Maynooth University Quality Committee
Teams Meeting 14th February 2022 at 12.00 pm

Minutes

Present: Dr Alison FitzGerald (Chair), Dr Teresa Lee (Secretary), Professor Joseph Coughlan, Mr Niall Daly, Professor Fiona Lyddy, Ms Sarah Searson

Apologies: Ms Nicole Carr, Dr Conor McCarthy, Ms Joan O'Riordan Bruton

Dr Alison Hood, Dean of Teaching & Learning attended for Item 4.1

In Attendance: Ms Helen Berry

Agenda Item	Key Points/Decisions	Actions, if any (Follow-up by)
1　Membership Update	The Chair welcomed Ms Sarah Searson (External Member of the Governing Authority) to the Committee. Ms Searson's background is in arts and cultural development and in arts education. She has researched & implemented policy and strategies for local authorities such as Dublin City, Galway City, Wicklow, and South Dublin County Councils. She was Head of the Centre for Creative Arts and Media at GMIT, where she led the Centre through programmatic review. Ms Searson has also led several significant arts and cultural initiatives.	
2　　Minutes	The minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2021 were accepted as accurate.	Minutes adopted.
3　　Matters Arising	The Director of Quality reported that the submission date for the Annual Quality Report (AQR) to QQI is 25th February. Invitations were issued to various units across the	

	University for submission of updates and for details of enhancement-led activities for inclusion in the AQR.	
4 Students and quality assurance processes	**4.1 Maynooth University Student Feedback and Teaching Evaluation** Dr Alison Hood, Dean of Teaching & Learning Presentation: Overview of presentation: The former University system in place for Student Evaluation of Learning Experience (SELE) was suspended in 2019 and has since being replaced with a devolved system that provides flexibility for academic departments to choose what works for them. Customised mid- and end-module surveys, in addition to a range of other materials that can be used, were made available by the Centre for Teaching and Learning to academic staff via Moodle. Ownership and responsibility for undertaking student evaluations, providing an opportunity for staff and units to hear the student voice and to assist academic unit staff to review and update their modules and programmes as needed remains with the unit. Academic units were made aware that the onus to demonstrate that they are surveying students and acting on feedback rests with them. They were also made aware that that they would be asked to provide details in relation to the use of student evaluation surveys of modules. Such details are now to be requested, with a light-touch process to be used, that can demonstrate that (i) student evaluations are undertaken, and (ii) captures the main messages. It is proposed that the process consist of a summary report submitted annually by academic units to the relevant Faculty and in turn an Annual Faculty Report is submitted to the Quality Office. A sample report template for use by academic units was shared with the Committee. The timeframe for introduction of the reporting process is the end of the current Semester. A discussion followed and it was confirmed that survey methods used will be in class (electronically). It was suggested that the number of students in a module be added to the Report Form. It was also suggested HODs be asked to write a short over-arching reflection in response to module evaluations within their units. It was remarked that an end of year report is timely in terms of enabling units to reflect on practice and to make changes in advance of the year ahead. The potential for academic units to use their annual reports to inform their quality reviews was also highlighted. A member of the	Presentation and Comparative Analysis report summarising practices in other universities to be circulated to Committee members. Committee members to provide any further feedback by email for forwarding to Dean of Teaching & Learning. Copy of MSU VP Education slides to be shared with Dean of Teaching & Learning.

	Committee queried how any issues arising from module evaluations would be captured and acted on. The QC emphasised that it is important to see a closing of the loop in terms of student evaluations. As proposed, the process as outlined sees reports going to Faculty and then Faculty reports are submitted to the Quality Office. It was highlighted that there is a need for greater clarity in terms of what responsibility for action Faculty has when it receives reports from academic units. Likewise, what action by or what role is envisaged for the Quality Office on receipt of reports from Faculty. The Chair acknowledged the supports put in place by the Office of the Dean of Teaching & Learning to help staff and students during the pandemic.	
	4.2 *Broadening Student Participation in Quality Review Process* Mr Niall Daly, Vice President for Education, MSU presentation:	
	This presentation was postponed from the previous meeting of the Committee in November. The Committee is looking to see how we can support greater student engagement in quality review processes for Cycle 4.	The Chair to liaise with the Experiential Learning Office regarding the MU Student Experience Award and will report back at the next meeting.
	Overview of presentation: A synopsis of the operations of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) was provided together with an outline of how students currently engage with, and inform, quality matters within Maynooth University, ranging from participation in committees, the engagement of academic representatives with academic units, and students providing feedback through surveys, module evaluations, etc. The need for students and representatives to be valued as partners, to see more closure of feedback loops, and to see evidence of actions arising from feedback was highlighted. It was noted that from a student perspective quality assurance is good, but quality enhancement is better.	
	A discussion followed regarding the Committee supporting award recognition for the work undertaken by student representatives. It was noted that at the moment, 60 hours is needed to be eligible for the student experience award. However, student representatives can only undertake 20 hours in any one year. Also discussed was the potential to have student involvement in key aspects of a units' quality review such as representation at the units' initial quality review steering group meetings and the	

	possibility of having external student participation on peer review groups. It was noted that with the NStep programme students sit on programme review panels only. Quality Committee members remarked that as students/student representatives often have a short time within the University, and certain issues by their nature take time to resolve, student do not always get to see the benefit or the outcomes of their engagement in quality-related processes. There is a need to capture and to make students aware of legacy issues and how they were resolved and addressed. In this way they can understand the long-term value and benefit of their engagement. The earlier in the student life cycle that they can be made aware of the positive outcomes from the feedback provided by previous student cohorts and can be made aware of the feedback processes that are available to them the better.	
5 High level thematic analysis reports of quality reviews FSS and FSE	The Chair introduced this item. The Director of Quality had produced a short report, for presentation to the Deans' meeting of 11th February, that ranked key cross-faculty themes identified from a) a comparison of themes arising from a FSE thematic review report and from a FSS thematic review report - these reports having been prepared and submitted to the Dean of each Faculty following completion of all reviews of the academic units within their faculty, and b) from an analysis of all the institutional level recommendations made to the individual academic units in their review reports. All cross-faculty themes identified were correlated to references in the University's strategic plan, to MU's QQI CINNTE review report (2019), the associated MU CINNTE QIP (2019) & the CINNTE QIP follow up report (2020). The Chair reported that the Deans' meeting was constructive, and that the report presented at the Deans' meeting prompted the following feedback and discussion: • Reviews may at times only capture a particular moment or short span in the life of a unit, with the result that reviews may become limited in focus-it is important that reviews consider units in the long term. • Concern that quality review processes are approached as a momentous/onerous investment once every few years, rather than in terms of more incremental reflection on policy and processes. It is worth reflecting on a more distributional	The Director of Quality to follow up with a conceptual map which will be sent by email to the Committee before the next QC meeting and then forwarded to the VP Academic.

	approach to quality, such as considering the incorporation of annual/biannual reporting steps. • As the University concludes its 3rd Cycle of Quality Reviews and begins planning for the 4th, it is an ideal period to reflect on existing institutional quality review guidelines– for units and for reviewers. There is a role for the QC to review the guidelines in terms of their clarity and the emphasis placed on core elements such as processes, policies, and procedures. Units need clarity about what they are being asked to do for quality reviews. • Consideration to be given to the separation of Academic and Administrative Units with distinct and clearly articulated guidelines for each. • Post-review processes are informed by pre-review processes, so it is important to ensure that the pre-review processes and objectives are set out clearly. • The Vice President Academic asked the Chair and the Director of Quality to revert with a conceptual map in terms of what needs to be looked at. The Chair and the Director of Quality will work on this, seeking input from the QC and reverting to the Deans' meeting, via the Vice President Academic. Discussion by the Committee followed, and it was agreed that guidelines need to be reviewed and it is worth considering an additional reporting step annually that would help to inform quality reviews when they take place. This is a good time to look at institutional operating principles, look at what other institutions are doing and possibly streamline the process. The Chair stated that this is the beginning of a planning dialogue for the 4th Cycle, and she will update the Committee by email on these matters if matters arise which require QC input in the interim between meetings. The Director of Quality indicated that the Framework is a high-level document with the guidelines providing the necessary detail. The Director of Quality confirmed the draft schedule for the 4th Cycle of reviews was sent to the Deans and the VP Academic for review. Some minor changes have been made.	The Director of Quality to follow up with the VPA for feedback from Deans on the draft 4th Cycle schedule and to invite proposals for thematic reviews.

6 3rd Cycle of Quality Reviews	The Director of Quality introduced this item. It was reported that all final Peer Review Group (PRG) reports for the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy were received and have been issued to Schools/Department with a request for submission of their draft Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs). QIP review meetings for the Departments of History and Music are taking place this week.	
7 4th Cycle of Quality Reviews	**7.1 Feedback on draft QIP Template and Guidelines** The Chair introduced this item. Feedback has been received from units in the FACSP where it was piloted and from the VPA. Item 7.2 and Item 7.3 have been covered under Item 7.1 **7.4 Schedule of reviews for Cycle 4** The Chair introduced this item. The Director of Quality is in discussions with the VPA, and the Committee will return to it as it evolves.	The Director of Quality to refine the QIP document, circulate to the original working group who will bring it back to the Quality Committee
8 Review of MU Framework of Quality 2018	The Chair introduced this item. The Chair and Director of Quality met to discuss the Framework. There is a need to undertake a general review: to see if it is still fit for purpose; to bring it up to date; and to identify areas that may require more significant changes. The Director of Quality stated that the nature of this document is to focus on overarching principles.	The Chair and Director of Quality will bring a draft document for consideration to the April meeting of the Committee.
9 Draft Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of	The Director of Quality introduced this item. A draft joint-sectoral protocol between designated awarding bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for the inclusion of qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications is currently in the final stage of production. The IUA is working with the universities and with QQI to finalise the protocol.	

Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications		
AOB	None	
Date of next meeting	The next meeting is scheduled at 12 noon on Monday 25th April. A Poll will be circulated asking for preferences for an in person or on-line meeting.	