

# Maynooth University

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2020

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



The Cyclical Review Process

## Part 1

# Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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

### 1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

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

This section provides a synopsis of key elements of the Maynooth University Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, adopted in 2016 and updated in 2018, to reflect new reporting and governance arrangements for quality. Consultation on Maynooth University's QA procedures, as set out in the Framework, took place with QQI through the 2016 Annual Dialogue Meeting. In accordance with Section 29 of the QQI Act 2012, following the establishment of our QA procedures, the University has published the Framework.

Many aspects of the University's quality assurance approach were endorsed by the external review team of the University's QQI CINNTE Institutional Review which took place in 2018/2019. Number one of five overarching commendations of the Review Team acknowledged the University's efforts *'for developing a strong culture of self-examination focused on continuous improvement and assuring quality in all of its programmes'*. The Review Team further commended *'Maynooth University's progress towards embedding a culture of quality evaluation and enhancement which includes coherent quality review strategies'* (commendation 2) and *'for developing and implementing a rigorous review procedure for programmes and units, and for following it through three cycles that have included quality improvement plans with monitoring following each review'* (commendation 5). In addition, the Review Team highlighted the University's *'systematic efforts to build a strong culture of self-evaluation with clear principles and objectives'* (commendation 18).

### Introduction

Maynooth University places quality as a central concept in its vision to *"further advance its international standing as a leading research university, with a vibrant postgraduate community, a distinctive undergraduate provision, a comprehensive and ethical approach to internationalisation...[and] we will be recognized for our commitment to the public and civic mission of the University, as a national leader in equality and diversity, an excellent place to learn and work, an inclusive community where students and staff can flourish"* (Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022, p. 14) The connectedness between quality and reputation is such that the strategic goals and objectives of the University are firmly focused on:

- Realising the full potential of the new Maynooth University Curriculum to deliver the best university education in Ireland;
- The quality and impact of its research and scholarship, focused investment in research capacity, and commitment to both fundamental and engaged research;

- Further developing quality, planning and financial management processes to support growth, development and innovation;
- Ensuring that the quality of the student experience and engagement between staff and students are preserved and further enriched as the University grows;
- Being an excellent place to work by providing for scholarly and professional development in a diverse and inclusive culture.

The University's commitment to quality and excellence in all activities undertaken requires sustained efforts to strive for the highest standards. It also requires on-going systematic self-monitoring, evaluation and organisational learning. Maynooth University has a long tradition of formal reviews of its approaches to supporting quality. It pioneered the introduction of departmental quality reviews in 1996, and again in 2009 it was the first university to undergo an institutional quality review under procedures devised by the Irish Universities Quality Board that had been established in 2006. Building on its achievements to date, and guided by the first university policy statement on quality assurance and enhancement approved by the Academic Council in October 2009, and also cognisant of on-going national and international discourses, the purpose of this Framework is to set out the University's overall policy on internal quality assurance and enhancement. The complexity of quality assurance and enhancement in higher education is succinctly summarised in the following extract from an EUA on Quality Culture Guidelines "*Quality in higher education is a culturally sensitive, relative and contested concept that is shaped by the institutional and national context, and given expression as an internal dynamic process with the objective of constant improvement*" (EUA, Quality Culture Guidelines, Brussels, 2004; see also EUA Embedding Quality Culture in Higher Education, Brussels (2007); EUA, Examining Quality Culture: Part 1 – Quality Assurance Processes in Higher Education Institutions, Brussels, 2010). The Maynooth Framework for Quality emphasises a commitment to comprehensive, open and inclusive processes that are effective, fully aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the University and which also enable the university to demonstrate compliance with both statutory based national objectives and European standards. Building on experience to date the emphasis in the next phase will be increasingly on quality enhancement.

Assurance mechanisms in relation to quality are required at two levels: for the community within the university and separately for external interest groups. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 states that "*it is essential (for Ireland's higher education) that its quality assurance structures and processes are trusted both nationally and internationally, and that confidence of students and prospective employers in the higher education system is maintained*" (p.93). The internal university community needs evidence to assure itself that quality procedures are applied systematically by all academic departments and other units and that the procedures are effective in enabling the university to achieve its objectives. Likewise, the university also needs to be able to engender and sustain public confidence in its quality procedures, and in its capacity to provide programmes that achieve national and international standards appropriate to the relevant level in the National Framework of Qualifications.

Maynooth University is a research-intensive university with scholarly strengths in humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, information and communications technology, teacher education, business and law. The University has approximately 13,000 students enrolled in programmes in the arts, humanities, social sciences including business and law and in science and engineering.

The approach to quality in the University supports and is embedded in the University's strategic planning, with the objective of impacting positively on the quality of research and scholarship,

teaching, the student experience and external engagement over the coming years. The scope of the Maynooth University Framework for Quality comprehends the range of quality assurance and enhancement processes, which provide for quality assurance and continuous improvement of research and scholarship, teaching and learning and the related services provided by the University. The Framework acknowledges but does not attempt to catalogue the very wide array of other strategic initiatives, policy instruments, planning and improvement processes, institutional learning activities, and internal and external validation and audit processes, which support quality.

The Maynooth University Framework for Quality builds on the experience acquired and embedded over the past two decades to support the achievement of the vision and strategies that comprise the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022, and in particular the major initiatives planned for the coming years. It is also cognisant of, and responsive to, the national legal context and statutory guidelines, annual reporting requirements and international standards as expressed in the ESGs. Throughout the Framework, the term 'quality' is used to represent both quality assurance and quality enhancement, as two necessary and complementary dimensions.

The critical importance of quality for the University is confirmed by the governance structure with oversight and governance provided a joint committee of the Academic Council and the Governing Authority.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Maynooth University Framework for Quality is to build on the progress achieved since the adoption in 2009 of the first policy on quality assurance, and to continue to enhance the effectiveness of its core activities of teaching, learning, research and scholarship and of all related support services, taking account of the goals of the University Strategic Plan.

### Principles

The Maynooth University quality framework is guided by the following over-arching and operational principles:

#### OVER-ARCHING PRINCIPLES

- **Purpose:** the primary purpose of quality assurance and enhancement is to support the achievement of the strategic objectives of the University and to ensure the highest standards and continuous improvement in all of the activities of the University;
- **Culture:** a quality culture is achieved through the commitment of staff, students, the university leadership and management, and the governance bodies to continuous improvement;
- **Design and implementation:** the University quality assurance framework is designed and implemented having regard to international norms and standards and national statutory requirements and guidelines;
- **Scope:** the scope of the quality framework includes both periodic reviews of units and programmes, and also monitoring and review of policies and procedures that sustain and enhance quality on an on-going basis;
- **Inclusive and transparent:** quality evaluation procedures are inclusive of all stakeholders (students, staff, representatives of external interest groups), are transparent and consistent in application, support in-depth assessment, reflection and change and are performance-focused in relation to the mission and objectives of the University;
- **External Validation:** all quality reviews involve peer review groups that include peers from

outside the university to provide objectivity and opportunities for assessing performance against international standards;

- **Students and stakeholders:** all quality reviews involve engagement with students and other stakeholders;
- **Public confidence:** public confidence in the effectiveness of the University quality procedures is achieved by the publication of quality review reports and the related quality implementation plan.

#### OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- The effectiveness of quality procedures applied across the university is evaluated on a periodic basis through the cyclical independent external review of our own internal quality assurance procedures conducted by QQI;
- The effectiveness of quality assurance procedures and the extent of quality enhancement initiatives in different units of the university are evaluated through reviews conducted by the University Quality Office on a cyclical basis;
- The unit under review can be an academic department/school, research institute, administrative unit, support unit or an amalgamation of units such as a Faculty. It may also be a programme (e.g., an omnibus degree programmes), a set of programmes (e.g., taught postgraduate programmes in a Faculty), a specific initiative (e.g., reform of the first year curriculum) or a theme (e.g., quality and impact of Maynooth University research). The University quality framework is not intended as a procedure for reviewing the performance of individuals;
- The scope of reviews of academic departments / schools is holistic in that they comprehend research and scholarship, education, public engagement, and interactions with internal support units. Particular emphasis is placed on the quality of the entire student educational experience with due regard to the diversity of the student population; the quality and impact of research and scholarship; and the work environment and developmental opportunities for staff;
- The focus of quality reviews of administrative and support services is on the quality and effectiveness of the services provided, the processes and systems that support those services, the overall contribution to the strategic development and effective operation of the University, and the work environment and developmental opportunities for staff;
- All quality reviews are supported by key metrics aligned with the University Performance Framework and are appropriately benchmarked against comparable units in other universities;
- The main findings and recommendations from reviews are reviewed by the President, the University Executive, and any other relevant management and governance structures within the University;
- The university officer responsible for quality prepares an annual report for the Quality Committee, and following this, the report is presented to the Governing Authority and the Academic Council.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the Maynooth Framework for Quality are to enable the University:

- To demonstrate to the University staff, students and governance bodies and external stakeholders that quality procedures are in place for the purpose of establishing, ascertaining,

maintaining and improving the quality of education, training and research and related services that it provides, and which have been established following consultation with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Sections 28 (1) and 29 (a), (b));

- To maintain public confidence, especially that of external stakeholders, in the quality and standards achieved by the staff and students of the University;
- To confirm that the quality procedures are effective in enabling units of the University to achieve the level of quality and the objectives which the University aspires to under its vision and strategic plan;
- To foster and sustain a quality culture supported by on-going learning and innovation in all units of the University, and by providing feedback to all staff and students on ways and opportunities for continuous improvement;
- To facilitate quality enhancement based on recommendations arising from reviews and other initiatives, and by highlighting effective practices to be shared among internal audiences;
- To demonstrate alignment with the legislative provisions and compliance with relevant European Standards and Guidelines, and other applicable national and international guidelines;
- To publish reports on quality reviews in order to provide to external stakeholders and interests (including the QQI and the HEA, and to the wider public on the quality of the education, training, research and related services that it provides;
- To be prepared for periodic external institutional review of the University quality assurance procedures.

### Implementation

The Maynooth University Framework for Quality is implemented via quality reviews of departments, units, programmes and thematic issues, and through the implementation of university wide policies and procedures – see especially parts 1 – 7 of the section on Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

### QUALITY REVIEWS OF DEPARTMENTS / OTHER UNITS

The typical model used for all internal quality reviews includes five phases:

1. **Self-Assessment:** The department / unit under review prepares a Self-Assessment Report (SAR). Guidelines approved by the Quality Committee guide the process and assistance is provided by the Office of the Director of Strategic Planning and Quality.
2. **Peer Review Report:** A peer review group (PRG) is established which normally comprises two external members and two members from within the university – the size of the group may vary according to the scale and scope of the unit under review. The SAR is sent to the PRG. The group visits the university, typically for two days, to meet with staff and students of the unit under review, staff from other relevant units of the university, relevant members of the University leadership and management, and external stakeholders. Following the visit, the opportunity to propose corrections to any factual inaccuracies in the report and the report is then finalised and signed off by all members of the PRG. The group submits a PRG report to the Quality Office. The Head of Unit is provided with the opportunity to propose corrections to any factual inaccuracies in the report and the report is then finalised and signed off by all members of the PRG
3. **Quality Improvement Plan:** The unit considers the recommendations contained in the PRG

report and prepares a draft Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for discussion with the President (or nominee) from which an agreed set of actions ensues. The University Executive is informed of the outcomes from the Review, its recommendations, and approves the Quality Improvement Plan which will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan for the unit;

4. **Publication of outcomes:** The review process is completed by publication on the Quality Office website of the Peer Review Group Report and the agreed Quality Improvement Plan. The Quality Committee, the Academic Council and Governing Authority are also informed of the outcomes from the review.

5. **Follow-up and On-Going Monitoring:** Following a set of reviews in a Faculty, the Director of Strategic Planning and Quality will prepare a synthesis report for the Dean to enable the identification of common themes, emerging issues and good practices. The Director of Quality meets with the head of unit on an annual basis to consider progress against the QIP. An annual update in writing is provided to the Director of Strategic Planning and Quality. The status of strategic recommendations at university level, is communicated to the President. An annual update on progress against unit-level Quality Improvement Plans is included in the annual report of the Director of Strategic Planning and Quality

#### **LINKED PROVIDERS**

Quality assurance procedures for linked providers will have regard to the internal university procedures presented above. Where a linked provider arrangement is entered into, the University, as the awarding body for such linked providers, will engage in a two-stage process involving (a) review of the quality assurance procedures of the linked provider, and, following approval of such procedures, (b) review of the effectiveness of the procedures. An independent appeals person will be appointed to consider any appeal that may arise if the university does not approve the quality assurance procedures of a linked provider.

#### **PROFESSIONAL, REGULATORY AND STATUTORY BODIES (PRSB) ACCREDITATION**

The University has many academic programmes accredited by Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSB); such accreditation is an important aspect of the overall assurance of professional standards and quality. A PRSB usually accredits a programme for a specific time period. The management of the process occurs at departmental level and the Quality Office engages annually with academic departments to maintain an up-to-date database of all PRSB accredited programmes in the University.

## 2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

The President, as Chief Officer, has delegated overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement to the Vice-President Academic, Registrar and Deputy President. The Director of Quality, who reports directly to the Vice-President Academic, Registrar and Deputy President, coordinates the operational management of quality assurance reviews. The Director prepares a multiannual schedule of reviews for approval by the University Executive. Normally, each unit will be reviewed once every seven years.

Quality in the University is also supported by policies and actions applicable across the University, which are led by the relevant members of the University Executive with support from Heads / Directors of Units that report to the Executive members.

Governance and oversight of the quality assurance and enhancement function is provided by the [University Quality Committee](#), established as a joint committee of the Governing Authority and Academic Council.

The functions of the Quality Committee are, using best governance practice, to:

1. support the University in discharging its statutory responsibilities in relation to internal and external quality assurance and enhancement;
2. formulate a University policy statement and strategy for quality assurance and enhancement, in the context of the University Strategic Plan;
3. oversee the implementation of a multi-annual programme of internal quality reviews;
4. support the University participation in external institutional reviews;
5. review progress on the implementation of recommendations arising from internal quality reviews;
6. promote public awareness and confidence in the quality performance of the University;
7. consider reports relevant to national and international benchmarking of the University and identify and disseminate examples of good and best practice; and
8. prepare an annual report for the University Executive, the Governing Authority and the Academic Council.
9. The Committee may establish sub-committees to assist it in completing its work. A subcommittee may include a minority of members who are not members of the Committee. Subcommittees must be chaired by a member of the Committee and shall be appointed by the Committee. The Governing Authority must be informed promptly if a sub-committee of the Committee is established.
10. The Committee may establish topic specific working groups to assist it in completing its work. A working group may have a minority of members who are not members of the Committee. The Committee shall appoint members to any working group it establishes.



## 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.

Maynooth University has a clearly defined process for [approving new programmes and/or making modifications to existing programmes](#). All proposals are submitted in accordance with a [standard template](#) to the Academic Council Office. A [guide for the development of programmes and modules](#) ensures programmes are designed in line with University standards: guidance is provided on a range of items including ECTS credits; qualifications and programmes, and the alignment of awards to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The programme approval process is a two-stage review, comprising:

- a) A review of the outline proposal by the [Academic Programmes Committee](#).
- b) A review of the full proposal, including full module descriptions, by external reviewers.

Stage I of the process involves:

- a) Proposal Preparation in the Department. Course proposal prepared within the relevant academic department. The proposal should be reviewed by the Department and signed by the Head of Department. The Departments review should consider: the fit with the departmental priorities; the relationship to other programmes offered in the department; the capacity to teach the course. Full module details are not needed at this stage.
- b) Review by Dean and Faculty Executive, and Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. The signed proposal is reviewed by the Dean and the Faculty Executive and Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee. This step is designed to ensure coordination between departments within the Faculty.
- c) Academic Programmes Committee. This may be done in parallel with review by Dean and Faculty Executive. The Committee will seek written comments from: Deans of Faculty and Faculty Teaching & Learning Committees; Registry team; Admissions or Graduate Studies as appropriate; Bursar's Office; Director of Quality; International Office if appropriate; Industrial placement office if a placement is involved. The Committee will discuss the proposal in the light of responses received. It may (i) decline the proposed course, (ii) refer it for revision or clarification, or (iii) recommend that it proceed to the next stage

Stage II of the process involves:

- a) Full proposal prepared and submitted to the Academic Programmes Committee and the relevant Faculty. The full proposal is the proposal form used in step 1 (modified as appropriate), plus the full module descriptions with details of assessment and learning outcomes. It is submitted to the Academic Programmes Committee & to the relevant Faculty or Faculties through the Academic Council Office.

- b) Faculty review. The Committee seeks reviews and reports from the relevant Faculties and Deans.
- c) External review. May be done in parallel with Faculty review. The Academic Programmes Committee will send the proposal to selected external reviewers (normally at least 1 from outside the country).
- d) Final review by the Academic Programmes Committee. The Committee will review the proposal in the context of the comments of external reviewers and comments from the Faculties. It will either recommend the programme to Academic Council, or refer it for amendment.
- e) Approval by Academic Council. The programme is referred to Academic Council for final approval.

[Academic Programme Proposal Process](#)

## 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.

Maynooth University's [Academic Policies and Procedures](#) set out rules relevant to programme delivery and assessment, including information on credits, modules, programmes, workload and regulations for assessment, much of which is contained in the University's Marks and Standards documentation.

The University uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Marks and Standards operate in conjunction with Module Information, Programme Specification and Departmental Handbooks which provide details of specific requirements of modules, entry criteria for modules with restricted entry, and deadlines and penalties. For each module learning outcomes and also the delivery and assessment methods are specified in advance and communicated to the students.

The University provides comprehensive information and guidance on Academic Standards and Assessment /Progression Rules, contained in the Marks and Standards:

- [Marks and Standards](#)
- [An introduction to Marks and Standards \(2016\)](#)
- [Changes to Marks and Standards - A Guide for Current Students](#)

Maynooth University commenced a major reform of its undergraduate curriculum in 2012, with full implementation of reforms and innovations from 2016. Students may now choose different levels of specialisation in accordance with the progression flexibility provided via options for major, minor or double subject programme combination. The reformed [Maynooth curriculum](#) is a significant commitment by the University to providing a curriculum that meets the needs of students and society in the 21st century. The new undergraduate curriculum received particular mention by the External

Review Panel of MU's CINNTE Institutional Review 2018/19 which, together with the PhD structured doctoral programme, was one of five primary overarching commendations made by the Team : the University was commended '*for an innovative new undergraduate curriculum, with a robust evaluation plan, as well as an innovative structured PhD programme*'. The undergraduate curriculum was also commended for being '*based on international research, societal needs and students' demands for flexibility*' (commendation 11).

The current curriculum helps students to shape their own education, allowing students to specialise either immediately or over time. Key components include:

- Innovative teaching and assessment that challenges students to analyse, reflect, think critically, communicate clearly and work in teams
- A unique first year subject, Critical Skills, that combines lectures with small group learning to support students' transition to university
- Fewer and simpler entry CAO entry routes, making choices easier and allowing students to specialise either immediately or over time
- Greater flexibility and choice, with the ability to take major and minor options within most degrees
- New and interesting subject combinations, including more opportunities to combine subjects across the arts and sciences
- Ability to pursue a modern language alongside any degree
- Elective options outside a student's core discipline
- Extensive opportunities to learn outside the classroom through accredited co-curricular activities such as work placement, volunteering, or study abroad.

The [Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies](#) is an administrative centre that supports undergraduate interdisciplinary and interdepartmental proposals under the umbrella of the [Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning](#). This Centre provides administrative support for any interdisciplinary Critical Skills and Electives as well as other relevant interdisciplinary courses.

The delivery of programmes can take many formats varying from intensive small group sessions to large lectures supplemented by tutorials or laboratory sessions. Increasingly staff use a variety of approaches to teaching with greater use of virtual learning environments (Moodle in Maynooth), interactive approaches to pedagogy, and more frequent use of assignments that are aimed at fostering active learning among the students. Opportunities are provided by the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#) to staff who may wish to develop their teaching skills and their understanding of learning processes. Students are supported in the transition to university with opportunities to develop their critical skills and to overcome specific weaknesses in areas such as quantitative reasoning, academic writing and information literacy.

[University principles and policies](#) that guide teaching and learning and supporting students in their learning are in place as are principles that apply to [interdepartmental teaching](#). [University guidance documents](#) in relation to University Academic Systems and procedures are also in place.

Criteria and methods of assessment are developed as appropriate for each discipline. The core information on methods of assessment for each module are published and communicated to

the students. A broad set of criteria aligned to academic grades (e.g., first class honours, second honours, pass, fail) are used by examiners to ensure consistency in standards. The assessment process for each discipline makes provision for taking account of documented mitigating circumstances which have been notified in advance to the relevant department.

Academic standards are monitored and validated by External Examiners appointed for the programmes provided by each department. The reports of External Examiners are reviewed by the relevant departments and by the Vice-President Academic, and a synthesis report is prepared for Deans. An updated external examiner policy was approved by Academic Council in 2017. [Maynooth University External Examiners for Taught Programmes](#) . Recognition of the effectiveness of the MU External Examiner system was provided as part of the MU CINTE Institutional Review 2018/19 with the Review Team commending the *'effective use of external examiners to raise quality oversight of student learning and also to benchmark its own assessment processes and standards against wider norms'* (commendation 13).

Feedback from students is collated on a consistent and systematic basis via surveys of modules and also through the university-wide Student Evaluation of Learning Experience (SELE) survey (currently under review) and national Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE). The findings from the surveys are shared with Heads of Departments who liaise with students via class representatives. The findings from the university survey of student engagement are widely shared among the academic community and also with the student representatives.

Student feedback on the current Maynooth curriculum is collated as part of a comprehensive [Curriculum Evaluation Framework](#), managed by the Office of Strategic Planning and Quality, with advice provided by an Advisory Committee comprising experts in evaluation.

Students are represented in all fora that have inputs into the delivery of programmes, the review of academic standards and assessment procedures, and also into procedures for obtaining feedback on the learning experience and engagement of students.

The University's regulations regarding examinations comprise rules governing plagiarism, examination procedures, accommodations, appeals and procedures for various student cohorts.

[Examination Regulations and Procedures](#)

[Plagiarism](#)

[Examination checking and appeals procedures](#)

[Reasonable Accommodations](#)

[Procedure on examination arrangements for visiting international students](#)

[Policy on use of dictionary in examination hall](#)

[Examination Regulations for Mature and Restricted Tests](#)

### 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.

Maynooth University is a research intensive institution with a strategic goal to be recognised as playing a leading international role in a number of thematic areas of research that address some of the major societal challenges of the 21st century. In pursuit of this goal, the University is committed to (a) building its capacity for research and scholarship to the highest international standards, (b) enhancing the postgraduate and postdoctoral experience, (c) supporting individual scholars and (d) further enhancing our national and international profile. The [University research strategy](#) builds upon strengths in Maynooth, which are structured to align with national and international research priorities. The University's approach as articulated in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 was deemed by the Review Team for the University's CINNTE Institutional Review (2018/19) as being a '*realistic proposal...to build research capacity--with quality assurance plans--in line with actual University expertise and potential as well as national need*' (commendation 20).

Maynooth University's [Research Institutes and Designated Research Centres](#) are an important element of the University's strategic plan to build research capacity and a research culture of international quality and outlook. The Review Team of the 2018/19 CINNTE Institutional Review recognised the importance of the Institutes and Research Centres for the University and commended '*the effective use of research institutes to cultivate an inclusive research culture and research initiatives across departmental lines, capable of attracting large-scale EU funding*' (commendation 21).

The quality of research outputs at the level of the University is monitored via citation analyses, especially the field weighted citation indices. The University performance framework includes a time series of such metrics, which are benchmarked on an annual basis against other universities in Ireland. Additional proxy measures of the quality of Maynooth research are successes in competitive bidding for national and international research funds, and especially successes for highly prestigious international awards such as European Research Council grants.

The primary process for reviewing the quality of research undertaken within units of the University is via the reviews of academic departments and research institutes. This includes narrative accounts of research quality and impact, appropriate to the discipline. The University is currently carrying out its [third cycle](#) of internal quality reviews of all units in the University.

While being mindful of the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines on Research Degree Programmes, the [Maynooth University Academic Policies and Procedures](#) include a set of regulations for a range of postgraduate degrees, including research Masters and PhD. In addition, the University has an extensive array of policies, to ensure the highest standards are attained in the training and supervision of doctoral students. These include policies on:

[Roles and Responsibilities of Students and Supervisors](#),  
[Route of Progression](#) for research masters students;  
Code of practice for the [Viva Voce](#)

A wide range of procedures, covering all aspects of the postgraduate student life cycle is managed by

the [Graduate Studies Office](#). In an effort to ensure a feedback platform is available to postgraduate students a [Postgraduate Feedback Council](#) is in place composed of postgraduate representatives (taught and research) as well as members of the Graduate Studies Office and Faculty Deans. When an issue is raised at the Council, the Dean can bring this forward to a Graduate sub-committee of Academic Council on behalf of the students. The Council received particular mention during the 2018/19 MU CINTE Institutional Review with the Review Team commending *'the work of the Postgraduate Feedback Council as an area of effective student engagement pertaining to the needs of postgraduate students'* (commendation 16)

In addition to postgraduate regulations and policies, there are [policies that apply to all researchers](#), covering staff and students. These include:

[Research Integrity Policy](#)

[Research Ethics Policy](#)

[Policy on Open Access to Research](#)

[Charter on Postdoctoral Research](#)

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Intellectual Property Management & Exploitation Policy](#)

[Research Incentivisation Policy](#)

The [Research Skills Development Programme](#) was launched in 2017 and offers an extensive range of training and development programmes to researchers in the University. It is a joint training programme developed by the Graduate Studies and Development Office with inputs from the Library and the Commercialisation Office. It is offered to all postgraduate, postdoctoral and other early stage researchers and combines on-line, blending learning and credited modules.

All doctoral students are registered for structured PhD programmes, which along with the preparation of a research thesis comprises mandatory modules on [generic skills and specialised modules](#) in the research field. Indeed, the *'development, implementation and continuous assessment of the structured doctorate degree'* was commended by the Review Team during MU's 2018/2019 CINTE Institutional Review (commendation 8 and Overarching Institutional commendation number 3). The decision to award a doctoral degree is based solely on the quality of the research, which is examined by an internal and external examiner.

The [Research Development Office](#) provides a range of services and funding supports to raise the quality of research applications to all funding agencies, and also to enhance the profile of Maynooth research outputs; these services are underpinned by a developed suite of procedures and processes. The *'development of the Research Development Office as a single point of contact to support all aspects of research from identifying funding streams through to post award'* was noted for commendation as part of MU's CINTE Institutional Review 2018/19 (commendation 19). The Research Development Office has implemented a Research Information System (RIS) which hosts academic profile, proposal tracking, ethics and reporting modules. Further developmental plans include expanding the system with a view to bringing postgraduate students into the system via a link with the student ITS system. The Office underwent a major restructure in 2015-16 to incorporate research finance so that oversight of research grants from preparation through to close out all fall within the one team.

The University's Commercialisation Office and the Business Incubation Centre are now closely aligned appearing under the brand of [MaynoothWorks](#). Together, they deliver an integral approach to

knowledge transfer, enterprise partnership and entrepreneurship innovation.

Funding is provided by the University to facilitate staff in attending international conferences, and to avail of sabbatical periods of either six months or twelve months to progress their research. The Research Development Office runs a series of internal funding schemes aiming to increase the University's research profile and assist staff in securing European funding.

#### 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 student life cycle at Maynooth University encompasses a wide range of activities, policies and procedures, spanning from the time before prospective students commence their third level studies, the transition to university life, through to graduation, employment and life beyond the university. The University has a strong tradition in the support of students throughout this entire life cycle.

The University has many procedures in place to provide quality assurance throughout the student life cycle. Commencing with recruitment and admission the university [Admissions Office](#) works very closely with school principals and guidance counsellors to ensure that prospective students are well informed of the range of programmes provided, entry requirements, and special features of the Maynooth curriculum. Further information and advice are provided via the web, social media and especially via Open Days. Through these efforts the threshold for entry to Maynooth programmes has been maintained at a high level even though the numbers of new entrants have increased substantially.

The [Maynooth University Access Programme \(MAP\)](#) encourages under-represented groups to enter third level and provides these groups with support through their time at Maynooth. These groups include [under-represented school leavers](#), [mature students](#), [students with disabilities](#) and members of the travelling community. The University is a national leader in both attracting and retaining school leavers from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds, mature students and students with disabilities. From a national perspective, MAP has taken a leadership role in developing national policy in the area of widening participation. From an institutional perspective, MAP has developed number of models of academic support that support transition to higher education of underrepresented groups and are acknowledged as innovative models of outstanding good practice.

Specific assistance is provided by the University Access Office to assess and support students entering via the [Higher Education Access Route \(HEAR\)](#) and [Disability Access to Education Route \(DARE\)](#).

All new entrants are provided an extended induction programme-[Launchpad](#), which was developed and evolved as part of the new curriculum initiative. During the initial induction week, the new entrants complete a survey which provides information on many matters including self-assessments by the students of their levels of preparedness for various aspects of third level education including independent learning. This information is shared with the providers of academic support services.

MU is actively engaged and is a national leader in addressing the higher education needs of the most marginalised communities, such as Travellers. Recently for instance, it took the lead partner role in the HEA funded *CollegeConnect* programme. The Review Team in the University's 2018/2019 CINTE Institutional Review highlighted MU's work in this area with one of five of the key commendations made by the Team referring specifically to MU's approach commending the University on *'its national leadership and strategic approach to Access, Transfer and Progression at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with recruitment, transition and post-entry strategies established to ensure the success of its diverse student cohort'* (key commendation 5 and commendation 22).

The [Critical Skills](#) subjects (optional for first year students) aim to provide a foundation for skills that the University regards as critical for a university education and that every university graduate should have and are also valued by employers. Such skills are dealing with complex arguments, evaluating evidence and making balanced judgments, communicating ideas clearly both verbally and in writing. Because these skills are so important, both in university and beyond, the University offers a specially designed subject for first-year students in critical skills to aid the transition to third level while at the same time complementing and supporting disciplinary learning.

There are documented procedures for deciding on applications from students who may have commenced in another university and later wish to [transfer to Maynooth](#). There are also documented procedures for deciding on exemptions that may be applicable to students with relevant [prior learning](#). Students, already registered in the University and depending on their initial programme of study, are provided a [range of options](#) to transfer internally from their first year programme. This provides students with greater choice in determining the final pathway of their studies.

The university Institutional Research Office systematically and consistently monitors retention, progression and completion rates. Trends over time are kept under review by the University Executive, including Faculty Deans.

Within the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning, the [Programme Advisory Office](#) is available to assist and advise undergraduate students, including incoming first year students, with programme related decisions before and after the registration period. The Programme Advisory Office is a guide for students as they navigate their own way through their programme options. The Office briefs incoming first year students during Welcome Week about Programme Choices students make during their academic journey at the University. Continuing second year students may also avail of the service, where they are unsure about programme options e.g. flexible degree pathways (major or major w/minor options) or whether or not to choose to take an Elective. Other key supports for students as they move through the student life cycle include support and advice for [work placement](#) during their studies and advice on [career development](#).

The academic grades achieved by students are monitored and reviewed each year with particular attention to the grades of final year students which are benchmarked against comparable data for other universities in Ireland, and against standards in universities outside Ireland via the External Examiners.

The career tracking of graduates is limited to early career stages via the national First Destinations



Survey taken nine months after graduation. The survey facilitates benchmarking against other universities in Ireland.

Maynooth University is committed to offering students “an outstanding university education, the best available in Ireland, an education which challenges and supports all students to achieve their full potential, and prepares students for life, work and citizenship, and for complexity, diversity and change”. Maynooth University’s [Graduate Attributes](#) adopted a part of the evolution of the new curriculum, emphasises a holistic understanding of education, encompassing academic excellence, opportunities for self-development and an emphasis on social, cultural and environmental awareness.

The University is also committed to providing an outstanding learning environment for our students, through its teaching, research and scholarship, and student supports. Maynooth University aims to offer a curriculum and an intellectual, cultural and social environment that provide students with opportunities to make meaningful and positive contributions to the development of the community and society. In return it expects a high level of engagement from students. The expectations and commitments from both the University and the students are codified within the [Maynooth Student Charter](#).

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) provides data on what changes occur in different aspects of the student experience as they progress from first to final year undergraduate and also the changes that occur for those that continue as taught postgraduates. The Maynooth ISSE database is analysed by the Institutional Research Officer to provide insights into sources of variability in the quality of the student experience which may relate to field of study, mode of study (full-time vs part-time), and age and / or gender of the student. The ISSE also supports benchmarking against all universities in Ireland and to a limited extent against universities in other countries.

Reports of the main findings from the ISSE are provided to the students, the University Executive, the Faculties, the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Academic Council.

### 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.

Teaching informed by research is a core function of the University and is critical to ensuring a high quality student experience and to enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competence and skills. Maynooth University has well developed recruitment and appointment procedures for all academic staff that are aligned to international best practices.

The primary focus of the Human Resources Office is to ensure the University continues to be an excellent place to work, known for a collegial ethos, which empowers all staff to contribute fully. A suite of [human resources policies](#) governs policy on teaching staff.

All academic posts are filled following a publicly advertised competition. Prior to advertisement, a detailed job description is prepared with a clear identification of essential and desirable attributes. Applications are assessed against criteria based on the requirements specified in the job description. Members of Assessment Boards are trained in advance to ensure consistency, fairness, and avoidance of any discrimination and /or unconscious bias.

For all academic posts, candidates are required to provide details of their teaching experience, and during the interview they may be questioned on their understanding of pedagogy at third level. It is standard practice that candidates are required to make a short presentation as part of the interview.

[Maynooth University Recruitment and Selection Process](#)

Staff are provided opportunities to further develop their teaching skills and deepen their understanding of different modes of learning via professional credit bearing courses organised by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and funded by the University. University Teaching Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis, while innovations in teaching practice across all departments are showcased at an annual event organised by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. [Staff Teaching and Learning Support](#). The University also recognises excellence in teaching and doctoral supervision via the Maynooth University Teaching and Supervision Awards.

The [potential of new technologies](#) to support teaching and learning are kept under review and also actively promoted by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The Quality Assurance and review of blended learning approaches at Maynooth are developed to enhance these specific programmes, while also being guided by the relevant QQI statutory guidelines. The Centre provides support to academic staff in the design and development of blended and online modules and programmes and in the innovative use of learning technologies. We do this through a range of individual supports, CPD activities, [workshops](#), department-based projects, as well as national and sectoral collaborative projects.

MU's approach to improving the quality of teaching was commented on as part of its recent CINTE Institutional Review with the *'University's 'progress in improving the quality of teaching and its plans to make additional progress in this area'* commended by the external Review Team (commendation 9).

The links between teaching and research are vital at all levels. Departments are encouraged to ensure that their best researchers have opportunities to teach undergraduates in order to foster a sense of passion and enthusiasm for research. To further develop this connection, the University has introduced an enhanced [Summer Undergraduate Research Programme \(SPUR\)](#) to provide students with an opportunity to work closely with faculty mentors on research projects across a range of disciplines and the chance to learn more about the postgraduate experience.

The University academic promotion schemes place equal weightings on evaluation criteria linked to both teaching and research in order to ensure that teaching is not in any sense of lesser importance.

Maynooth University considers [Sabbatical Leave](#) for the purpose of research and study to be of fundamental importance to academic life and as an integral part of the employment relationship between the University and its permanent academic staff. Such leave contributes to ongoing staff development by providing individuals uninterrupted periods for research and for updating their theoretical knowledge and methodological expertise, while also facilitating the achievement of the objectives of the University's Research and Teaching Strategies. It also supports the University mission to have an international reputation for teaching and research, and its commitment to collaboration and engagement with other higher education institutions, industry and civil society.

Maynooth University is committed to being a University community that promotes and advances equality, respects and values diversity, and develops a collegiate environment of excellence with equality, in which the human rights, the responsibilities and diversity of all students and staff are recognised and respected. The University values the enrichment that comes from a diverse community of students and staff and seeks to promote equality and prevent discrimination in the access, experience, progression and achievement of all students and staff through developing and implementing clear policies, processes, practices providing effective support to help realise equality in student experience and in employment. A University Equality and Diversity Policy has been developed therefore, to realise the University's core values of equality, inclusiveness, social justice, dignity and respect. Equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism have also been identified as key strategic goals in the University's Strategic Plan (2018-2022).

[Maynooth University Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

## 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.

Maynooth University aims to offer its students an exceptional educational experience that enables them to reach their full potential as students and as individuals. The Maynooth education places emphasis on critical skills, flexibility, unique subject combinations, electives, and experiential learning. A key strength of our University is its strong community that fosters an open, supportive, and flexible learning environment. Personal interaction and active citizenship lie at the heart of the Maynooth University experience. Students are encouraged to co-create their educational pathway and choice is central to this personalised experience. The [Maynooth University Teaching and Learning Guidelines](#) were developed, in that spirit, to provide guidelines, rather than rigid prescriptive approaches, for teaching and learning at the University.

Using a wide range of mutually reinforcing actions, the University aims through the [Maynooth curriculum](#) to provide its graduates with a unique set of [graduate attributes](#).

The University Academic Council has established a [Teaching and Learning Committee](#), chaired by the Dean of Teaching and Learning. It has a very broadly based membership that includes academic staff from each Faculty, staff from academic support units and representatives from Maynooth University Students' Union. The role of the Teaching and Learning Committee is "to make recommendations to Academic Council on matters of strategy and policy in relation to Teaching and Learning in order to enhance teaching, learning and assessment at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and to oversee, on behalf of Academic Council, the development, implementation and review of the education strategy for the university, within the overall framework of the University Strategic Plan". The Academic Council Teaching and Learning Committee is supported by a Teaching and Learning Committee in each of the three Faculties (Arts, Philosophy and Celtic Studies; Social Sciences; and Science and Engineering).

Within the broad remit summarised above, the Teaching and Learning Committee has specific responsibility to "oversee the development and implementation of systems to evaluate the quality of programmes, including mechanisms for student feedback and evaluation of student engagement and the student experience" and also to "oversee the standards of student achievement, relative to local and international standards, and the consistency and pattern of results".

The [Dean of Teaching and Learning](#) provides leadership for the University in the key areas of the development of teaching and learning and the supports for students in learning. This includes overseeing the development of a co-ordinated suite of critical skills subjects for first year students, a range of elective courses for undergraduate students, advisory, guidance and peer mentoring supports for students, and experiential learning and co-curricular activities including service learning and work placements. The Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning supports teaching and learning across the university, assuming direct responsibility for certain interdisciplinary courses and coordinating the work of the following functions (links provide details of these functions and additional detail provided below):

- [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Career Development Centre](#)
- [Work Placement](#)
- [Experiential Learning](#)
- [Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies](#)
- [Programme Advisory Office](#)
- [Student Engagement Office](#)

The aim of the **Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)** is to enhance teaching and learning in the University through the support and development of good practice and innovation in this regard, through a range of initiatives for staff and students. Amongst its activities, it provides accredited courses in teaching and learning to staff. These are currently being comprehensively reviewed and redesigned in order to fully align them with the [National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning](#) in Higher Education's Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education (PD Framework); and to incorporate stakeholder feedback. The CTL also offers Evaluation of Teaching processes, through peer review or student group evaluations, supports teaching fellowships, and provides training, supports and facilities for technology enhanced teaching and learning. In addition, it coordinates the provision of Critical Skills modules for the Maynooth undergraduate curriculum.

The **Programme Advisory Office** was established in August 2016 and is situated within the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning as a dedicated advisory service to assist students with programme choice related decisions. The Office consists of a full-time Programme Advisor, who is supported by a team of PG students during peak times. The Programme Advisory Office has a number of functions: (i) to provide advice to individual undergraduate students with programme related choices they may be unsure about; (ii) to promote the key components of the new Curriculum to current students including increased subject choice, Electives, Critical Skills, and experiential learning opportunities; (iii) to produce guidance documents for students mapping out their programme choices as well as establishing a significant online presence for the Office; (iv) to support undergraduate students as they transition into Maynooth University and as they transition between academic years (in collaboration with many other offices).

The **Experiential Learning Office** was established in 2016 within the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning. Its aims to support the enhancement of student opportunities for professional development, undergraduate research, service learning and community engagement, as informed by the University Strategic Plan. The office works closely with academic staff, employers and community partners to develop quality experiential learning opportunities within the new curriculum and co-curriculum.

The University [Library](#) is a key resource for supporting teaching and learning in the University, its mission being to foster communities of learning and scholarship through excellent resources, services and people. The Library is actively engaged in supporting the Maynooth University Curriculum with its emphasis on critical skills, that are explicitly linked to information literacy. The Library supports the delivery of information literacy skills and promotes information resources to a growing student body, through a blended technology approach.

The University's facilities and buildings for teaching and learning has seen significant investments; a major extension to the University library was completed in 2013 and, more recently, the addition of 21,700 m<sup>2</sup> to the building stock of the University at a cost of €62.4m; this including the EOLAS building and the School of Education. A new campus master plan will guide the capital development of the University over the coming decade.

### **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.

The planning and deployment of university resources and supports is a key consideration in the implementation of the University's strategy and activities. The University is committed to underpinning the growth and development of the university with policies and processes for financial planning, resource allocation and risk analysis that support strategic decision-making.

Maynooth University (MU) has been growing rapidly and consistently since its foundation; total enrolments have increased from approximately 1000 students in 1980/81, to about 13,000 in 2018/19. Supporting this growth requires a suite of strategic goals to deploy resources appropriately across all areas of activity; this includes capital and infrastructure development, human resources, teaching and learning, research and enabling administration.

Maynooth university is committed to delivering an effective and efficient use of the resources to assure, sustain and where feasible to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. While operating within the constraints of the current funding allocations, the University has undertaken a major revision of its undergraduate curriculum that necessitated the prioritisation of resources to support the introduction of new components in the curriculum such as modules on critical skills, elective streams, greater participation in experiential learning opportunities, and the appointment of university tutors.

In addition, some of the existing support services have been expanded: for example, a Programme Advisory Officer has been appointed to assist and guide students with their programme choices in the context of the new curriculum; funding for additional tutors has been provided for the Mathematics Support Centre, while other well developed services such as Academic Writing and targeted services for Access students continue to be developed. Furthermore, since 2017 resources have been provided to support an Experiential Learning Office and also to undertake on-going monitoring of the implementation of the undergraduate curriculum.

The University has adopted a campus masterplan, which sets out a strategy for the development of the campus over the next twenty five years through key capital projects; the University's [Campus Planning and Development Office](#) is tasked with the coordination of this strategy. The university is currently

implementing a ten-year (2011-2020) capital development plan with a budget of 157 million euro that includes a loan of 77 million euro from the EIB.

In order to support the rapid growth and increasing complexity of the University, new central systems across IT, Finance, HR and Registry have been deployed and management structures have been scaled to respond and to enable the University to transition to its next stage of development.

The objectives of the [University's Finance Office](#) are to: support the University Executive and Governing Authority in delivering on the Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 by providing objective, accurate and timely information for decision-making; manage university assets by maintaining strong financial control, realising 'value-for-money', controlling expenditure and managing financial risk; optimise university funding and prioritise the allocation of resources to assist with the delivery of the Strategic Plan; ensure accountability and transparency by preparing and delivering information to external stakeholders; oversee financial compliance: meet all legal, statutory, regulatory and governance requirements; and be an exemplar customer services organisation within the university.

A key consideration for the University is planning, developing and valuing its staff to support the growth and development of the University. The University's [Human Resources Office](#) coordinates strategic aims in this regard. An annual review of staffing, focused on the allocation of appropriate resources at faculty and departmental level, is carried out to plan for growth in student numbers. The Human Resources Department is closely linking its strategy over the next 5 years to quality improvement and enhancement, through a range of initiatives aimed at the development and advancement of all staff.

Policy and procedures for the resource and support requirements relating to the development of new programmes are set out under the section on Programme Design and Approval in Part 1 of the AIQR. Wide-ranging supports for the undergraduate curriculum have been developed through the [Maynooth Education](#) developments. These include support for the development of critical skills, the option of elective streams and enhanced experiential learning opportunities. Specific resources and supports for teaching and learning are described in the relevant section of Part I of the AIQR.

Resources and supports for developing and increasing the [University's research](#) capacity are core components of the University's strategy. The University's [Research Development Office](#) supports this aim through a wide range of policies and procedures aimed at sourcing research funding, supporting the development of human capital and collating key performance data on research activity, through the University's Research Information System.

Robust and reliable data and performance indicators are essential to support strategic decision making and resource allocation. The University has prioritised the alignment of Strategy and Quality, through the establishment of a joint office in this regard. The Institutional Research function of the Office of the Director of Strategy and Quality is central to the collation and analysis of university data that informs key decision-making, planning and underpins the measurement and assessment of quality. Key and Secondary Performance Indicators across a wide range of the University's activities such as student numbers, research, human resources, finance and campus infrastructure are regularly monitored and reported on to the University Executive, the Governing Authority and Academic Council.

### **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.

Maynooth University has a highly developed approach to information management. Through the University Performance Framework, data are collated on an annual basis using documented definitions, census dates and sign off procedures to compile a suite of key performance indicators and secondary indicators.

The indicators cover the following topics: profile of the student population, numbers of undergraduates and postgraduates, full-time and part-time students, age, socio-economic background, domicile, study outside Ireland, CAO entry points, non-progression rates, completion rates, academic grades and first destinations. The research metrics include funding inputs by source of funding, and normalised output metrics such as numbers of publications, citation rates, and PhD graduates. The KPI framework also provides indicators on income and expenditure, with particular reference to expenditure on core academic functions. The data on staff enable monitoring of staff/student ratios and staff qualifications. Net academic space per student is also monitored on an annual basis. Many of these internal indicators are benchmarked against comparable data for other universities published by the HEA. In addition to the data used for the compilation of performance metrics, data are also collated systematically on an annual basis of numbers of students that avail of each of the academic support services and learning resources provided for students.

Feedback from students is obtained at the level of modules through a university wide survey of all modules taught each year. This micro level feedback is supplemented by higher level feedback obtained via the Maynooth component of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement.

The Institutional Research Office undertakes an annual survey of first year undergraduate students registering in the University for the first time. The survey is conducted during student orientation week each year achieving a response rate in the region of 80-85%. The survey provides invaluable information to internal stakeholders on incoming students including why they choose to study in Maynooth University, how prepared they are for third level education, what their expectations are, information about their general living and working arrangements, and feedback on concerns or issues that they have..

The data from all surveys are analysed by the Institutional Research Officer and reports are provided to all the internal stakeholders.

The Institutional Research Office also administers the annual HEA Equal Access Survey which surveys incoming first year students asking them questions on their social, economic and cultural background

Other means of gaining feedback on University activities are through participation in such initiatives as the International Student Barometer survey, and the biennial LibQual survey which evaluates student perception of library service quality.



### 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.

Self-evaluation and monitoring occur at many levels within the University - module, programme departmental, faculty and whole of institution.

At module, programme and department level, student feedback is solicited both through locally designed and administered surveys and through the centrally administered Student Evaluation of Learning Experience (SELE) survey. A review is underway on the central student feedback mechanism with alternative options being explored.

Self-evaluation is the central tenet of the University's approach to [periodic quality review](#) which has been unit/departmental in its focus. New developments include the development of a framework for review of larger programmes, which sit across traditional academic structures and therefore require a new approach to self-assessment. In addition, synthesis of the outcomes of academic departmental quality reviews are produced at faculty level, to develop better enhancement approaches to crosscutting issues and to share good practice developed and recognised at departmental/unit level. Annual monitoring of the implementation of quality improvement plans (QIPs) is carried out between the Director of Quality and the unit implementing the recommendations of periodic quality review.

The Maynooth curriculum is well embedded and a key aspect of its successful implementation was the development of a curriculum evaluation framework to review the effectiveness of the changes and innovations on student learning and outcomes, as well as the impact on staff. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide reliable and unambiguous evidence to support critical decisions on whether, or how, the curriculum is enabling students to achieve outcomes that are aligned with the curriculum objectives. The evaluation approach informs policy and management decisions at a high level in the university and also informs decisions by lecturers, programme managers, and students in relation to the choices they make. The evaluation process is supporting ongoing learning at all levels of the university regarding curriculum, pedagogy and teaching and learning practices and conditions.

Since it may take many years for tangible evidence to emerge on the impacts of a revised curriculum, it is important that a monitoring and on-going evaluation process provides assurance on an on-going basis to all stakeholders, internal and external. Each of the key components of the curriculum is evaluated separately and collectively.

### 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.

The University engages formally with a very wide range of stakeholders:

- Governance: A number of major external stakeholder groups are represented on the [Governing Authority](#).
- Formal structures: The University engages with an extensive range of stakeholders and interest groups through formal structures which meet regularly, for example, the Regional Skills Forum, the North Kildare Chamber of Commerce.
- Regular engagement: A number of external bodies are engaged with regularly. Examples include the HEA, QQI and Kildare and Meath County Councils.
- University offices: A number of university offices lead systematic engagement with specific groups of external stakeholders: these include the [Access Office](#), the [Placement Office](#), the [Commercialisation Office](#) and the Office of the Director of External Relations, which includes the [Alumni Relations Office](#) and the [Communications and Marketing Office](#).
- Strategic engagement: The University consults widely with external stakeholders on the envisioning and implementation of any major strategic project; examples include the new Maynooth Curriculum and the new Campus Master Plan.

Maynooth University's strategic goal is to strengthen its engagement with all stakeholders through sustained partnerships with enterprises, communities, civil society and public bodies, to build support for the mission of the university, to serve the needs of society, and to open new opportunities for research and learning.

The [Maynooth University Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#) makes explicit provision for the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance and review processes. The over-arching principles in the Framework refer to inclusive and transparent procedures, engagement of students and other stakeholders, external validation, and publication of findings in support of building public confidence in the process.

In relation to the periodic quality review of all units of the University, the composition of the peer review group (PRG) typically includes two internal and two external members. This can be modified in specific instances, if the review requires additional members. All members of the PRG have an equal role in the conduct of the review and in the drafting of the PRG report. The PRG meets with external stakeholders of the Unit under review; this is an important aspect of the PRG visit to the University. Surveying of PRG members on the overall quality and effectiveness of the periodic review process is carried out.

### **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 University has many academic programmes accredited by Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSB); such accreditation is an important aspect of the overall assurance of professional standards and quality of our offerings. A PRSB usually accredits a programme for a specific time period. The management of the process occurs at departmental level and the Quality Office engages annually with academic departments to maintain an up-to-date database of all PRSB accredited programmes in the University.

Engagement with stakeholders as part of departmental or programme reviews is set out in the University's framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement and is set out in this document under policies/procedures for stakeholder engagement.

At a strategic level there are on-going engagements with Government (especially the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation) and government agencies such as the HEA (annual strategic dialogue and Compact process; regional clusters, funding, implementation of public sector constraints on staffing), QQI (e.g. the AIQR and Annual Dialogue process), and with research funding agencies.

### **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.

University strategy and policies for the provision and use of public information relate to all levels of activity in the organisation and span all stages of the student life cycle. The University's approach on the provision of public information was commented on by the external Review Team of the 2018/2019, MU CINNTE Institutional Review. The Team commended the University '*for upgrading the quality of its public information and communications in print developed for current and prospective students and for embarking on a broader plan to improve external communications*' (commendation 17).

At the level of [University governance](#) and management, information is easily accessible on legal status and decision-making structures; the University's [Strategic Plan 2018-2022](#) is published and available in both English and Irish.

The University Framework for Quality Assurance and the reports related to each of the completed quality reviews are published on the [Quality Office](#) webpage. Peer Review Group Reports and Quality

Improvement Plans are published for completed reviews as well as results of surveys of stakeholders who have engaged in the peer review process.

The University's [Communications Office](#) focuses on consolidating the national and international reputation of the University and has responsibility for PR and media relations, marketing to prospective students, internal communications, the University identity and web presence. As with most modern organisations, the University website is the go-to platform for accurate, comprehensive and accessible information. The [Internet Publishing Policies and Standards](#) are in place to make the University's content as effective as possible, ensuring that online visitors have the best possible experience, that obstacles to accessibility are minimised and that web content complies with all relevant legal provisions. The policy also covers the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

In addition to the website, the University publishes a wide range of hard copy material for students, prospective students as well as internal and external stakeholders including information on admissions, programmes, student life and supports etc. Information for prospective and existing students spans all aspects of the student life cycle and is targeted at providing information appropriately for different student groups, such as Undergraduate, Access, Mature, Postgraduate and International students.

The Maynooth University Freedom of Information and Data Protection Office is the central office for matters related to FOI, data protection and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. This allows for the publication or giving of records outside of FOI provided that such publication or giving of access is not prohibited by law. [The scheme](#) commits FOI bodies to make information available as part of their normal business activities in accordance with this scheme. A suite of University policies provide rules and procedures for data privacy, Freedom of Information and responsible computing:

[Routine Access to Personal Information](#)

[Contact with Third Parties](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[HEA Student Data Collection Notice](#)

[Records Management Policy](#)

[Code of Conduct for users of Computing Facilities](#)

[Responsible Computing Policy](#)

[Freedom of Information](#)

[Data Protection Office](#)

**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.

The Maynooth University [Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#) provides the context for quality reviews of linked providers.

Quality assurance procedures for linked providers will have regard to the internal university quality procedures. Where a linked provider arrangement is entered into by the University as the awarding body for linked providers will engage in a two-stage process involving (a) review of the quality assurance procedures of the linked provider, and following approval of such procedures, (b) review of the effectiveness of the procedures.

An independent appeals person will be appointed to consider any appeal that may arise if the university does not approve the quality assurance procedures of a collaborative provision partner. The University currently has collaborative provisions with the Military College and the Crafts Council.

**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.

Not applicable

**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.

Maynooth University provides a number of programmes on a collaborative basis, whereby we engage with another provider for the purpose of providing a programme of higher education and training. Collaborative provision therefore spans a wide range of educational offerings.

The quality assurance of programmes provided on a collaborative basis is through the University procedures for unit level review of academic departments and through programme approval and the appointment of external examiners by the University. Collaborative provision with key strategic partners nationally and internationally involves the negotiation of memoranda of understanding, setting out *inter alia* the regime for collaboration, treatment of learners and quality assurance.

For joint programmes provided by the [3U Partnership](#) involving Maynooth University, DCU and RCSI a protocol, for the academic leadership, management and governance of all joint academic programmes, was approved by the Academic Councils of each partner institution. Section 10 of the Protocol specifies the Quality Assurance Arrangements. The protocol has been amended to cater for joint programmes and awards provided by the four higher education institutions (MU, DCU, AIT and DkIT) in the MEND regional cluster.

**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	<b>2016/17</b>
Areas/Units	Adult & Community Education Department Anthropology Department Applied Social Studies Department Education Department Froebel Department Law Department Sociology Department IT Services Department Human Resources Department
Number	9
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="#">Third Cycle Peer Review Reports</a>

Year	<b>2017/18</b>
Areas/Units	Design Innovation Department School of Business Economics, Finance & Accounting Department Geography Department Finance Department
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="#">Third Cycle Peer Review Reports</a>

Year	<b>2018/19</b>
Areas/Units	Biology Department Chemistry Department Computer Science Department Electronic Engineering Department Experimental Physics Department Mathematics & Statistics Department

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

	Psychology Department Theoretical Physics Department Campus Planning & Development and Commercial Services Department
Number	9
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="#">Third Cycle Peer Review Reports</a>

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Ancient Classics Department English Department History Department Media Studies Department Music Department Philosophy Department School of Celtic Studies School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures President's Office and Associated Functions Office of the Director for Strategy and Quality Research Institutes
Number	11
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="#">Third Cycle Peer Review Reports</a>

Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	High level review of BS & BA programmes
Number	2
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="#">Third Cycle Peer Review Reports</a>



## 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	24
Awarding Bodies	0
QA Bodies	0

First Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Honorable Society of Kings Inns;
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	LLB (Bachelor of Laws); BCL (Law and Accounting); BCL (Law and Business); BCL (Law and Arts); BCL (Law and Criminology);
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2015
Next Review Year	No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained

Second Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBS Business and Management</li> <li>• BA Arts Business</li> <li>• BA Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• BA double major</li> <li>• BBS Business and Accounting</li> <li>• HDip in Professional Accounting</li> <li>• MA in Accounting</li> </ul>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2019

Third Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Teaching Council
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Education Primary</li> <li>• Professional Master in Education</li> <li>• BSc Mathematics with Education</li> <li>• BSc Science with Education</li> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma in School Guidance Counselling</li> <li>• BA Arts &amp; Business</li> <li>• BBS Business &amp; Management</li> </ul>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2012 to 2016 (programme dependent)
Next Review Year	2020/2021

Fourth Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• BBS Business and Accounting</li> <li>• HDip in Professional Accounting</li> <li>• MA in Accounting</li> <li>• Two-year MA in Accounting</li> <li>• BA Finance</li> <li>• BA Double Major</li> </ul>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2019

Fifth Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Chartered Accountants (ACA)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• BBS Business and Accounting</li> <li>• HDip in Professional Accounting</li> <li>• MA in Accounting</li> <li>• Two-year MA in Accounting</li> <li>• BA Finance</li> <li>• BCL (Law and Accounting)</li> <li>• BA Double Major</li> </ul>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2019

## 2. Collaborative Provision

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
Joint Research Degrees	1
Joint/double/multiple awards	3
Collaborative Programmes	7
Franchise Programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

First Collaborative Provision	Joint Degree
Name of Body (bodies):	St Patricks College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	BA Theology and Arts
Date of Last Review	NA
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

Second Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	Military College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies
Date of Last Review	NA
Next Review Year	2020/21

Third Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	Military College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Higher Diploma in Leadership, Defence and Contemporary Security
Next Review Year	NA
Next Review Year	2020/21

Fourth Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	Military College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	MA in Leadership Management and Defence
Date of Last Review	NA
Next Review Year	2020/21

Fifth Collaborative Provision:	Joint Research Degrees
Name of Body (bodies):	CERN, Intel
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	European Industrial Doctorate in ICT (level 10)
Date of Last Review	2018/19
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Sixth Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	3U Partnership
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	3U Master of Engineering in Digital and Medical Technologies
Date of Last Review	2018/2019
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

Seventh Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	St Andrews Scotland, University de Lorraine
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Joint MSc in Dependable software systems (Computer Science)
Date of Last Review	2018/2019
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

Eighth Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Goldsmithing and Jewellery Design
Date of Last Review	2016/2017
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Ninth Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Ceramic Skills and Design
Date of Last Review	2017/2018
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

Tenth Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of Body (bodies):	Catholic University of Lyon (UCLy)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Dual degree jointly offered by MU Department of Law and the Law School at the Catholic University of Lyon (UCLy). Programme title: LLM in International Law
Date of Last Review	NA
Next Review Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC

### 3. Articulation Agreements

<b>Articulation Agreements - Total Number</b>	<b>1</b>
---	----------

First Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Changzhou University
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Electronic Engineering Pharmaceutical Chemistry
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2018/2019
Review Year for Agreement	4 <sup>th</sup> Quality Review Cycle-Date TBC



## 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).

---

## 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.

Maynooth University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement, reaffirmed and codified in its Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in 2016, informed and guided the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement during the period. The Framework was updated in 2018 to reflect changes in governance arrangements for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, with revisions noted by Academic Council (April 2018) and Governing Authority (April 2018).

The University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement has focused on unit-level reviews in the reporting period. This approach provides an opportunity for meaningful self-assessment by academic departments at cognate discipline level, and in the case of service units, affords the opportunity to reflect on quality assurance and its linkages to the area's strategic plan. The third cycle of scheduled quality reviews (covering the period of 2014 to 2021) progressed in the reporting period. Periodic quality reviews of eight academic departments in the Faculty of Science and Engineering were completed, along with the quality review of the University's Campus Planning & Development and Commercial Services Department.

The practice of undertaking faculty-based synthesis of findings from the reviews of all academic units within a faculty continues. The objective of establishing such a practice was: to enable reflection and learning on faculty-level; to provide opportunity for identifying and sharing good practice identifying challenges shared by multiple departments; and to highlight opportunities for collaborative quality enhancement activities across the Faculty and the University. On completion of academic unit reviews in each of the three faculties, cross faculty trends and themes can also be determined. Given that the review of all academic units of an individual faculty are scheduled to take place in a given academic year and that all three faculty review cycles take place in close succession, it is expected that cross-university trends and themes identified will provide a strong basis for enhancement led initiatives within the University.

The reporting period coincided with the submission in September 2018 of the University's *Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)*. The QQI CINNTE Institutional Review visit taking place in December 2018. The Review groups report was received in July 2019 and work on the University's Post Review Implementation Plan progressed over the remainder of the summer of 2019 with the final Plan submitted in September.

Preparations for the development of the Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 were extremely useful in informing the ISER production process. Unit-level submissions received during the Strategic Planning process provided a rich source of views and perspectives from across the University, with the potential for informing future developments and a range of enhancement activities and themes. These submissions, complementing a range of specific extensive consultations, informed the University's self-evaluation process for the Institutional Review.

The Review Team Visit in December 2018 and the subsequent Review Report in July 2019, together with the wealth of information, views and perspectives formulated in the University's ISER, has provided the University with invaluable material with which to work with for the coming years. Many findings, commendations and recommendations stated in the CINNTE Review Report resonate well with objectives articulated in the University's Strategic Plan serving to support the achievement of the objectives and bringing fresh perspectives for consideration. Other findings and recommendations bring additional ideas and aspects for the University to take into account. The Post Review Implementation Plan prepared by the University outlines the University's plans for addressing each of the recommendations made by the Review Team. Where relevant, synergy between existing University strategic objectives and the Review Team recommendations are highlighted in the Post Review Plan. This serves to bring the strategic planning and the institutional review process closer together.

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

Recruitment for a Director of Quality commenced in the summer of 2019 resulting in a successful appointment later in the year.

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

The Quality Committee met 3 times on the following dates during this reporting period:

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019

20<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**The Agenda items for these meetings included:**

Updates on QQI CINNTE Institutional Review

Programmatic Review of Omnibus Programmes

Collaborative Provisions

Update on 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of quality reviews 2017/18

Schedule of Cycle 3 reviews, 2018-19

Office of Strategy and Quality Annual Report, 2017-18

Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) 2018 national reports

Green Paper on Assessment of Learners and Learning (QQI)

**Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period**

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

**Units Reviewed**

***Academic departments (8):***

Biology Department  
 Chemistry Department  
 Computer Science Department  
 Electronic Engineering Department  
 Experimental Physics Department  
 Mathematics & Statistics Department  
 Psychology Department  
 Theoretical Physics Department

***Service Units (1):***  
 Campus Planning & Development and Commercial Services Department

[Third Cycle Peer Review Reports](#)

**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>23</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	8
Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	1
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>50%</b>
National	70%
UK	27%
EU	3%
Student	0%
Other	0%

<b>Chair Profile</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal	<b>0%</b>
Similar Institution	100%
Different Institution	0%
International	67%

### 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 implementation of the third cycle of quality reviews 2014-2021 is underpinned by the provision of standardised data sets to all academic departments by the University's Institutional Research Office, supplemented, as required by further data provision and analysis. The Institutional Research Office plans the provision of data to units under review and communicates closely with the relevant head of unit.

Further on-going support for quality assurance is provided through use of feedback obtained from student surveys. All modules are surveyed at the end of each semester. This process is currently under review with options being explored including whether a one size fits all model is still appropriate to the University's needs. An incoming student survey is carried out at the beginning of each new academic year.

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) provides an opportunity for external benchmarking and for deep internal analysis of many aspects of the quality of the student experience in relation to their learning, the teaching they obtain, the academic supports provided by the University, the quality of interactions with other students and with staff, and the scope and effectiveness of other supports available to students. Students at Maynooth University have consistently rated the quality of their entire educational experience very highly. According to the 2019 ISSE, 84% of all students rate their entire MU educational experience as good or excellent (90% of postgraduate taught students rate it as good or excellent). 83.6% of all students would go to the same institution again if they could start over (89.7% of postgraduate taught would attend MU again if they could start over).

Since 2018, ISSE are conducting a biennial survey of postgraduate research students. This survey, tailored to the experience of research students, provides similar opportunities for external benchmarking and for internal analysis of such aspects of the postgraduate research student experience as research culture, facilities and funding, supervision, progress and assessment, research skills and development opportunities. According to the 2018 ISSE-PGR, 78.8% of all postgraduate respondents rate their entire research experience at MU as either 'good' or 'excellent' and 79.6% of all respondents felt confident that they would complete their research degree programme within the institution's expected timescale.

Maynooth University's new undergraduate curriculum has entered into Year 4 of implementation. The University Curriculum Researcher monitored and evaluated the impact of the changes brought about by curriculum reform on students and staff. The work is guided by a comprehensive evaluation framework, established in 2016, and overseen by the Curriculum Evaluation Steering Committee. The evaluation provides reliable and unambiguous evidence to support critical decisions on whether, or how, the curriculum is enabling students to achieve outcomes aligned with the curriculum objectives. The evaluation approach informs policy and management decisions at a high level in the university, and decisions by lecturers, programme managers, and students in relation to the choices they make.

The evaluation process supports ongoing learning at all levels of the university regarding curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching and learning practices and conditions.

The monitoring and evaluation process provides assurance on a continual basis to all stakeholders, both internal and external. Each of the key components of the curriculum is analysed and evaluated separately and collectively. Frequent reports on findings are communicated to the Curriculum Evaluation Steering Committee, the Registrar, the Dean of Teaching and Learning, and the University Executive.

The data from the surveys is complemented by key performance metrics that are compiled as part of the Performance Framework for the Governing Authority. Of particular note, are metrics on retention, progression, completion, final academic awards, and first destinations. The quality of research outputs is monitored via the trends in numbers of publications and weighted citation indices. The Maynooth performance on these indices is benchmarked against other universities in Ireland.

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

Several factors have impacted on QA and QE at Maynooth University in the reporting period. These included the continued roll-out of the new undergraduate curriculum and putting in place a monitoring framework, the introduction of the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 which accords greater prominence to QA and QE, completion of the preparation of the ISER for the Institutional Review, the Institutional Review visit in December 2018 with the Review Report received in July 2019 followed by commencement of the University's Post Review Implementation Quality Plan over the summer of 2019.

Recent QQI Initiatives continue to have an impact such as changes to QQI legislation, QQI policies and guidelines regarding research degree programmes, student assessment, transnational education and collaborative provision which continue to guide the implementation of QA and QE procedures at the University. National reports and strategies, such as the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the National Access Plan (2015-2019), have also had impact on quality assurance. The IUA Quality Officers group continues to provide an important forum for sharing expertise and mutual learning.

The wider context for higher education in Ireland remains very challenging and continues to impact negatively on the capacity to maintain, assure and enhance quality procedures at the University. The persistent decline in public funding continues to impact on staffing levels and thus on the time for quality enhancing interactions with students and also on the maintenance of infrastructure and facilities for teaching and research. In the absence of new investments, there are increasing concerns related to overcrowding, insufficient study spaces and opportunities to timetable extracurricular activities. The administrative system required to enable the University to function effectively and efficiently, and to achieve the quality standards it aspires to, are over-stretched.

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

n/a



## 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 effectiveness of Maynooth University's framework for quality assurance and enhancement, its policies procedures and implementation, is evaluated at institutional level by the independent external review process, conducted by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The QQI CINNTE Institutional Review for Maynooth University took place from 2018 to 2019 which included preliminary and ongoing consultations with QQI, preparation of the Institutions Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) submitted in September 2018, a site visit of the External Review Team who met with a wide range of stakeholders in December 2018, a Review Report from the Team (July 2019) followed by the submission in September 2019 by the University of its Post Review Implementation plan in response to the recommendation made by the External Reviewers in their report.

Outcomes from the CINNTE Institutional Review provided feedback to the University on the effectiveness of its policies and procedures such as its developing *'a strong culture of self-examination focused on continuous improvement and assuring quality in all of its programmes'* (key commendation 1) amongst many other commendations made in relation to its policies and procedures. The Review also provided invaluable feedback to the University on areas that could be enhanced and work on improving these areas is ongoing across the University.

The effectiveness of internal, unit-level and other quality assurance processes is evaluated through the University's own schedule of quality reviews, which is currently in its third cycle. To evaluate the effectiveness of the quality review process via an evidence-based approach, the Quality Office surveys reviewers and academic departmental staff who participate in an internal quality review process.

The survey for academic departmental staff invites all staff, academic and administrative, from the departments reviewed to provide feedback on their experience. Responses to date indicate that participants are satisfied with the overall approach and practices of the quality reviews, while making some suggestions for enhancement. Suggestions are acted on as appropriate such as raising more awareness about the quality review process by involving all departmental staff in preparatory meetings. Commending the strengths of the process, respondents also highlighted the importance of ongoing self-review structures. Surveys of internal and external reviewers inviting feedback on their experience to support the Quality Office's assessment of its own processes and practice indicate that respondents were satisfied overall with the quality review process. Remarks made on the process were that it is 'robust,' 'thorough, open and fair,' while noting the 'improvement oriented' nature of the process as a particular strength. Among respondents' suggestions for enhancement the

recommendation to tailor the scheduling of reviews to facilitate more time for reflection during site visit was particularly noteworthy.

Further evidence of the effectiveness of the University QA procedures and its commitment to Quality Enhancement is provided by the completion and publication of Quality Improvement Plans following each review. <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/strategy-quality/quality-promotion/quality-reviewprocess>

## **2. Impact**

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

The quality reviews in the Faculty of Science and Engineering were carried out in the reporting period as was a review of the Campus Planning & Development and Commercial Services Department. Building on the previous success of the production of a synthesis report for the Faculty of Social Science a similar report to measure impacts is to be completed for this Faculty. Common trends and issues between the two synthesis reports can then be identified and highlighted as areas potentially requiring improvement.

The level of impact of the University's policies and procedures was highlighted frequently in the Institutions CINNTE Review Report. Reference is included in part 1 of this report to numerous commendations received from the Review Team in relation to the University's approach, processes and practices.

### **3. Themes**

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

During the academic year 2018-19, all eight academic departments in the Faculty of Science and Engineering carried out internal quality reviews. Preliminary analysis of the eight resulting review reports was undertaken by the Quality Office. As detailed earlier in this report, the goal of such exercises is to identify common themes, good practice, and possible enhancement themes and activities for Faculty and University level enhancement-led actions.

The themes listed below indicate broad areas that received emphasis during the unit level review process: they provide an opportunity for reflection and highlight potential to inform future initiatives.

The following were in evidence:

- there is greater awareness and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusiveness matters.
- there is increasing demand for the use of technology for teaching and learning and for administrative functions.
- a need to strengthen the student voice was emphasised with a variety of means needed to capture feedback.
- recognition of the importance of training and development is strong.

These themes mirror areas emphasised in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022. They also reflect findings from the CINNTE Institutional Review Report (2019).

For key themes identified during the Institutional Review, see section 6.3 below.

## 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.

The current reporting period focused on further embedding the University's new curriculum while a number of other significant quality enhancements continue to grow and develop further.

The optional subject **Critical Skills** available to most first-year students continues to increase in popularity. Taught in small groups, this subject provides students with an initial peer group, supports their transition to third-level education while providing the opportunity to develop key attributes of clear analysis, critique, and written and verbal communication. The subject was mainstreamed in 2016-17 with approximately 750 first-year students taking up the option. This number increased to about 1050 in the 2018-19 reporting period and continues to grow. To showcase students' work, the University organises a Critical Skills Poster Symposium each year. In April 2018 over 170 student posters from 30 different classes were featured. This rose to 185 posters representing 800 students in 2019.

Initiatives developed within the University's **Experiential Learning Office** continue to grow providing opportunities for students to enrich their undergraduate education experience and enabling students to experience more from their degree programmes, both inside and outside the classroom. Students learn by doing and reflecting on their experiences. The Maynooth University Student Experience Awards (MUSE), recognise and reward student contribution to non-credit bearing activities such as work experience, volunteering, community engagement, club and society involvement, and student representation. In the region of 14,000 students' hours are now recognised as part of the MUSE awards programme. The University's **Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)** also continues to expand with more students participating. Held over six weeks during the summer, this programme offers students the opportunity to work closely with faculty mentors on research projects across a range of disciplines, offering exposure to a myriad of learning and research opportunities, ultimately enhancing students' confidence and disciplinary knowledge. Second-year students have the option to register for the **Skills for Success: professional development and employability elective modules**, which are designed to facilitate students' academic, personal and professional career development. The module, involving a number of employers, provides students with the opportunity to develop a strong sense of self-awareness, as well as enabling them to identify and develop a range of employability skills. The number of students taking this module rose to 88 in 2018/19.

Maynooth University continues to host, in October of each year, a **Research Week** to celebrate the innovation, the impact and the creativity of research undertaken by its world-class professors, lecturers, postdoctoral researchers, undergraduate and postgraduate students, across its three faculties, its institutes and centres.. Many of the events are open to the public providing a platform to raise awareness across the wider community of the value of research and illustrating how Maynooth researchers are taking on some of the more pressing challenges facing society.

#### **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.

See above in 4.1.

## 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.

The forthcoming period, September 2019 to August 2020, will build on the quality assurance and enhancement activities of the current reporting period. These will include:

#### **Maynooth University CINTE Institutional Review**

The University having submitted its Post Review Implementation Plan in September 2019 will report to QQI on progress with the implementation of the plan in July 2020. Work on implementing changes and initiating enhancements in response to the various recommendations made in the Review Report will continue to take place.

#### **Continuation of Cycle 3 periodic quality reviews**

Preparation for the quality reviews of all eight academic units of the Faculty of Arts, Celtic studies and Philosophy will commence, concluding in the autumn of 2020.

#### **Establish a Framework for Programmatic Review**

Work on establishing a framework for review of large multi-disciplinary programmes will continue. Reviews of more specialised programmes will continue to be undertaken within the periodic reviews of the departments/schools providing the programmes.

#### **Review of the University approach to surveying of modules**

The current survey used in the University to illicit student feedback on modules entitled SELE (Student Evaluation of Learning Experience) will be reviewed with potential explored on providing academic units greater flexibility in how they survey their modules.

#### **Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies**

The University has many academic programmes accredited by Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSB); such accreditation is an important aspect of the overall assurance of professional standards and quality. The Quality Office will continue to maintain an up-to-date database of all PRSB accredited programmes in the University.

### 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.

Review of academic departments in the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy (8):

- Ancient Classics Department
- English Department
- History Department
- Media Studies Department
- Music Department
- Philosophy Department
- School of Celtic Studies
- School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures

### 5.3 Other Plans

n/a

## 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 *Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)* was submitted to QQI in September 2018. The planning visit and main review visit took place in October and December 2018, respectively. The Review Report was received in July 2019 with the University's Post Review Implementation Plan submitted in September 2019.

The self-evaluation process was based on a robust evidence-based approach which was supported by a range of consultations and opportunities for feedback. The evaluation approach comprised reflecting on such questions as 'what are we doing and why,' 'how effective is our approach,' lessons learnt, and along with potential changes of course or other actions. These analyses were also informed by the consultations and feedback acquired during the preparation of the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022. This part of the exercise was a valuable opportunity for the University to analyse and reflect on its quality assurance and enhancement activities in a holistic and cross institutional manner and was particularly beneficial in that it coincided with work undertaken in developing the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

The preparation of the ISER, the review visit, the resulting Review Report produced, and the associated Post Review Implementation Plan submitted by the University, together with the University's Strategic Plan, were all achieved by means of thorough and rigorous processes. The findings and outcomes arising from these processes have provided the University with invaluable material with which to enhance its activities over the coming years.

The impact of the Institutional Review within the University is already being felt. Given the fact that the University had recently completed work on its new 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, it was welcomed that many of the strategic goals and actions outlined in the Plan were reflected in the Institutional Review Report providing additional ideas and an external perspective that will assist the University as it implements numerous aspects of its Strategic Plan in the coming months and years. The synergy evident in the five primary overarching recommendations made by the Institutional Review Team in their report with the University Plan is outlined below. Synergies also exist with other recommendations: in each case this will aid the development and enhancement of the University as it works to fulfil its various strategic goals.

#### **Five primary overarching recommendations in the CINTE Institutional Review Report 2019**

1. The Review Team recommends that the University begin to address its most severe infrastructure issues, in spaces and staffing, before the problems seriously impact both quality and reputation.



In relation to infrastructure issues as they pertain to space, the University, as articulated in its Strategic Plan 2018-2022, was already committed to significant expansion of the buildings infrastructure over the life of the plan, stating that *'We will significantly invest in new and existing teaching spaces and learning infrastructure, providing state-of-the-art flexible facilities to meet the changing needs of our growing student body'* (Strategic Plan 2018-2022, 4.1.2, p. 38). The University has already taken significant steps to address this matter including the: acquisition of additional lands which provide space for development; completion of a campus masterplan which provides a long-term vision for the campus; and securing finance through borrowing to enable significant development. Construction is already underway of a new teaching and learning building of 10,554m<sup>2</sup> which will open in 2021 and the new student centre of 3,670m<sup>2</sup> is at the tender stage with completion scheduled for late 2021.

The University has also already committed, in its Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (4.1.1, p. 38), to maintaining an appropriate staff-student ratio: *'We will benchmark our staff-student ratio in detail at broad discipline level against other Irish universities, and set and maintain an appropriate target staff-student ratio'*. Work on maintaining an appropriate ratio continues.

2. The Team recommends that the University address workload management issues by developing a fair and consistent model for workload management.

Workload management and the need for a fair consistent model to manage it are recurring themes in many of the Quality Reviews undertaken within the University and the University was already committed to a review of the academic workload models. The current Strategic Plan (9.1.3, p. 53) states that *'We will ensure appropriate balance between research, teaching and service through a review of academic workload models, work practices and teaching commitments to enable the optimal teaching and service contribution from each academic colleague and department'*. This will be undertaken building on existing departmental workload models and on good practices elsewhere, with a view to developing a system in the University that is fair and transparent.

3. The Team recommends that the University develop a more robust system for staff development, promotion, and succession, together with mechanisms for regular feedback to all staff members on their strengths and on areas of national development.

This was another area that the University had identified as requiring attention with a need for a more robust system of staff development, and feedback. Areas for enhancements identified in the Strategic Plan 2018-2022 were that *'We will support the development and advancement of our staff through: Clear career frameworks and progression pathways for all categories of staff; appropriate performance management and development systems; a formal induction and mentoring programme for early career academic, research and support staff; and, renewed and significant investment in mentoring and staff development for all parts and levels of the organisation'* (9.1.1, p.53). Furthermore, the Plan stressed that *'We will implement an enhanced and integrated staff recognition and reward policy to support the development and advancement of staff and the strategic objectives of the University, including: a range of awards to recognise service and achievement; enhanced academic promotion processes with regular promotions rounds; a researcher career framework; and, clear regrading and appropriate promotion opportunities and processes for library, information services, administrative, technical, professional and general services staff'*. (9.1.2, p.53). Work on achieving these declared strategic actions, and other related University strategic objectives will serve

to also address this key recommendation made by the Review Panel. The enhanced orientation programme for new staff is just one example of an almost immediate change introduced in the University with numerous other projects planned for the coming reporting period with many aspects already implemented and others well advanced in terms of reviewing of practice and planning for implementation of changes and enhancements.

4. The Team recommends that the University, following a thorough survey of institutional needs, improve the quality of its information management platform and portfolio as well as its capacity for data analysis needed to succeed with the new Strategic Plan.

An interrelated recommendation (15) made by the Review Team asked that the University *'engage in an institution-wide evaluation of all the data requirements necessary, existing and new, to build a robust infrastructure that can support the new Strategic Plan'*. These recommendations are reflected in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 in its focus on digital transformation with a commitment to *'build capacity for operational excellence and digital transformation and adopt a 'digital first' strategy in the design and implementation of all University processes'* (10.1, p. 57) and to *'adopt a dual approach to IT governance and service delivery, balancing the need for stable and effective operations with the need to accelerate digital innovation in support of the strategic goals of the University'* (10.2, p. 57). The University has committed as part of its CINNTE Post Review Implementation Plan to *'increase the staffing in some key areas, particularly in IT services'*. (action item 1.7, p. 3) together with reviewing *'capacity in the institutional research office'* (action item 4.1, p. 6) together with a *'review of the institutional KPI's'* (action item 4.2, p. 6) and to *'develop an institutional reporting tool'* (action item 4.3. p. 6). The action items outlined in the Post Review Implementation Plan together with existing commitments in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 provide a strong framework for change and will serve the University well over the lifetime of the current Strategic Plan and beyond.

5. The Team recommends that the University develop a better system for collecting and utilising student input on courses, teaching, and the student experience, and for providing regular feedback to students on how their input has helped to improve teaching and learning.

The University already recognised that the student feedback system, in operation since 2013, in which every student is surveyed about each module in each academic year was seeing a decline in response rates and that the system in use was no longer getting the attention of the majority of students. The University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 includes an action item to review and refine the student feedback system, outlined as *'We will further develop and refine our approach to gathering student feedback and information on the effectiveness of teaching, informed by the best available evidence, with the goal of better supporting departments in enhancing teaching and learning'* (7.1.4, p. 49). Work on developing a more flexible and action orientated approach to capture student feedback commenced in 2018/2019. Guidelines, developed by the Dean of Teaching and Learning, have now being agreed by Academic Council and work continues with developing alternative approaches. The further emphasis placed, by the Review Team, on the overall student experience and the provision of feedback to students is welcomed and work in this area will include a focus on these matters.

## **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.

Maynooth University has a comprehensive framework for QA and QE which is vigorously implemented. An important component in Maynooth is the commitment to monitoring, review and adaptation of policies and procedures. As outlined in section 6.1 the preparation of the ISER provided an opportunity for self-evaluation across the University. It confirmed that there has been steady progress since the last institutional review. It also identified some areas where improvements can be made, many of which were already included as action points in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022. The Institutional Review Report provided unique insights and perspectives and has given the University a substantial amount of feedback and ideas that will impact on how the University develops and shapes itself over the coming years.

### **6.3 Themes**

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

Earlier sections of this report highlighted and identified emerging themes from the reporting period. In addition, the various stages of the University's Institutional Review identified further themes of interest. These include:

- Review of the Postgraduate Taught Masters portfolio
- Programmatic reviews of omnibus programmes
- Collecting and utilising student feedback and closing the student feedback
- Support services-coordination and capacity
- Review of workload models
- Staffing and infrastructure
- Staff development and promotion
- Institutional research capacity and systems
- Enhanced communication processes.

AIQR Case study: Maynooth University  
Annual Incoming student Survey.

The Institutional Research Office undertakes an annual survey of first year undergraduate students registering in the University for the first time. Up to 2014/15 students were invited to complete the survey via email, with the survey invite included in the students' first welcome email to the University. In 2015/16, a dedicated survey session was added to the student orientation week schedule (students can also complete the HEA Equal Access Survey) and response rates to the incoming survey are now in the region of 80% to 85% each year.

The survey is carried out in collaboration with internal stakeholders in the offices of Admissions, Communications, Career Development, Experiential Learning, Curriculum Evaluation and Accommodation. Each year the questions are reviewed and if necessary amendments made (for example, a new question on the accommodation 'home finder' service in 2017; the inclusion of Instagram as a communication tool in 2018).

The survey report is shared widely with internal stakeholders including the Education Officer of Maynooth Student Union and provides invaluable information on students' decision to study in Maynooth: how students interact with the University; their preparedness and expectations with regard to education at MU; where they plan to live and if they plan to work. Results of the survey are used to inform change. For example, they have been used to align the marketing and communication strategies, as input to the student accommodation strategy, to enable targeted career guidance and advice, and to monitor and adjust student recruitment and admissions activities.

## AIQR Case study: Maynooth University

### Irish Survey of Student Engagement Workshop- What can the data tell us about our students' experience?

The Quality Office organized a half-day, interactive workshop entitled '*Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE): What can the data tell us about our students' experience?*' in November 2018. The aim of the workshop was to enhance institutional knowledge about the survey and to raise awareness about the available datasets and their potential for the institution. The workshop was open to academic staff and to colleagues in student facing areas of central administration, teaching and learning support services. Students Union officers and student faculty representatives were also invited to attend.

The hands-on workshop began with a short introduction and overview from the ISSE project manager who spoke about student engagement, the survey, the datasets and their local potential. The workshop was then dedicated to two interactive sessions on interpreting the data, reflecting on themes, and discussing the potential the datasets could represent. Participants were placed in groups with ISSE indicator file printouts available to each group. Attendees were grouped deliberately to ensure that each group had representation from a mixture of backgrounds with a view to the sharing of a variety of points of view. The first session was dedicated to exploring the data while during the second session participants reflected on the potential the datasets could offer to their individual areas, along with how the data could inform future developments in teaching & learning. Feedback on the event from participants was very positive: both staff and student representatives welcomed the opportunity to learn about the datasets. The hands-on approach was commended as particularly valuable. Attendees welcomed the suggestion that this introductory workshop would be repeated at certain intervals in the future, accompanying other, more thematic explorations of the survey data.

## **AIQR Case Study: Maynooth University** **Experiential Learning - Enhancing and Developing the Student Experience.**

A variety of experiential learning programmes are available to students of Maynooth University (MU). The programmes, organised by the Experiential Learning office (within the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning) aim to enrich the undergraduate education experience and enable MU students to experience more from their degree programme by developing and cultivating high-impact learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, where students learn by doing and reflecting on this experience. Currently, three experiential programmes are available to students: SPUR (Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research); MUSE (Maynooth University Student Experience Award) and Skills for Success modules.

### **MUSE (Maynooth University Student Experience Awards)**

The Maynooth University Student Experience (MUSE) Awards recognise and reward student's contribution to non-credit bearing activities such as work experience, volunteering, club and society involvement, student representation. The programme started in 2017/18 with 30 students receiving the award and is growing steadily with over 14,140 students' hours recognised since across six thematic areas of: University Community and Campus Life; Volunteering and Civic Engagement; Internationalization; Leadership; Social and Cultural; and Enterprise and Work Experience. The MUSE awards provide students with the opportunity to:

- Increase their self-awareness as they reflect on their achievements
- Stand out from their peers
- Enhance their employability skills
- Develop confidence in articulating skills gained whilst in Maynooth University
- Enhance their career readiness as they prepare for their future

### **SPUR (Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research)**

SPUR is an active 6-week research based and paid experiential learning programme for undergraduate students who wish to learn more about the postgraduate experience and possibly pursue a career in research. Student interest in the programme is high, with 60 places on offer across 30 departments for summer 2020. Participants of the programme are provided an opportunity to:

- Gain insight into research whilst developing networks with student peers and faculty
- Identify and develop appropriate research objectives in collaboration with their academic mentor and employ appropriate methodologies to address these
- Work collaboratively, illustrate and present their research effectively to others in the field
- Reflect on the experience, identifying what was learned, opportunities for growth, and how the experience informs their future educational and career goals

### **SKILLS FOR SUCCESS: Professional Development and Employability Modules**

Skills for Success are professional development and employability modules that are credit bearing and available to eligible 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. The modules involve a number of employers and provide students with the opportunity to develop a strong sense of self-awareness, as well as enabling them to identify and develop a range of employability skills fundamental to their future career. The module started in 2017/18 with 79 students registered and has since grown to 99 students. To date it has provided 235 students with the opportunity to take part in simulated interviews in front of employers and alums. Participation in the module overall enables students to:

- Gain an insight into organisational culture and preferred working styles
- Develop self-awareness and understand the importance of reflective practice and its role in effective, continuous professional development and lifelong learning
- Structure and articulate ideas effectively, orally and in writing

- Recognise the skills, qualities and abilities graduate employers seek in potential employees, and how they are evaluated
- Identify methods used to assess candidates during selection processes
- Understand how to exploit their skills in sourcing, securing and excelling in their chosen future career