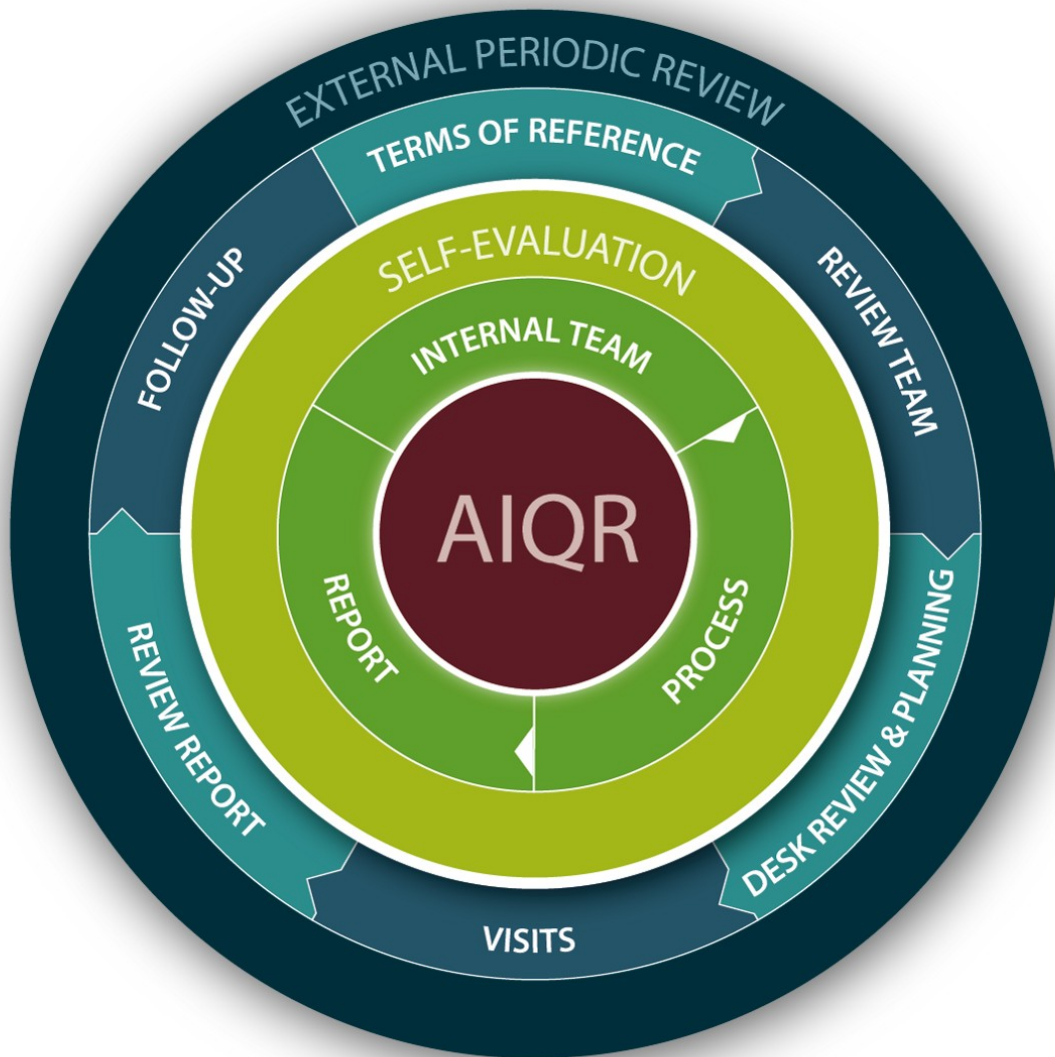# Maynooth University

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2019

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018

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.

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[1].*

An all-pervasive commitment to quality and excellence in all activities undertaken by the University 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

---

[1] Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022

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 in 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, 2004)[2]. 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 12,000 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.

---

[2] 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 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, 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[3];

- 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 group submits a PRG report to the Quality Office. The Head of Unit is provided with the

---

[3] Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Sections 28 (1) and 29 (a), (b)

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 Strategy and 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 multi-annual 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 sub-committee may include a minority of members who are not members of the Committee. Sub-committees 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.

The 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 has recently completed a comprehensive update of the 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 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 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.

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

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 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.

In 2018, Maynooth University and Dublin City University collaborated in piloting the addition of survey questions to ISSE to further enhance meaningful feedback from students within the frame of institutional review.

Student feedback on the new Maynooth curriculum is collated as part of a comprehensive Curriculum Evaluation Framework, managed by the Office of Strategic Planning and Quality, with advise 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 the strengths in Maynooth, which are structured to align with national and international research priorities.

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 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 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
Campus Company Policy
Inventions and Patent Policy
Research Incentivisation Policy

A Researcher Career's Framework Policy (presently in draft) for researchers has been developed in line with the European Charter for Researchers. The University has completed a gap analysis as part of a submission for the Human Resources Strategy for Research Award. The University is progressing with the planning stages of the project. The Research Skills Development Programme was launched in 2017. 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 comprise mandatory modules on generic skills and specialised modules in the research field along with the preparation of a research thesis. 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 and Commercialisation Office provide 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 Research Development Office has implemented a Research Information System (RIS) which hosts academic profile, proposal tracking, ethics and reporting modules. The system is in its final stages of implementation and is linked to the Core HR, JD Edwards financial system and the Library eprints systems. All of these links are now functioning and the reporting module is expected to be rolled out by December 2018. Further developmental plans include expanding the system further 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.

In addition, the university provides funding 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.

The Research Development and Commercialisation Office completed a quality review in 2016. The findings from the review and the resultant quality improvement plan will assist the university to further enhance the quality of all research activities. Further monitoring of the effectiveness of the University quality assurance for research will be undertaken in the context of reviews of academic departments over the coming years.

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 a number of models of academic support that support transition to higher education of under-represented 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, 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.

The recently introduced 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.

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 though 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.

Recruitment Skills Training
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 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.

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^2 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 over 12,000 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, in 2017 resources were 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 recent 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 data from all surveys are analysed by the Institutional Research Officer and reports are provided to all the internal stakeholders.

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 occurs 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 also through the centrally administered Student Evaluation of Learning Experience (SELE) survey.

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 cross-cutting 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 new Maynooth curriculum is being implemented and a key aspect of its 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 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. Maynooth Curriculum Evaluation

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 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. At the level of University governance and management, information is easily accessible on legal status and decision-making structures; the University's Strategic Plan 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 has been prepared for the academic leadership, management and governance of all joint academic programmes which has been 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	2016/17
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	Third Cycle Peer Review Reports

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	Design Innovation Department School of Business Economics, Finance & Accounting Department Geography Department Finance Department
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	Third Cycle Peer Review Reports

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

	Psychology Department Theoretical Physics Department Campus Planning & Development and Commercial Services Department
Number	9
Link(s) to Publications	[Third Cycle Peer Review Reports](#)

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	[Third Cycle Peer Review Reports](#)
Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	High level review of BS & BA programmes
Number	2
Link(s) to Publications	[Third Cycle Peer Review Reports](#)

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	MU AIQR Part1 Final_1303_final draft_v2.docx
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Honorable Society of Kings Inns;
Programme Titles 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 last review or accreditation	01-03-2015
Next review year	2018
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BBS Business and Management; BA Arts Business; BA Accounting and Finance; BA double major; BBS Business and Accounting; HDip in Professional Accounting; MA in Accounting;
Date of last review or accreditation	01-03-2016
Next review year	2017
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB

Name of the Body	Teaching Council
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Education Primary; Professional Master in Education;
Date of last review or accreditation	01-03-2012
Next review year	2017
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA Accounting and Finance; BBS Business and Accounting; HDip in Professional Accounting; MA in Accounting; Two-year MA in Accounting; BA Finance; BA Double Major;
Date of last review or accreditation	01-03-2016
Next review year	2018
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Chartered Accountants (ACA)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA Accounting and Finance; BBS Business and Accounting; HDip in Professional Accounting; MA in Accounting; Two-year MA in Accounting; BA Finance; BCL (Law and Accounting); BA Double Major;
Date of last review or accreditation	01-03-2016
Next review year	2018
Joint research degrees	1
Joint/double/multiple awards	2
Collaborative programmes	7
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	St Patricks College
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA Theology and Arts
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Military College
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies
Section: Collaborative Provision	Third Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Military College
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Higher Diploma in Leadership, Defence and Contemporary Security
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fourth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Military College
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	MA in Leadership Management and Defence
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fifth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	CERN, Intel
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	European Industrial Doctorate in ICT (level 10)
Section: Collaborative Provision	Sixth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes

Name of the Body (Bodies)	3U Partnership
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	3U Master of Engineering in Digital and Medical Technologies
Section: Collaborative Provision	Seventh Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	St Andrews Scotland, University de Lorraine
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Joint MSc in Dependable software systems (Computer Science)
Section: Collaborative Provision	Eighth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Goldsmithing and Jewellery Design
Section: Collaborative Provision	Ninth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Ceramic Skills and Design
Section: Collaborative Provision	Tenth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Catholic University of Lyon (UCLy)
Programme Titles 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
Articulation Agreements	1
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Body	Changzhou University

Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	Electronic Engineering Pharmaceutical Chemistry
Do you wish to make a final submission?	Yes, this is my final submission
On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.	Confirmed
Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).	Confirmed
Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.	Confirmed
Collaborative Provision.	Confirmed
Articulation Agreements.	Confirmed
Date of Final Submission	13-03-2019

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 a new 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, these revisions were 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 four academic departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences were completed, along with the quality review of the University's Finance Office.

Furthermore, the Quality Office built upon the practice of developing a faculty-based synthesis of findings from the departmental reviews carried out in the Faculty of Social Sciences. This was established in the previous reporting period in collaboration with the Dean of Social Sciences. With all of the quality reviews completed for the Faculty in the current reporting period, the Quality Office further developed and finalized the synthesis to include all departments. 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. The structure and approach of the synthesis report will be implemented for the Faculty of Science and Engineering quality reviews commencing in the next reporting period (Spring Semester

2019). In addition to these enhancement focused initiatives, the University's commitment to and focus on quality enhancement was further supported by the appointment of a Quality Officer with a dedicated quality enhancement brief.

In the spirit of continuous self-reflection and applying the culture of enhancement to the University's quality assurance and enhancement systems, the Quality Office examined good practice in other universities for programmatic reviews. The development of a programmatic review approach for the omnibus BA programme will commence in the 2018/19 academic year following the University's Institutional Review. Future plans include the extension of this work to the BSc omnibus programme.

The reporting period coincided with the development of a new Strategic Plan and the preparation of the University's *Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)* for the Institutional Review scheduled for December 2018. The 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. For more details on the University's self-evaluation process, see part 6.

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

At the commencement of the University's preparations for the CINNTE Institutional Review, the President appointed Professor Jim Walsh as Institutional Coordinator.

In January 2018, the University's Office of the Director of Strategic Planning and Quality appointed Dr Zsuzsanna Zarka as Quality Officer to support and further develop the work of the Office. In particular, the Quality Officer's brief includes the promotion of a culture of localized quality enhancement through targeted initiatives across the University.

For operational reasons, the reviews of the Estates & Capital Development and the E.M. Kennedy Institute were deferred until 2018/19.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

The Quality Committee met 8 times on the following dates during this reporting period:

19th September 2017
10th November 2017
1st December 2017
16th January 2018
7th March 2018
16th April 2018
27th June 2018
28th August 2018

The Agenda items for these meetings included:
Institutional Review 2018
Revised Quality Review Schedule 2017-2021
Office of the Director of Strategy and Quality: Annual Report on Quality Assurance 2016/17
Update on 3rd cycle of quality reviews in 2017/18
Student Surveys, Student Feedback, University Rankings
Faculty of Social Sciences: Peer Review Group Reports Analysis
Maynooth University Curriculum Evaluation
Development of a Framework for the programmatic review of "omnibus" degrees
Updated Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework
3rd Cycle Quality Reviews: Results from Reviewer and Staff Surveys
Overview of Professional and Statutory Body Accreditation
Quality Committee Report 2016-2018
Annual Institutional Quality Report, 2016/17

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

Units Reviewed

Academic departments (4):

Design Innovation Department
Economics, Finance & Accounting Department
Geography Department
School of Business

Service Units (1):
Finance Unit

Third Cycle Peer Review Reports

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

Number of new **Programme Validations/Programme Approvals** completed in the reporting year	**44**
Number of **Programme Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Research Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **School/Department/Faculty Reviews** completed in the reporting year	4
Number of **Service Unit Reviews** completed in the reporting year	1
Number of **Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations** 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.

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	**47.6%**
National	27.3%
UK	54.5%
EU	9.1%
Student	0%
Other	9.1%

Chair Profile	%
Internal	**0%**
Similar Institution	100%
Different Institution	0%
International	80%

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. 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 2018 ISSE, 78.5% of final year undergraduates rate their entire educational experience at MU as either 'good' or 'excellent' and 83.8% of all students who have studied at Maynooth would chose Maynooth if they were starting again. In 2018, ISSE included for the first time a survey of postgraduate research students. This additional 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 3 of implementation. The University Curriculum Researcher is monitoring and evaluating 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. An overview of the entire evaluation process was presented to the Quality Committee in November 2017.

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 preparation of the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022 which accords greater prominence to QA and QE, establishment of top-level leadership posts in such areas as campus development and digital transformation, and the preparation of the ISER for the Institutional Review. Other initiatives include the appointment of a quality officer, the launch of the NSteP initiative with the Maynooth Students Union, the establishment of the Masters Taskforce, and the successful submission for the Athena Swan Bronze Award.

Initiatives undertaken by QQI in relation to the CINNTE institutional review cycle, developments regarding QQI legislation (2018) amending QQI's roles and functions, developments around QQI policies and guidelines regarding research degree programmes, student assessment, transnational education and collaborative provision have helped 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. Of particular note in this space was the one-day collaborative and networking event the IUA Quality Officers group held for all Quality Office staff in May 2018.

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 an independent external review process, conducted by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The University commenced preparation for the CINNTE Institutional Review which was scheduled for December 2018.

The *Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)* was submitted to QQI in September 2018. The self-evaluation process was based on a robust evidence-based approach which was supported by a range of consultations and opportunities for feedback (for more details, see part 6). 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.

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 surveyed reviewers and academic departmental staff who recently participated in an internal quality review process.

The survey for academic departmental staff invited all staff, academic and administrative, from seven departments from the Faculty of Social Sciences to provide feedback on their experience. Respondents were satisfied with the overall approach and practices of the quality reviews, while making some suggestions for enhancement. Some of these suggestions are currently under consideration while others were already acted on 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. The survey of internal and external reviewers (2015-2017) invited feedback on their experience to support the Quality Office's assessment of its own processes and practice. Respondents were overall satisfied with the quality review process, commendations included '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-review-process

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

As outlined in 1.1 and 2.1 above, the final set of quality reviews in the Faculty of Social Sciences were carried out in the reporting period. As detailed in 1.1 earlier, upon completing the quality reviews for the Faculty, the Quality Office has finalized the synthesis report for Social Sciences. The report was welcomed by the Dean and commended for its potential to facilitate learning at both a faculty and university-level. Given the level of detail in the report, the reflection on outcomes, and potential recommendations for future actions on enhancement activities are still in progress.

Detailed in 3.1 above, the surveys of academic departmental staff and peer reviewers on the quality assurance processes yielded good feedback and valuable insights for enhancement. Evidence from these surveys led to the introduction of a small number of enhancement-related initiatives for the quality review process. These were mostly operational in nature.

The Review of the University's Finance Office was closely aligned to the unit's strategic planning, such linkages between quality assurance and strategic planning is a particular focus of the University's overall approach.

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

During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, all eleven academic departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences carried out internal quality reviews. A synthesis report, prepared by the Quality Office, analysed all eleven peer review group (PRG) reports for these individual departments. As detailed earlier in this report, the goal of this synthesis exercise was to identify common themes, good practice, and possible enhancement themes and activities for Faculty and University level enhancement-led actions.

The possible enhancement themes listed below comprise both broader reflective observations and areas that are more specific, while they also provide opportunity to reflect on and explore future potential initiatives:

-explore potential for cross-faculty and shared teaching
-interdisciplinary initiatives for teaching, learning and scholarships
-collaborations and synergies with cognate subjects
-sharing expertise with colleagues across faculties on areas such as non-traditional students, embedding placements and work experience in the curriculum
-development of departmental research and publication strategies
-excellence in practice-based research, benchmark accordingly
-enhance formality to ensure transparency of departmental roles and structures

Some of the more specific recommended actions/themes emerging from this synthesis report were mirrored in the set of submissions received for the strategic planning process. The Strategic Plan 2018-2022 was officially launched in October 2018.

For key themes identified during the self-evaluation process of 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.

Following the implementation and mainstreaming of the new Maynooth Curriculum in the previous reporting period, the current reporting period focused on further embedding the Curriculum while a number of other significant quality enhancements have also taken place.

The new optional subject **Critical Skills** was made available to most first year students in the academic year 2016-17. 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. In the year of its mainstreaming in 2016-17 approximately 750 first year students took Critical Skills. This number has increased to just over 900 in the 2017-18 reporting period. Retaining the overall structure and approach to the Critical Skills subject, the University has worked on further embedding this offering by introducing new varieties and enhancements within existing options. Student feedback provided valuable information and evidence-base for these enhancements. To showcase students' work, the University organized a Critical Skills Poster Symposium (April 2018) which featured over 170 posters from 30 different classes.

Newly launched in the previous 2016-17 reporting period, the University's **Experiential Learning Office** provides opportunities for students with short-term work placement, service learning, community engagement and undergraduate research. In the current reporting period the Office has worked on expanding and enhancing existing offerings by introducing the Maynooth University Student Experience Awards (MUSE), which recognises and rewards students' contribution to non-credit bearing activities such as work experience, volunteering, club and society involvement, and student representation. Furthermore, the University's **Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)** has also been updated and expanded prior to its relaunch with over 50 academic mentors and over 50 undergraduate students across the three faculties in 2018. 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 also have the option to register for the **Skills for Success** elective module, which is 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 University has also introduced a set of **Teaching Awards** with awardees in both individual and team categories across the three faculties are expected to be announced in the next reporting period.

Following the co-signing of an agreement, Maynooth University and the Maynooth Students Union (MSU) have started working in partnership to launch and develop the **National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)** on campus. Established as a collaborative initiative by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the National Student Engagement Programme works with over 20 higher education Institutions, including Maynooth University, to develop student capabilities and institutional capacity to enhance student engagement at all levels across the higher education system. In February 2018, as an initial step, the University and MSU hosted a one-day Institutional Analysis workshop, facilitated by NStEP and SPARQS, to identify themes and priorities, which are suitable for a partnership approach in Maynooth University. The rollout of NStEP at the University has strategically been timed to coincide with Maynooth University's CINNTE Institutional Review to encourage students to engage with quality enhancement and quality assurance activities.

Maynooth University is a leader in **widening participation**, and the rates of low SES students, students with a disability, and mature students are higher than sector norms. The University has been successful in retaining these students, and the progression rates for low SES students, students with a disability and mature students are all similar to other students with similar points at entry. In 2017, Maynooth University was identified as one of the six third level institutions best placed to support increased diversity in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), which is a key objective in the National Access Plan.

The HEA-funded **Turn to Teaching Project (TTT)** at Maynooth University is a three-year programme that officially launches in September 2018. This programme is a collaborative initiative between the Maynooth University's Access Programme, Department of Education, Department of Adult and Community Education, Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education and Department of Applied Social Studies. The Project includes such innovative initiatives as the Tar Linn ag Teagasc programme, which re-conceptualises the implementation and direction of Irish language policy at initial teacher education level, and the Think about Teaching foundation course. The similarly innovative **Rising Teachers-Rising Leaders** leadership programme facilitates senior cycle post-primary students attending DEIS post-primary schools to meet and be mentored by primary and post-primary teachers from underrepresented groups in teaching.

In May 2018, Maynooth University was awarded the internationally recognised [Athena SWAN Bronze Award](#) for gender equality in higher education institutions. Maynooth University is the first and only institution in Ireland to date to apply for and achieve the **Athena SWAN Bronze Award** under the expanded version of the charter that includes Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines as well as Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (STEMM). The University is also the first Irish institution to incorporate intersectionality as part of its Athena SWAN application, taking into account the numerous factors than can overlap in discussions of inequality, including the intersections between gender, race and ethnicity. The cornerstone of Maynooth University's Athena SWAN application was its comprehensive **Gender Action Plan for 2018-2021**, which is underpinned by the University's recently renewed Equality and Diversity Policy.

Maynooth University is a **research-led university**, where the quality of published scholarly work across a wide range of areas is benchmarked as excellent by national and international standards, with a strong international dimension. The University has continued to develop centres of research excellence, with a focus on 4 research institutes of significant scale in ICT and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Human Health, and Arts and Humanities. Launched in 2018, the University's **Arts and Humanities Research Institute** is dedicated to the promotion of scholarship within the Faculty, and to bringing the best of Maynooth University's rich tradition in humanities research to the world. Current and future planned activities include the support of individual, collaborative and interdisciplinary research, facilitating of public engagement with the texts and cultural objects, and hosting research projects. Launched in 2017, the University's **Assisting Living & Learning Institute** (ALL) is an interdisciplinary institute dedicated to supporting people achieve well-being through the development and application of appropriate technologies, person-centred systems and evidence-based policies and laws that empower users and those supporting them.

In October 2017 Maynooth University hosted its inaugural **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, research institutes and centres. With many of the events open to the public, Research Week 2017 was part of a yearlong series of programmes marking the 20th anniversary of the founding of Maynooth University as an independent university.

The University's Strategic Plan (2018-2022) has identified the need for a comprehensive review and restructuring of the University's Taught Masters portfolio. A **Masters Taskforce** has been established to conduct the review and make recommendations to the President and Academic Council about the further development and enhancement of the University's Taught Masters provision. During the current reporting period the Taskforce conducted a review of the existing provision, examined international best practice, while the developmental work will commence in the next reporting period. Furthermore, in line with the University's continuous goal of enhancing the postgraduate student experience, the inaugural **Postgraduate Awards** were established in 2018. Categories included a community impact award, postgraduate student teaching award, postgraduate research impact award, and a doctoral supervision award.

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 2018 to August 2019, will build on the quality assurance and enhancement activities of the current reporting period. These will include:

Maynooth University CINNTE Institutional Review
The University will submit the ISER in September 2018 and will prepare for the Planning Visit and Main Review Visit scheduled for October and December 2018, respectively. The University is scheduled to receive a draft report in April 2019 for fact checking, with a final report in May 2019. Further details regarding the University's preparation process are included in part 6.

Continuation of Cycle 3 periodic quality reviews
Reviews will take place for the Estates & Capital Development unit and all eight academic departments in the Faculty of Science &Engineering. Once the final departmental review has taken place, a synthesis of peer review reports will be prepared to identify emerging themes and potential enhancement activities at Faculty/University level.

Commencement of work to establish a Framework for Programmatic Review
A Programmatic Review working group will be established to prepare guidelines for periodic reviews of large multi-disciplinary programmes such as the omnibus BA and BSc degree programmes. Reviews of more specialised programmes will continue to be undertaken within the periodic reviews of the departments/schools providing the programmes.

Workshop on the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)
The Quality Office is planning an interactive workshop in November 2018 to enhance knowledge and raise awareness about the *Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)* among colleagues on campus. The workshop will focus on providing an opportunity to explore the data and reflect on potential benefits for particular areas.

The Quality Office is working with the Dean of Teaching and Learning to explore establishing suitable frameworks for sharing ISSE data with departments/units. This collaboration will support the further embedding and use of ISSE data across the University with the aim of informing future quality enhancement initiatives that will enhance the undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research student experience.

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. Building on this developmental work, the Quality Office will also explore the potential for aligning PRSB requirements with internal quality review cycles.

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 the following service units (1):

Estates & Capital Development

Review of academic departments in the Faculty of Science and Engineering (8):

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

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.

Maynooth University submitted its *Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER*) in September 2018, with the planning visit and main review visit scheduled for October and December 2018, respectively. Given this timeline, outcomes from the CINNTE Institutional Review are not known at this point. The University's next AIQR will provide details on the impact and outcomes of the review. The paragraphs below provide details on Maynooth University's preparation for the self-evaluation process.

The preparation of the ISER involved extensive consultation and deliberation. The process commenced in autumn 2017 with the first stage, led by the Strategy and Quality Office, involving dialogue with QQI on the process and timetable for the review, initial briefing of the Quality Committee, preparation of a synthesis of all relevant Maynooth University policies and procedures, and identification of evidence requirements. A synthesis of feedback from department reviews was also completed.

At the end of January 2018, Professor Jim Walsh was appointed as the Institutional Coordinator. An extensive consultation process led by the Institutional Coordinator and the Quality Enhancement Officer was undertaken over the three months to the end of April 2018. This involved customised briefings for the University Executive, the Academic Council, the Governing Authority, each of the three Faculties, the Quality Committee and the Committees for Academic Programmes, Teaching and Learning, Research, Graduate Studies and Internationalisation. At an early stage, all staff were informed of the review via a letter from the President and all students were contacted via email by the Institutional Coordinator. In addition, briefings were provided to the student leaders and additional questions pertinent to the review were added to the annual Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE). Engagements with students included workshops with academic class representatives and the Students Union officers, while feedback was also sought from the general student body on particular areas. Further briefings were provided to staff who were assigned responsibility for preparing initial papers on sections of the ISER. In most instances, the briefings were supplemented by workshops that were facilitated by the Institutional Coordinator and the Quality Enhancement Officer. In total over 20 briefing sessions and workshops were held.

In parallel with the awareness raising activities, progress was made on the compilation of background material for the ISER. In February, the University Executive approved a proposal from the Institutional Coordinator regarding the process for preparing the ISER document, which included establishing a Task Group and Consultative Forum.

The core function of the Task Group was to oversee the planning, development and implementation of a systematic, critical and robust institutional self-evaluation report. Its membership included members of the University Executive, the Librarian, Directors of the Access Office and Student Services, members of the Governing Authority and the Quality Committee, and representatives of undergraduate and

postgraduate students. Staff of the Quality Office were also members. The role of the Consultative Forum was to facilitate cross-cutting, collective discussions of the key issues to be addressed by the review. The membership included the Faculty Deans, Heads of all academic departments and of the administrative and support units, and student and staff representatives. Colleagues involved in the roundtable discussions as part of the Consultative Forum event commended the benefit of facilitating cross-cutting discussions. Overall, the briefings and consultation process was a good investment of time, which ensured that the ISER would reflect the views of the staff and student body.

The task of developing material for the different sections was assigned to senior individuals that included members of the Task Group, the University Executive and directors of functions. The initial inputs along with submissions from the three Faculties, the students, and outcomes from workshops were completed by end of April 2018.

Using these materials, the Institutional Coordinator and the Quality Enhancement Officer in early May 2018 prepared a draft *Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT)* analysis which, after review by the University Executive, was submitted for discussion by each of the three Faculties, the Academic Council and the Governing Authority in order to help agree the overall thrust and tone of the ISER. In parallel, the Institutional Coordinator and the Quality Enhancement Officer prepared the first draft of the ISER, which was reviewed by the University Executive on 19th June 2018 and subsequently by the CINNTE Task Group and Consultative Forum and also by the Quality Committee. Following feedback from these groups and additional input from members of the University Executive, a second draft was prepared in the course of July and early August 2018.

The revised draft was considered by the University Executive on 21st August and by the CINNTE Task Group and Consultative Forum and also by the Quality Committee on 28th and 29th August 2018. The overall approach, and the content of the draft ISER, were reviewed, and subject to proposed amendments, approved and endorsed by these meetings. Following further revision, a third draft was presented for comment to meetings of the three Faculties on the 3rd and 4th September 2018. A special meeting of the Academic Council on 5th September approved the content and tone of the ISER as a balanced and fair representation of the University and of the effectiveness of its quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures. The ISER was submitted to QQI on 8th September.

The self-evaluation process was informed by data from a number of sources. Quantitative metrics on student enrolments, progression and completion rates, staff numbers and funding were taken from the University Performance Framework, which is compiled annually by the Institutional Research Office from data provided by the administrative offices of the University. All indicators used for benchmarking against other universities were based on definitions and census dates used by the Higher Education Authority. Data were also compiled from a variety of surveys ranging from those undertaken across the whole University such as the annual *Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)* and internal MU survey of modules, the *Student Evaluation of Learning Experience (SELE)*, to more localised and thematic surveys such as those taken by, or on behalf of, the Library, the International Office, the Admissions Office, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Graduate Studies Office, the Quality Office and units within Student Services.

In addition, the preparation of the ISER was informed by the consultations undertaken with staff and students over recent years on the reform of the undergraduate curriculum, the reorganisation of the University research institutes, the preparation of the *University Strategic Plan 2018-2022*, the *Campus Development Masterplan*, and most recently the successful submission for the Athena Swan bronze institutional award and the successful submission for Green Campus status. Furthermore, the reports

of the peer review teams for all units reviewed over the past three years, and the annual reports of external examiners for each discipline have been reviewed during the preparation of the ISER.

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. 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, and many are already included as action points in the University Strategic Plan 2018-2022. The University awaits the report on the Institutional Review which will guide further developments in relation to QA and QE. The Strategic Plan explicitly recognizes the need for close alignment of QA and QE with strategic planning at all levels in the University.

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 University's self-evaluation process identified further themes of interest. These include:

Review of the Postgraduate Taught Masters portfolio
Feedback to and from students
Programmatic reviews of omnibus programmes