Internet of Things;
  - \*BSc (Hons) in Biomolecules & Cell Systems.

*\*For development Academic Year 2019/2020*

- Procedures in relation to the approval of the following Programmes were ratified by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee before forwarding same to the Academic Council for noting:
  - Single Module in Lean UX Design;
  - BEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering;
  - BEng in Mechatronic Engineering;
  - Certificate in Irish Sign Language;
  - Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching;
  - BSc (Hons) in Construction Management;
  - Higher Certificate in Engineering in Engineering Technology;
  - BEng in Mechatronics (Online).
  
- The following minor awards were approved by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee:
  - Certificate in DevOps;
  - Certificate in System Administration;
  - Certificate in Computer Aided Engineering & Finite Element Analysis.

#### **Research and Development Sub-Committee**

- The following items were approved by the Research and Development Sub-Committee and \* were further approved by the Academic Council:
  - Nominations for Postgraduate External Examiners received in Academic Year 2018/2019 were approved by the Research and Development Sub-Committee;
  - \*Report of the R&D Sub-Committee's review of the Institute Quality Assurance Procedures – Section A11 Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes.  
*\* For submission to the Academic Council in Academic Year 2019/2020.*

#### **Student Affairs Sub-Committee**

- The following items were approved by the Student Affairs Sub-Committee were further approved by the Academic Council:
  - A14.3 Admissions Policy;
  - A13.7 Student Code of Conduct and General Discipline Policy.
  
- The following items were also approved by the Student Affairs Sub-Committee:
  - Quality Assurance Work Plan Academic Year 2018/2019 as approved by the Academic Council.

### 1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

#### **Governing Body** meeting dates Academic Year 2018/2019:

- 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018;
- 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 (section 12 meeting);
- 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018;
- 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018;
- 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019;
- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019;
- 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019;
- 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019;
- 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 (section 12 meeting);
- 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (section 12 meeting);
- 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (section 12 meeting);
- 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

#### **Academic Council** Meeting Dates:

The Academic Council meets six to seven times per Academic Year. Additional meetings are scheduled if required. Its four Sub-Committees have a number of meetings throughout the Academic Year. The schedules for all committee meetings are agreed in advance of the Academic Year. In addition to the scheduled meetings, a number of supplementary/special meetings are held to accommodate business as it arises. The following meetings of the Academic Council were held during the Academic Year 2018/2019:

- Monday, 17th September 2018;
- Monday, 5th November 2018;
- \*Monday, 11th March 2019;
- Monday, 25th March 2019;
- Monday, 13th May 2019;
- Monday, 17th June 2019.

\* Induction for new incoming members of Academic Council

In the Academic Year 2018/2019 the **Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee** met on the following dates in Academic Year 2018/2019:

- Monday, 8th October 2018;
- Monday, 19th November 2018;
- Monday, 29th April 2019;
- Wednesday, 29th May 2019.

The **Student Affairs Sub-Committee** met on the following dates in Academic Year 2018/2019:

- Monday, 1st October 2018;
- Monday, 1st April 2019;
- Monday, 20th May 2019.



The **Research and Development Sub-Committee** met on the following dates in Academic Year 2018/2019:

- Monday, 26th November 2018;
- Monday, 20th May 2019.

The **Quality Assurance Sub-Committee** met on the following dates in 2018/2019:

- Monday, 24th September 2018;
- Monday, 22nd October 2018;
- Monday, 8th April 2019;
- Monday, 10th June 2019.

## Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

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

The following programmes were presented to and noted by Academic Council over the course of Academic Year 2018/2019 and have been added to the Institute's Order in Council.

- New Programme Validations approved (ratification of process by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee and noting by the Academic Council - final approval stage for minor award programmes was approval by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee):
  - Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (Data Analytics);
  - Certificate in Social Media for Digital Marketing;
  - Single Module on Lean UX Design;
  - Certificate in Pastry and Baking;
  - Certificate in Irish Sign Language;
  - Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching;
  - BSc (Hons) in Construction Management;
  - Higher Certificate in Engineering in Engineering Technology;
  - BEng in Mechatronics (Online);
  - Certificate in Artificial Intelligence;
  - Certificate in System Administration (minor award);
  - Certificate in DevOps (minor award);
  - Diploma in Human and Personal Development (re-titling of award);
  - Certificate in Computer Aided Engineering & Finite Element Analysis (minor award);
  - \*BSc (Hons) in International Agricultural Engineering
  - \*Certificate in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management;
  - \*Certificate in Front Office & Revenue Management;
  - \*\*Certificate in AgriTech Development;

\*Ratified and noted by Executive in Summer 2019 & noted by Academic Council in Academic Year 2019/2020

\*\* For final approval in Academic Year 2019/2020

- Other Programme Validations:
  - The proposal to extend the validation of programmes in the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics & the School of Health and Social Sciences, where validation will expire in the current Academic Year was approved, pending completion of Programmatic Review, which is to be completed no later than the end of Academic Year 2019/2020;
  - Department of Nursing Programmatic Review, for Stages 2-4 of the new BSc (Hons) in General Nursing and the BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing, were approved.

**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	<b>27</b>
Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
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

**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	<b>0</b>
National	100
UK	0
EU	0
Student	0
Other	0

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

<b>Chair Profile</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal	<b>0</b>
Similar Institution	87
Different Institution	13
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.

The Institute collects, analyses, and uses data for the effective management of its academic programmes and all other central services activities. The Institute is committed to the enhancement of the student's experience and the Institutes quality assurance mechanisms include an emphasis on feedback from students. Data used includes data from the following:

Application/Admissions data; Examinations data; Progression/Retention Data; National data on progression and retention and national/international research to enhance the student teaching and learning experience, in particular with respect to retention and what works to support the first year student experience in their transition to third level; Department level Student Surveys; Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE); Library Survey; Computer Services Survey; QA1-3 Surveys; Student Services Surveys; Graduate Employment Surveys; Joint Academic Workshops (JAWS); Student Forum; Feedback from Work Placement and Industry; External Examiners Reports; online Tool-Academic Department Report/Plan. All of this data is used as a feedback and feed-forward mechanism to inform quality assurance and quality enhancement.

Under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a Central Student Data Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination. The Banner System is the tool used to collect data with respect to student retention, progression and success. This data, and all other data sourced, is analysed by Institute Management, Service Units and Course Boards, in the context of the requirements of a number of relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures, and this data is used to inform quality enhancement. The following are the relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures:

Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules; Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Sub Section A5.15 Analysis of Examination Results, Sub Section A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes; Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Form QA 1-Survey of Students by Lecturer, Form QA 2-Summary of Survey of students by Lecturer, Form QA 3-Course Survey Questionnaire.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

In Academic Year 2016/2017, it was decided by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar to pilot an amended version of the previously in place Annual Course Board Report Forms (CBA 1 and 2). The amendments were based on feedback from the Heads of Department. On the basis of the pilot in Academic Year 2016/2017, and the subsequent requirement of the new Strategic Plan for Academic Department Plans, a full review of the CBA 1 and 2 took place at the commencement of Academic Year 2017/2018, co-ordinated by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar. This review was focused on the establishment of centralised data, and informed academic department level decision making and planning, which resulted in the development of the online tool-Academic Department Report/Plan which was rolled out on a pilot basis in academic Year 2017/18. The pilot was reviewed in Academic Year 2018/2019. This online tool

is centrally populated (through the Central Student Data Office) with the relevant data for analysis and interpretation by academic departments, to inform their development of an academic department action plan for the subsequent academic year. The plan is submitted to the Executive and subsequently to the Academic Council.

The following are the headings included:

- Current Department Strategy;
- Current Programmes within the Department;
- Previous Annual Academic Department Report/Plan;
- Student CAO Data-Trends;
- Student Registration Data-Trends;
- Analysis of Examination Results and Progression Data-Trends;
- Student Withdrawals and Retention Initiatives;
- Student Graduation Statistics;
- Stakeholder Feedback (including ISSE Feedback, External Examiners Feedback, Industry Feedback, Graduate Feedback, Course Board Feedback);
- Use of Technology Enhanced Learning;
- New Programme Proposals;
- Quality Enhancements-Department activities which contribute to quality enhancements on teaching and learning;
- Annual Academic Department Plan for the next Academic Year (This section is a summary of the actions to be addressed, as outlined within each of the previous sections, and the indicators of success).

The External Examiner Policy and Procedures provide for the requirement of Course Boards to produce a 'Summary Report of Action Items/Recommendations for Improvement from External Examiners Reports and Responses by School/Department' to the Academic Council. Reference to this requirement quality assures that Course Boards consider and provide a response to external examiners recommendations for improvement in the teaching and learning experience. This requirement is embedded within the new Academic Department Report/Plan.

At student registration, the Institute carries out the HEA Equal Access Survey. The HEA through its National Access Office, promotes equality of access to higher education for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers and minority groups, including the Traveller Community and is achieving this full equality of access to higher education is a national priority. Each year the HEA invites us to collect Equal Access information at the point of registration on the Students socio-economic background, disability and ethnicity and returns it to the Higher Education Authority. With the information that is provided, the HEA is able to measure equality of access to higher education and allocate the resources needed to support students of all backgrounds and abilities.

The information gathered during registration is protected by robust data protection policies in the ITT and in the HEA, in full compliance with data protection legislation. The data that is returned to the HEA is collective and students are not identified by name, address or ID number. All students are encouraged to respond to the Equal Access questions. The non-response will not affect the student's

registration and enrolment, or their ability to be considered for financial support. However, it is highlighted that non-responses may have implications for the amount of State funding that is allocated to the IT, Tralee and as a result, we may then not be in a position meet the requirements of students with specific needs.

Each year the Careers Office surveys graduates using the Graduate Destination Survey. First Destination Survey offers a vision into the first destination of graduates nine months after graduation. Graduate surveys are produced to measure higher education output providing useful information to a wide selection of stakeholders such as higher education institutions, policy makers and prospective students. Results of surveys can also be used to benchmark institutional performance to similar institutions.

Section 1 of the graduate survey focuses on level 8-10 graduates whether graduates are in employment in Ireland or overseas, seeking employment, in work experience schemes or further study. Section 2 looks at the relevance or how graduates rate their qualification to the employment gained while Section 3 outlines salaries reported by graduates 9 months after graduation. Section 4 focuses on location by regional distribution of graduates with a level 8-10 qualification. Section 5 is an overview of employment sector by level, of working graduates in Ireland and overseas nine months after graduation. The final section reviews level 8-10 international graduate's first destination after graduation.

Presently the graduate surveys are created under the limitations of cross sectional data collection approach – a process which is under revision by the HEA currently. It is expected that the new survey (in early stages of longitudinal development) will include:

- Data on graduate qualifications and employment both within Ireland and overseas;
- Relevance of employment to area of study;
- Data on graduate further study;
- Data on graduate unemployment and unavailability for work;
- Career progression of graduates through longitudinal data.

See: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/What-do-Graduates-do-2015.pdf>

Each year the Graduate Outcome Survey goes live from April to June as the Institute must have the data back to the HEA by July. The HEA then returns the data to the Institute in September/October. The Central Student Data Office at the institute has been working on putting the ITT data gathered through the survey on PowerBI which makes the data more accessible and user friendly for local Institute analysis. From next year, the programme will be set up in a way that PowerBI populates automatically so the data will be available immediately once the survey is closed. The Academic Year 2016/2017 data (captured in April - June 2018) was available in January 2019, Academic Year 2017/2018 graduates (captured April - June 2019) was available July 2019, Academic Year 2018/2019 graduates will be captured in April - June 2020 and available in July 2020 and each July thereafter.

Each year the library surveys students on their experience of the library services. This data is analysed by the library and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year Computer Services surveys staff and students on their experience of the IT services. This data is analysed by Computer Services, and used to inform enhanced service provision.

The HEA-funded Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) initiative has effectively been in operation since 2014. The Assistant Registrar co-ordinates survey-related activity and, in particular, their outputs and response to the survey findings. During the Academic Year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feed-forward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received. This pilot proposal was agreed for roll in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the Central Student Data Office. This office was established under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance. ISSE feedback is now embedded within the new online tool-Academic Department Report/Plan.

In Academic Year 2017/2018, ISSE afforded HEIs the opportunity to embed the QA3 questions (Survey of Students Course Experience) within the ISSE Survey. IT Tralee accepted this opportunity in Academic Year 2017/2018 and the questions were included within the February/March 2018 ISSE Survey. IT Tralee welcomed also the inclusion of questions specifically focused on students completing a masters by research programme. IT Tralee continued with the inclusion of the QA3 questions in Academic Year 2018/2019.

Feedback is sought and provided from Industry to inform programme enhancement and new programme development. This feedback is sought and provided formally in the context of Programme Work Placement Guidelines and also through other engagements with industry.

Student feedback on teaching and learning: The Joint Academic Work Shop (JAWS) forum, involving the student class representative, the class tutor and the Head of Department, provides students with the opportunity to raise feedback/concerns with respect to their teaching and learning experience, as does the student completion of the QA1 and 3 Forms. See section A9.1 at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The Student Open Forum was launched by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the Academic Year 2012/2013. A minimum of two fora are arranged in each academic year. Membership of the forum includes: Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (Chairperson); Assistant Registrar; Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (Deputy Chairperson); Students' Union executive; Student class representatives; Admission Officer; Examinations Officer; Students Services Officer (Secretary); Computer Services Manager; Head Librarian and Access Officer. The objectives of the forum are to provide an open discussion platform for student experiences of Institute services and facilities, and where particular issues can be presented for resolution where possible. Minutes and matters arising are reviewed at each subsequent forum meeting.



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

Internal and External factors that have impacted on quality include: The continuing funding restrictions and reductions; the lack of investment in physical infrastructure and reducing staff resourcing despite the growth in higher education enrolments; National QQI Developments in Policy, Procedure and Best Practice; The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030; the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area; the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework; National Higher Education landscape; Institute Compact with the HEA; ITT and CIT working towards the establishment of the Munster Technological University; National HEI Best Practices-learning from other HEIs; National focus on Student Engagement (Publication of 'Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision Making' April 2016 and the establishment of NStEP - the National Student Engagement Programme); National focus on the transition to third level for the year 1 student; HEA Studies of Progression in Higher Education-National Benchmarking; National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning; National Access Plan 2015-2019 with the national focus on the provision of inclusive and accessible third level education; National focus on Student Feedback-Irish survey of Student Engagement (ISSE); National focus and requirements on transparency and accountability in the public sector; working towards the establishment of the Munster Technological University.

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

Nothing to Report.

## 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.**

### 1. Effectiveness

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

The Institute is committed to continuous improvement in the operation of its quality assurance policies and procedures, and in quality enhancement.

The continued strategy for reviewing and disseminating the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures has in particular contributed to enhancing engagement from staff and students with the policies and procedures, and consequently has contributed to ensuring the ongoing review and effectiveness of the policies and procedures. The following are particularly relevant:

- As required by QQI, the publication on the Institutes website of the Institutes Quality Assurance Procedures, Institute Plans and Reports. The Quality Assurance Manual is only available to staff, students and the public alike through the Institute website. See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>
- Use of an approved template for the development of new Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures;
- E-mail notification from the Office of the VPAAR to all relevant stakeholders (including students and the Students' Union) of new and/or updated Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, reference to their location on the ITT Website and a request for feedback on the operation of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures (Template provided for this feedback). Heads of department are also asked to include any new/updated quality assurance procedures on the Course Board agenda. Feedback from individuals/Course Boards is logged in the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the template provided. Editing issues are rectified immediately, major issues are referred to the relevant Sub-Committee and minor issues are recorded for consideration at the next scheduled review of the particular procedure;
- An academic staff CPD session on the Institutes Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is held as part of each of the scheduled CPD events across the academic year (three CPD Events per year, consequently three Quality Assurance CPD sessions are scheduled each year for academic staff). Academic staff are asked and encouraged here to provide ongoing feedback on the operation of the quality assurance policies and procedures;
- Engagement between the Office of the VPAAR and the Student Union in working together to: raise awareness amongst students of the relevant Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, particularly in relation to the Assessment of Learners; support the SU in their role in decision

making regarding Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures (ie. their role as student representatives on the Academic Council and Subcommittees of the Academic Council);

- Rolling agenda item placed on the agenda of each Quality Assurance Sub-Committee 'Stakeholder Feedback on the Operation Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures'. The feedback received through the Office of the VPAAR in the template document provided is processed through this agenda item. Feedback is in relation to the operation of quality assurance policies and procedures and quality enhancement of all service units across the Institute.

## **2. Impact**

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

Under section 1.2, a list references the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures approved by the Academic Council during the Academic Year 2018/2019. Review and update of the existing policies and procedures were considered in the context of alignment between CIT and ITT quality assurance procedures, and only high priority new ITT were considered for development and approval. All policies and procedures approved during the Academic Year 2018/19 had an impact on quality assurance and enhancement.

### 3. Themes

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

#### Key Themes:

- Strategy Development;
- Building a quality assurance and quality enhancement culture Institute wide;
- Enhancement of quality assurance policies and procedures and alignment with relevant QQI Policies and Procedures;
- Data informed decision making and planning, and learning analytics;
- Enhancement of the student experience through student engagement;
- Student Retention and Success focused on supporting the students transition to third level in Year 1;
- Equity of access to third level and support for learners, in particular students with a disability and students with learning difference;
- Quality inclusive learning centred teaching and learning;
- Dignity and Respect for staff and students in the learning environment and in the workplace;
- Research Quality;
- Establishment of Munster Technological University;
- Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

#### Internal Review Themes (41 Programme Validations and Programme Reviews):

- Assessment Strategy (including repeat assessment strategy) and Scheduling of Assessment;
- Student Assessment Workload and Class Contact Hours;
- Module Content and Delivery;
- Graduate Profile and Career Pathways;
- Quality Assurance of Work Practice Placement (including assessment of learning outcomes);
- Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

## 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.

#### School of Health & Social Sciences

Review of HSS School/Department Quality Enhancement Initiatives

The following section provides an outline of the School of Health and Social Sciences contribution to the Annual Institute Quality Reports. This section is presented in three different sections each representing one of the three Departments.

The Department of Health and Leisure ensures the effective operation of processes and initiatives in support of improved retention of its students, as follows:

- Monthly Course Board meetings with fixed 'student progress' agenda item;
- Working Groups established to address issues that may arise from time to time;
- Joint Academic Workshops as a formal staff-student engagement process to seek to enhance the learning environment;
- Programme Handbooks for each programme to ensure that students have written version of local department philosophies, options, expectations, rules and special regulations;
- Comprehensive Student Induction programme for first year students to demonstrate and discuss the nature of the Health and Leisure programmes and career prospects;
- Class Tutors (nominated academic staff) to flag to the course board any class or student related issues;
- Class (Student) Representatives who represent their class group on arising matters and attend the Joint Academic Workshops;
- QA1 surveys are conducted with nominated years and modules each year, the outcomes of which are summarised on QA2 forms and held for reference for programmatic review;
- External Examiner visits. Initiatives include: Guest academic and industry visitors;
- Increased promotion of ERASMUS student and staff mobility, to offer opportunities for enhanced third level and CPD experiences, respectively;
- Live ITT programme, including the Try-and-Move ITT event. This is an Institute-wide initiative, first piloted in the Health and Leisure department, which aims to deepen the student's personal development, personal responsibilities and understanding of life skills what promote a greater quality of life through longer-term good health;

- A comprehensive programme of student/stakeholder (e.g. community groups, medical practitioners, school children, etc.) engagement that ensures students receive authentic, real-world tuition by experiencing authentic, real-world situations in weekly time-tabled activities;
- Community Service Initiative and Community Leadership modules: students can gain credit for volunteering activities in two modules (second year and fourth year) in Health and Leisure programmes;
- Induction days for prospective students from the local National Learning Network. This initiative aims to ensure prospective students have a first-hand understanding of the nature of Health and Leisure programmes – timetables, workload, embedded qualifications and certifications, expectations and responsibilities. The initiative helps with course choice and therefore, retention;
- Initiation of greater engagement with local Youthreach by students and staff on health promotion initiatives through Healthy Ireland-funded development work. Staff and students are set to work with local Youthreach centres to voluntarily provide bespoke physical activity programmes aimed at increasing self-confidence, engagement with education and motivation to continue in education. These initiatives enhance the sense of relevance and authenticity to students' and staff competence and expertise;
- Greater engagement with local HSE and other health providers by staff and students towards development, through bespoke programme modules, of greater adherence among targeted patient groups to life-long physical activity;
- Initiation of greater engagement with the local International (migrant, asylum seeker) Resource Centre towards greater openness by the institute to users of the above service;
- In optimising first year students first experience of third level education the department provides an alternative first year academic calendar with greater emphasis on a year-long learning process. This initiative aims to further underpin other improvement of retention initiatives.

Department of Social Sciences ensures the effective operation of processes and initiatives in support of improved retention of its students, as follows:

- Student progress is discussed as an agenda item at regular Course Board meetings;
- Class Tutors are assigned at the first Course Board in September. These assigned staff members are usually teaching the relevant class cohort and are the first contact when issues arise or simply act as a point of information or liaison with the Course Board;
- Class Reps are appointed per class group with the support of the Students' Union;
- Joint Academic Workshops are held on a regular basis throughout the academic year, and are an agenda item on Course Boards. These are three-way meetings with Class Reps, Tutors and the Head of Department and aim to address ongoing issues for student cohort to help enhance their student experience and engagement with their studies;
- Programme Handbooks were developed during the Academic Year 2016/2017, one for each programme running in the Department, with specific information per class cohort including contact details of administration and support staff and the Head of Department as well as programme specific details around assessments, submissions, placement for example;
- QA1 (module feedback forms) surveys are disseminated each semester across a selection of modules on each programme. The feedback is collated and feeds into Programmatic Review in particular for overall programme improvement but feedback is also noted by the individual lecturers for subsequent iterations of the module delivery;

- External Examiners review assessments and examination material each semester, and visits the Institute on an annual basis to oversee the examinations process;
- The programmes on offer in the Department are very applied and involve two full semesters of work placement (2 x 30 credit modules). As such, we have developed a wide and diverse network of sectoral engagements with agencies who deliver services in the field. Staff from these agencies regularly deliver guest lectures and workshops, to both pre-and postplacement students and to support staff CPD;
- Staff attend seminars and deliver at conferences on a regular basis, which further informs teaching and learning in the class room;
- International students (ERASMUS) are particularly attracted to the placement semesters in the area of Social Care and we have developed links with colleges in Canada and Malaysia whereby students come to the ITT for the final award years of the Bachelor of Arts (Ordinary/Honours) in Early Childhood Care and Education programmes (level 7, level 8). International students enhance the student experience for the wider cohort in general but in particular, it helps broaden the undergraduate experience for a peripheral third level college like the ITT;
- The Department is part of the Live ITT initiative which is run across the School (Health & Social Sciences). It aims to add to the student's personal development and understanding of life skills for a greater quality of life and long-term physical and mental health;
- The Department undertook a review of assessment procedures across all three programmes (Early Childhood Care & Education, Social Care, Youth & Community with New Media Studies). Seminars and workshops were delivered to the Course Boards and the staff reviewed all the assessment strategies used in the Department across different discipline strands and modes of delivery. Marking rubrics were developed and refined for adoption across all programmes and at all levels, for continuous assessment and final examinations;
- Professional regulation is currently an important issue in the areas of both Social Care and Early Childhood Care & Education. The Department is engaging with CORU on the programme approval process to ensure that our graduates will be eligible for registration as Social Care Workers from 2022 onwards when the register opens. The issue of professionalisation and registration is also becoming an important one in the area of Early Childhood Care & Education. Department staff attend PLE (Pedagogy, Learning and Education Association) meetings and are keeping abreast of developments and regularly inform the Course Board on updates to this process.

Department of Nursing and Healthcare Sciences engaged in the following initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality:

- PhD/Doctorate activity amongst Department staff has increased from 3 to 10 between 2016-2018, with another 6 lecturers undertaking Level 10 study;
- There has been an increase in research activity and publications amongst staff that is reflective of this ongoing education within the Department,
- CPD relating to teaching and learning activities is an ongoing process with the majority of the lecturers holding both professional nursing qualifications as well as specialist teaching qualifications. Three lecturers engaged in formal teaching and learning courses during this reporting period;
- One staff member was identified as a Teaching Hero by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education in 2015 and three other Department members have been awarded Teaching Hero recognition by the Institute;

- The Department was the first in Ireland to introduce the implementation of electronic portfolios for nursing students;
- In 2016 the Department partnered with nursing staff in UCC and WIT in the development of the first Honor Society for Nurses in Ireland. In 2017 there were 80 members recruited to this SIA Society. The first Sigma Theta Tau Chapter in Ireland evolved from the SIA Society and inauguration of the Chapter took place in November 2018;
- Annual Department Careers event where graduates meet and share experiences with nursing students on career options and future decisions;
- Internship Nursing Student Team Building Outing in Summer each year. This event is a partnership (and co-funded) between the HSE/Bon Secours Hospital and the Department of Nursing and Healthcare Sciences;
- A number of staff elected to National committees as follows:
  - HEI representative for Department of Health Steering Committee-Community Nursing & Midwifery response to an integrated model of care;
  - IOT representative to the National Older Person Strategy;
  - IOT representative to the National Critical Care Network;
  - IOT representative to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland Ethics Committee;
- A number of conferences were hosted by the department:
  - November 2016: International Conference on Addiction (co-hosted with Cuan Mhuire, the largest provider of addiction support in Ireland).
  - April 2017: Hallmarks of Excellence in Nursing (co-hosted with Associated Health Service Partners – Acute Hospitals);
  - April 2017: International summit on Advancing Nursing Practice (co-hosted with Sacred Heart University, Connecticut, USA);
  - May 2018: Master class in Nursing Leadership to celebrate International Nurses Day
  - August 2018: Co-partnered in an international research initiative on leadership behaviours including in participation from IT Tralee, Free Mantle University in Australia and Sacred Heart University in USA.

## **School of Health and Social Sciences Overview**

### Department of Health and Leisure Studies

Ongoing Quality Assurance Processes include:

- Regular Course Board meetings with fixed 'student progress' agenda item;
- Working Groups established to address issues that may arise from time to time;
- Joint Academic Workshops as a formal staff-student engagement process to seek to enhance the learning environment;
- Programme Handbooks for each programme to ensure that students have written version of local department philosophies, options, expectations, rules and special regulations;
- Comprehensive Student Induction programme for first year students to demonstrate and discuss the nature of the Health and Leisure programmes and career prospects;
- Class Tutors (nominated academic staff) to flag to the course board any class or student-related issues;



- Class (Student) Representatives who represent their class group on arising matters and attend the Joint Academic Workshops;
- QA1 surveys are conducted with nominated years and modules each year, the outcomes of which are summarised on QA2 forms and held for reference for programmatic review;
- Extern Examiner visits.

Quality Enhancement Initiatives include:

- Guest academic and industry visitors;
- Increased promotion of ERASMUS student and staff mobility, to offer opportunities for enhanced third level and CPD experiences, respectively.
- Live-ITT programme, including the Try-a-Tri event. This is an Institute-wide initiative, first piloted in the Health and Leisure department, which aims to deepen the students' personal development, personal responsibilities and understanding of life skills what promote a greater quality of life through longer-term good health;
- A comprehensive programme of student / stakeholder (e.g. community groups, medical practitioners, school children, etc) engagement that ensures students receive authentic, real-world tuition by experiencing authentic, real-world situations in weekly time-tabled activities.
- Community service initiative and community leadership modules: students can gain credit for volunteering activities in two modules (second year and fourth year) in Health and Leisure programmes. Numbers of students on these modules is increasing.
- Induction days for prospective students from the local National Learning Network. This initiative aims to ensure prospective students have a first-hand understanding of the nature of Health and Leisure programmes – timetables, workload, embedded qualifications and certifications, expectations and responsibilities. The initiative helps with course choice and therefore, retention.
- Initiation of greater engagement with local Youthreach by students and staff on health promotion initiatives through Healthy Ireland-funded development work. Staff and students are set to work with local Youthreach centres to voluntarily provide bespoke physical activity programmes aimed at increasing self-confidence, engagement with education and motivation to continue in education. These initiatives enhance the sense of relevance and authenticity to students' and staff competence and expertise.
- Greater engagement with local HSE and other health providers by staff and students towards development, through bespoke programme modules, of greater adherence among targeted patient groups to life-long physical activity.
- Initiation of greater engagement with the local International (migrant, asylum seeker) Resource Centre towards greater openness by the institute to users of the above service.
- The department drafted an Assessment Guide document to promote consistency of assessment load. The document also includes an academic language development policy and the special regulations as applied to Health and Leisure degree programmes.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment is core to all activities in the Department of Health and Leisure Studies. The principle of ensuring authenticity of learning is the central paradigm. The academic programmes in Health and Leisure have long been characterised by significant embedded service learning. This model of practice ensures that students experience authentic learning environments in which to develop, practice and perfect their learning. This model also enables stakeholders to benefit from the teaching process. Examples are given below:

- Local primary schools are given swimming lessons each week by students on Education in Aquatics modules. Education in aquatics 6 also includes swimming lessons for individuals with disabilities;
- Local groups (e.g. service users of local St. John of God services and Tralee International Resource Centre) are often invited groups for outdoor (land and water-based) activities hosted by students taking Outdoor and Experiential Learning modules;
- Local sports clubs benefit from voluntary work by first year students taking the Physical Education and Coaching module and the Independent Studies module. These students practice coaching skills while assisting local clubs training sessions;
- Second year student taking the APA: Disability Studies module lead gym and hall sessions for children and adults with a variety of disabilities;
- Third year students taking the Inclusive Physical Education module develop and lead gym, pool and hall based physical education sessions for children and adults with a variety of disabilities;
- Students taking Community Service Initiative or Community Leadership modules undertake specified hours of Community Engaged Learning (CEL) work as part of the module;
- Student in Year 4 of the Physical Education stream undertake scheduled teaching practice on Fridays;
- Students taking the Activity Leadership 6 module (all students) are assigned a personal training client for 6 weeks;
- Students in stage 4 of the Disability Studies and International Practice module plan and lead pool, hall and gym sessions for individuals with a variety of disabilities with the assistance of second year social care students;
- Students in Stage 2, 3 and 4 of the Health and Leisure with Massage programme provide a scheduled massage service for staff of the Institute. Higher years (3,4) take clients for remedial support of specific conditions;
- Year 4 students taking Exercise Referral and/or Aquatic Rehabilitation modules are referred clients or groups with chronic conditions which the students lead through specific rehabilitative exercise programmes;
- 4th year Community Development students undertake an appreciative inquiry intervention to spotlight and accentuate strengths in their environment.

Towards a consistent approach to assessment, the Health and Leisure Studies Course Board has drafted a Guide to Assessments. This draft (working) document has also been forwarded to the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar for consideration by other Heads of Department at their group meetings.

#### Department of Nursing and Health Care Sciences

During this reporting period the Department of Nursing and Health Care Sciences, in partnership with the Health Service Executive, the Bon Secours Hospital and Galilee House of Studies engaged in quality enhancement initiatives as listed in this section.

Each quality enhancement is listed in response to the values titles presented in the Institute Strategic Plan: Excellence, Creativity and Innovation, Collaboration through Connectedness, Integrity and Inclusivity (Institute of Technology Tralee, 2017).

Excellence - The number of staff with QQI L10 studies completed have increased from 8 to 12 since the previous report submission in 2018, with 1 pending completion in Summer 2020, another 4 staff member at different phases of their PhD/Doctorate journey. The reason for staff undertaking their PhD and Doctoral programmes is linked with the requirement to increase the L10 numbers of staff in advance of becoming the MTU.

Collaboration through Connectedness - The IOT collaborative response to the HSE tender resulted in the introduction of the NFQ Level 8 Certificate in Acute Medicine Nursing and the Certificate in Emergency Nursing where a combination of theoretical and practical classes promote nursing knowledge and skills in practicing nurses. This initiative could not be made possible without the collaborative support of the Advanced Nurse Practitioners in the region. This collaboration was in response to the HSE's identified need to develop and enhance knowledge and skills in nurses in specialist areas.

#### Student Services and Academic Affairs

##### 1. Digitalising of Student Records within Service for Students with Learning Difference

Procedures around record keeping for the Service for Students with Learning Difference were reviewed in the Academic Year 2017/2018 by the Secretary for Student Support Services, who subsequently designed and successfully executed the transition from paper to digital record keeping during Semester One of Academic Year 2018/2019. The newly established system is proving very fit for purpose. The Service Provider has immediate access to a centralised file which holds all disability related documentation - this greatly facilitates student meetings, subsequent decision making and any follow up support activities/reporting. The new system is in line with GDPR requirements and will be continuously reviewed with respect to compliance.

##### 2. Staff Training and Consultation on Live Scribe Pen and the Institute Recording Policy

Due to noted issues voiced by individual lecturers regarding the Live Scribe pen, the OSLD scheduled a series of demonstration sessions, co-facilitated by ATAC and Disability Services, for lecturing staff during Semester One. Four training sessions were offered with 18 lecturers in attendance. The purpose of these sessions was to demonstrate the Live Scribe Pen as an aid for students with note taking difficulties and allow staff the opportunity to trial the pens themselves. In addition, staff were offered the opportunity to view the Recording Policy and contribute to the wording of the Student Undertaking sign sheet. Following staff consultation, the Student Undertaking sign sheet was amended to reflect staff contribution and the updated version is the version attached to the quality assurance policy document A13.4 Reasonable Accommodations and Supports for Students with Disabilities – Policy and Procedures.

##### 3. GDPR Plan for Disability Services

The OSLD, in collaboration with the Access Officer, formulated a phased GDPR plan for Disability Services. Phase One of the plan involves the finalisation and roll out of the IT Tralee Disability Services Privacy Statement and the Student Consent to Disclose and Share Disability Information documents by September 2019. Phase One has been successfully completed with both documents in full utilisation.

##### 4. Online registration for repeat and attending students was introduced.

5. Garda vetting was included as part of registration which ensured greater efficiencies in getting it completed in time for work placement for students on relevant programmes.

6. Application for progression were generated automatically i.e. all students that could potentially progress onto the next level of a programme were automatically included for progression. This saved the student having to complete the forms and after their June exams if they had met the minimum requirements to progress, and they wished to progress, they could then register for the next stage of the programme. This brought a significant efficiency to the service where students were automatically progressed and could opt in or out in June by registering saving both the students and the administration staff time and ensuring the system was more efficient.

7. Eventbrite used for ticket distribution for conferring. This ensured accurate projection of numbers for attendance and gave us the opportunity to offer extra tickets to students who wanted same.

**Access21@ ITTralee** is a project that has been running for the past two years between the Institute of Technology Tralee and four DEIS schools in Kerry. Once again, Academic Year 2018/2019 saw what is a strong multi-tiered programme, with the key core practices of Pathways to College, Mentoring, Leadership through Service and 21st Century Teaching and Learning, get more and more established in our partner schools. Staff and students from 2nd and 3rd years have now been deeply involved in the efficient running of this programme.

**Access21@ ITTralee**'s overall objective to fulfil key goals set up in 2017 has been reached as:

- the educational aspirations and attainment of Irish second level students from geographical areas where attendance at third level is historically low has been raised;
- partner schools have been supported to develop and promote 21st Century Teaching & Learning environments;
- the STEM/CS capabilities of teachers across the Irish second level education system have been increased; and
- an evidence base that informs policy and structural change is being built.

Furthermore, as the quality assurance in implementing this programme has been rigorously ensured, very noticeable improvements have been recorded in the:

- strengthening in the Access21@IT Tralee concept;
- structuring of the delivery of this programme;
- efficiency in the delivery of this programme;
- strengthening in staff involvement;
- quality of student involvement with key subjects; and
- relationship between IT Tralee students and students from our partner schools.

#### 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.

**Quality enhancement highlights** for Access21@ITtralee during Academic Year 2018/2019 included:

- Planning Sessions with Participating Schools;
- Practitioner-led workshops;
- Access21@IT Tralee mentor's workshops;
- School Visits (Consultation/Troubleshooting with Teachers);
- Implementation of IT Tralee Access 21 Mentors mentoring in partner schools;
- Campus visits for participating schools;
- Second Access21@IT Tralee College Experience Day;
- Seminar on research findings presented to all participating schools;

Access21@IT Tralee strongly cemented its relationship with management, staff and students in partner schools by the continuation of rolling out five major initiatives:

- The implementation of the **ITT Getting College Ready Calendar of Events**;
- The retention of an **Access21@IT Tralee Budget** which has been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of the project;
- Access21@IT Tralee second **Access 21 Experience Day** with over 140 second year students from our partner schools experiencing college life in IT Tralee and being treated to a suite of Tasters, as well as IT Tralee Final Year students showcasing their Final Projects;
- The building up of **IT Tralee Access 21 Mentors** mentoring their mentees in our partner schools;
- The continuation of **IT Tralee Access 21 Student Ambassadors** visiting partner schools and engaging with students by relating their own path to College and the many obstacles on the way particularly struck a chord with DEIS students as a noticeable engagement was recorded.

Furthermore, Access21@IT Tralee hosted another **Access 21 Research Seminar** with Trinity Access 21 research team presenting the findings of their work for 2014-2018 which reflected an increased improvement in the Access 21 students' confidence in key skills:

- Sense of purpose in education;
- Aspirations and goals;
- Active engagement with education;
- Wellbeing;
- Self-worth;
- Student voice;
- Team work & Problem solving;
- Student-teacher relationship.

The section on Urban-Rural Comparison highlighted an obvious engagement with the whole Access 21 approach from students from rural partner schools.

## 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 2017 – 31 August 2018).

### 5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans

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

At the end of Academic Year 2018/2019, the following Quality Assurance procedures are proposed for review and update:

- A5.2 Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures;
- A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit;
- A5.11 Review of Provisional Examination Results;
- A5.15 Analysis of Examination Results;
- A13.6 Policy and Procedure to Support and Determine a Student's Fitness to Continue in Study; and
- A14.1 Procedure for vetting students for placement in environments with children or vulnerable adults - Garda Vetting Policy.

### 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.

Programmatic Review Plans:

1. Programmatic Review of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics:
  - Department of Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences;
  - Department of Technology engineering and Mathematics.
2. Programmatic Review of the School of Health and Social Sciences:
  - Department of Social Sciences;
  - Department of Nursing and Health Care Sciences;
  - Department of Health and Leisure Studies.

### 5.3 Other Plans

Academic Council and Sub-Committee Plans for meetings in Academic Year 2019/2020:

**Academic Council Meeting Dates in Academic Year 2019/2020:** Monday, 16 September 2019; Monday, 04 November 2019; Monday, 11 November 2019; Monday, 09 December 2019; Monday, 03 February 2020; Monday, 23 March 2020; Monday, 11 May 2020; and Monday, 15 June 2020

**Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2019/2020:** Monday, 07 October 2019; Monday, 18 November 2019; Monday, 16 December 2019; Monday, 27 January 2020; Monday, 02 March 2020; Monday, 27 April 2020; and Monday, 25 May 2020.

**Quality Assurance Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2019/2020:** Monday, 23 September 2019; Monday, 21 October 2019; Monday, 02 December 2019; Monday, 13 January 2020; Monday, 24 February 2020; Monday, 20 April 2020; and Monday, 08 June 2020.

**Research & Development Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2019/2020:** Monday, 14 October 2019; Monday, 25 November 2019; Monday, 10 February 2020; Monday, 09 March 2020; and Monday, 18 May 2020.

**Student Affairs Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2019/2020:** Monday, 30 September 2019; Monday, 11 November 2019; Monday, 20 January 2020; Monday, 17 February 2020; and Monday, 30 March 2020.

Plans for **Academic Council:**

- Ratification of Examination Results (Summer and Autumn);
- Quality Assurance Work Plan for Sub-Committees of the Academic Council;
- Academic Council Annual Report;
- Academic Calendar;
- Analysis of Examination Results;
- External Examiners Summary Reports;
- Programme Approvals;
- Items approved and/or referred from Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval;
- Items approved and/or referred from Quality Assurance Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval;
- Items approved and/or referred from Research and Development Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval;
- Items approved and/or referred from Student Affairs Sub-Committee for Academic Council approval.

Note: In the context of progressing with the process of merging with CIT, it was decided that any review of existing Institute quality assurance procedures would be considered with respect to the alignment between CIT and ITT quality assurance procedures, and only high priority new quality assurance procedures would be considered for development.

**Plans for Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Consideration and approval of Academic Calendar Key Dates (incl. Academic Council and Sub-Committee dates for Academic Year 2019/20);
- Review and approval of New Programme Proposals;
- Review and approval of plans for Programmatic Review;
- Review and approval of proposed amendments to module descriptors;
- Review and approval of minor amendments to Approved Course Schedules;
- Approval of undergraduate External Examiners;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A1.1 Introduction.

**Plans for Quality Assurance Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Review of stakeholder feedback on the operation of QA procedures;
- Review and inclusion of a postgraduate appeal mechanism within Quality Assurance Procedures;

**Plans for Research & Development Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Approval of the process for post-graduate External Examiners;
- Review of Research & Development Sub-Committee Terms of Reference.

**Plans for Student Affairs Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan.



## 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 Institutes last Institutional Review took place 2004-2009. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

In March 2018 IT Tralee established the Institutional Self Evaluation Team and progressed on April 12th with an initial planning meeting of the team with QQI. At this meeting, IT Tralee placed as an agenda item the value of progressing with the completion of Institutional Review at the same time as the Institute and Cork Institute of Technology were working towards merging and becoming the Munster Technological University. As Institutional Review is focused on the completion of a quality enhancement plan for the Institute going forward, the institute questioned the value of progressing with same in the context of progressing towards becoming the Munster Technological University. The Institute expressed the view that Institutional Review post the establishment of the Munster Technological University would yield the maximum value. QQI advised that the preparations for Institutional Review were to continue until there was documented evidence that the TU process had formally commenced via a Section 29 application to the Minister. If and when that application was made, QQI advised that they would then enter into discussion with the Institute and CIT about the next appropriate date for a review of the merged institution. In September 2018, the Institute President made contact with QQI confirming that the Institute was progressing with a formal application to the HEA in Q4 2018, with the objective to merge and create the MTU in September 2019. In light of the Institute progressing with the formal application, the President requested of QQI that Institutional Review be deferred and aligned with Cork Institute of Technology post-merger in the context of the MTU. QQI agreed that Institutional Review should happen at a time when it can have the greatest impact on the future quality provision of the Institution. QQI concluded that that this matter would be best addressed through consultation with all of the Institutes of Technology, resulting in a revised schedule of reviews, within the same overall timeframe, to accommodate the merger processes and the potential for the review of the merged institutions, rather than individual pre-merger institutions.

QQI formally communicated with all Presidents in March 2019 attaching a revised schedule for 2017-2023. QQI, while considering the application by Cork Institute of Technology and the Institute of Technology, Tralee for designation as a Technological University, issued a revised schedule of Cyclical Reviews for Institutes of Technology to reflect both the establishment of TU Dublin and the planned establishment of Munster Technological University, depending on the outcome of the application process. As is reflected in the revised schedule, the QQI CINNTE Review for a Technological University will commence with the submission of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), 18 months from the date of establishment of a new Technological University.

**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.

Not applicable as Institutional Review on hold.

**6.3 Themes**

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

Not applicable as Institutional Review on hold.