Maynooth University Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Purpose:	This document sets out Maynooth University's overall policy on quality assurance and enhancement.
Approval:	Approved by Academic Council and Governing Authority 2016. Revisions were noted by the Academic Council on 9th April and by the Governing Authority on 26th April 2018 Further revisions were noted by the Academic Council on 7th November 2022 and by the Governing Authority on 10th November 2022.
Consultation:	Consultation with the QQI on Maynooth University's QA procedures, as set out in this Framework, took place 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 this Framework.
Review:	Document updated in January 2018 to reflect changed governance arrangements. Document updated in October 2022 to reflect factual changes. Document will be reviewed again in 2023, in line with the new University Strategic Plan 2022-2028.
Audience:	University Governance, Staff, Students, External Quality Agencies, external stakeholders.
Policy Author:	Director of Quality.
Policy Owner:	Office of Strategy and Quality.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Maynooth University recognises quality as a core concept in its Strategic Plan (2018- 2022) [1] with a key goal set down to "enhance our quality assurance and quality enhancement processes, and strengthen the link between quality enhancement and strategic planning" (Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022, p 36). The Strategic Plan placed quality assurance and enhancement as "key drivers of institutional strategy, effectiveness, innovation and change" and highlighted that "The success of the University depends upon excellent quality assurance and enhancement processes, linked to good strategic, operational and financial planning, and robust governance" (Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022, p 35).

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 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

---

[1] Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

[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

and international standards appropriate to the relevant level in the National Framework of Qualifications.

The statutory based Authority, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are in place to provide assurance to external interests. As quality is a dynamic concept, there is a continual need for enhancement of procedures, guided by feedback from reviews, local experimentation and innovation and examples of documented best practices in other universities. Taken together quality assurance processes and quality enhancement initiatives can support the development of a quality culture that is endorsed and embraced by students, academic staff, staff of enabling units, plus the leadership and management of the University at all relevant levels.

In practice, quality assurance and quality enhancement in Maynooth University are supported through a combination of university-wide policies and procedures implemented on an on-going basis, and periodic reviews of units and programmes of the University. From time-to-time, specific thematic reviews may be undertaken to assist in designing initiatives for improvement, for example the comprehensive review of the undergraduate curriculum that was undertaken in 2013. The implementation of all quality related activities normally involves participation by staff, students, internal and external stakeholders and peer review groups comprising internal and external members, utilising evidence-based methodologies.

The Framework sets out in Part 1 the context for quality assurance and enhancement in the University. Part 2 identifies key principles, which inform the Framework, elaborates a suite of objectives, outlines how the Framework is implemented, and concludes with a consideration of leadership, management and governance of the Framework.

Consultation on Maynooth University's QA procedures, as set out in the Framework, took place with the 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.

PART 1: CONTEXT
1.1   Legal framework
 The Universities Act 1997, section 12 (h) identifies as one of the objects of a university that it will *"promote the highest standards in, and quality of, teaching and research".* Section 35(1) requires the University *"to establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university"*. Section 35(2) specifies that the procedures shall include *"evaluation at regular intervals ......(of) the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level"* and *"assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university"* and *"shall provide for the publication of findings arising out of the application of those procedures".*

The legal framework has been updated by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012), with further amendments in 2019, as part of Section 28(1) of the Act that requires all providers to *"establish procedures for quality assurance for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training and research and related services the provider provides"*.

The procedures shall include procedures for (a) *"evaluation from time to time by the provider and by enrolled or formerly enrolled learners of the education, training and research and related services provided by that provider"*, (b) *"review by the provider of the implementation of the quality assurance procedures"*, (c) *preparation by the provider of a report on results from the review,* (d*) "furnishing the report to the Authority"* (QQI), (e) *" publication of the report"* and (f) *"implementation of any measures"* arising from the review.

Section 29 of the Act clarifies that *"a previously established university"* (such as Maynooth University) *shall (a) consult with the Authority before establishing procedures under Section 28"*, (b) *"provide a copy of the procedures ..... to the Authority"* and (c) *implement procedures published by it under this section"*.

Maynooth University is a Designated Awarding Body under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) and as an independent awarding body, has responsibility for overseeing the quality assurance procedures for all qualification awards that it makes, and also for approval and oversight of the quality assurance procedures of any linked providers[3]. Section 32 (1) requires the University to include in its own quality assurance framework, procedures for review of procedures submitted by any linked provider *"for approval",* (Section 33 (1), and for *"review .... of the effectiveness of the implementation by the linked provider of those procedures",* Section 31 (1) (b). The University is also required to have procedures for the *"appointment of an independent appeals person for the purposes of hearing an appeal"* Section 31 (1) (c) of a decision by the University to withdraw approval of the quality assurance procedures of any linked provider, Section 39.

1.2   National Statutory Guidelines

Following the passing of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) the Authority known as Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established as a statutory agency in November 2012 with responsibility for, *inter alia*, the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training. In order to discharge its responsibilities for quality assurance QQI published its *Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines* in December 2015[4] (revised in April 2016) that was followed in February 2016 by a *Policy Framework for Cyclical Reviews of Higher Education Institutions[5]*.

The implementation of the QQI Policy Framework is supported by a suite of statutory quality assurance guidelines including *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*[6] and additional sector and topic-specific QA guidelines, which the University should have regard to as appropriate. The scope of the Guidelines extends beyond the periodic quality assurance reviews to encompass the wider spectrum of policies and procedures used on an on-going basis to support and sustain a quality culture in the University (Appendix A). The Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines are also closely aligned with the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines[7]. The QQI Guidelines recognise that

---

[3] A linked provider is defined by QQI as "a provider that is not a designated awarding body, but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body".
[4] QQI *Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines* (December, 2015)
[5] QQI *Policy Framework for Cyclical Reviews of Higher Education Institutions* (February, 2016a)
[6] QQI *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* (May, 2016b)
[7] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), May 2015

providers differ in the scale and scope of their activities and that such differentiation will be reflected in the complexity of their QA procedures, which should be fit-for-purpose and context. The specific purpose of the QQI Guidelines is to assist providers in the development of quality assurance systems, which are appropriate to individual provider contexts, and they are not intended to prescribe the manner in which providers must implement their QA procedures.

The aim of the QQI Policy Framework for cyclical reviews of higher education institutions is *"to provide an independent external review* (on an agreed cyclical basis) *of the institution's own internal quality assurance procedures"* (QQI, 2016a, p.5) that have been developed in accordance with the legal requirements of the Universities Act (1997) and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012).

The scope of the statutory quality assurance framework for reviews extends from periodic reviews of academic, administrative and service departments to include reviews of study programmes and thematic reviews of institution-wide issues.

The Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities and other Designated Awarding Bodies[8] reflect the scope and objectives of the policy on cyclical review, the purposes being:

1. To encourage a quality assurance culture and the enhancement of the student learning environment and experience within institutions,
2. To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance,
3. To contribute to public confidence in the quality of institutions by promoting transparency and public awareness,
4. To facilitate quality enhancement by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice.

The implementation of the QQI framework for institutional review (entitled Cinnte) is through a single flexible model requiring each institution to prepare an institutional self-evaluation report (ISER), an assessment and site visit by a review team, publication of a report prepared by the review team, and a follow-up procedure to monitor and review actions taken after the review. The scope of a review of this type includes: (a) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the institution-wide quality assurance procedures, (b) assessment of compliance with the European Standards for quality assurance and also with expectations contained in QQI guidelines and with other relevant QQI policies, and (c) exploration of quality enhancement in initiatives by the institution. The QQI framework acknowledges that the institution's own mission and strategy, and selected quality indicators and benchmarks, will be part of the over-arching context for assessing the findings from institutional reviews.

---

[8] Terms of Reference Universities and other Designated Awarding Bodies

1.3　European Standards and Guidelines

The Council of Ministers responsible for higher education adopted the first set of Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in 2005. Since 2005, through the application of the ESGs, as well as other Bologna related developments pertaining to qualification frameworks and the promotion of learning outcomes, there has been a paradigm shift in higher education towards student-centred learning and teaching. Following a review process that was formally initiated by the Ministerial Council in 2012 and which included extensive consultation with national organisations, a revised set of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) was approved by the Ministerial Conference in May 2015.

The 2015 ESGs place a considerable emphasis on the design, approval, monitoring and periodic review of study programmes; supports and training for teaching staff; and regular student feedback and complaints procedures. In addition, well-established mechanisms such as the external examiner system and the institutional research and strategic planning functions are also regarded as significant contributors to quality. The learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation are also noted as important. In the context of the ESGs, *quality* is therefore considered "*mainly a result of the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment. Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of programmes, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose" (*ESG, 2015, p.5).

The revised ESGs contain ten Standards with a standard defined as an "*agreed and accepted practice for quality assurance in higher education in the European Higher Education Area and should, therefore, be taken account of and adhered to by those concerned in all types of higher education provision"* (ESG, 2015, p.7). The emphasis is on standards for quality assurance rather than on quality *per se.* Their purpose is to provide guidance for successful quality provision and learning environments, and is not to prescribe how quality assurance procedures should be implemented. The implementation challenges are considered in a report for the EUA (2015)[9].

In both the 2005 and 2015 ESGs, the first Standard is that *"Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management".* The inclusion of the words *"forms part of their strategic management"* is new and indicative of the enhanced expectations regarding quality in higher education. The most important innovation in the 2015 ESGs is the introduction of a Standard specifically focused on student-centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG, p.9. The ESGs are strongly reflected in the QQI Core Guidelines (Appendix B).

1.4　Resources and Capacity Requirements

 A key challenge for any higher education institution is the maintenance of high standards and quality provision for increasing numbers and diversity of students against a backdrop of limited public funding. Maynooth University (MU) has been growing rapidly and consistently since its foundation, from around 1,000 students in 1980/81 to close to 15,500 students in 2022/23. The challenges posed to maintaining quality and standards by the combined effects of the trends in resources and student

---

[9] EUA, *ESG Part 1: Are Universities Ready?* Brussels, 2015

numbers are evidenced by peer review reports from several quality reviews over recent years[10] (QQI, 2016c).

The university sector is subject to monitoring and assessment by both the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and QQI. Strategic Performance Compacts are agreed with the HEA and include specific objectives and targets on, *inter alia*, teaching and learning and quality of the student experience; high quality internationally competitive research and innovation; and enhanced internationalisation. Quality is central to each of these dimensions. The outcomes from the Compact process are published. The HEA also publishes detailed institutional profiles that contain several metrics that are germane to evaluation of the quality of the education and research functions of the university.

The University also prepares an Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQR) for QQI, which forms part of a strategic dialogue process between the University and QQI. The AQR reports on reviews of units and /or programmes and also on quality enhancement initiatives. The QQI process of AQR and the HEA Compact process both contribute to national reports on the higher education system. The annual national survey StudentSurvey.ie, and the biennial survey PGRSurvey.ie are further examples of national level initiative that provides rich data on different types and extent of student engagement plus extensive data on outcomes achieved by students. Data from this survey can be used to inform decisions on interventions to support and enhance quality in the University.

PART 2: MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY

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, in 2022/2023, has approximately 15,500 students enrolled in programmes in the arts, humanities, social sciences including business and law and in science and engineering.

The approach to quality in the University supports and is embedded in the University's strategic planning, with the objective of impacting positively on the quality of research and scholarship, teaching, the student experience and external engagement over the coming years.

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

The Maynooth University Framework for Quality, builds on the experience acquired and embedded over the past few 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

---

[10] QQI *Quality in an Era of Diminishing Resources – Irish Higher Education 2008-15*, (2016c)

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 our governance structure with oversight and governance provided a joint committee of the Academic Council and the Governing Authority.

2.1   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.

2.2   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 that includes a report on the Quality Committee activities, and following this, the report is presented to the Governing Authority and the Academic Council as the Annual Quality Report of the Quality Committee.

2.3   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[11];

---

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

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

2.4   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.

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 Strategy & Quality Office.
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 Strategy & Quality Office. The Head of Unit is provided with the opportunity to propose corrections to any factual inaccuracies in the report and the report is then finalised and signed off by all members of the PRG.
3. *Quality Improvement Plan:* The unit considers the recommendations contained in the PRG report and prepares a draft Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for discussion with the President (or nominee), Vice-President Academic, the Dean of Faculty or the Head of Administrative Area, other University Executive member(s) as required, and the Director of

Quality, from which an agreed set of actions ensues. The University Executive is notified of receipt of the final Peer Review Group report, and of the final Quality Improvement Plan.

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 Quality will prepare a synthesis report for the Dean to enable the identification of common themes, emerging issues and good practices. Twelve months following completion of a unit's Quality Improvement Plan, the Unit submits a follow-up report to the Director of Quality outlining progress made against the Plan. The Quality Committee, the Academic Council, and the Governing Authority are notified. The annual progress against unit-level Quality Improvement Plans is included in the annual report of the Director of 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.

2.5 Leadership, Management and Governance of the Framework for Quality

The President, as Chief Officer, has delegated overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement to the Vice-President Academic, Registrar and Deputy President. The Director of Quality, who reports directly to the Vice-President Academic, Registrar and Deputy President, coordinates the operational management of quality assurance reviews. The Director prepares a 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. Its membership and Terms of Reference are listed in Appendix C.

2.6   Review of the Framework

The Academic Council and Governing Authority will review this Framework for Quality following completion of the University Strategic Plan 2022-2028; in the intervening period, minor changes may be made and approved by the Quality Committee, for noting by the University's governance structures.

Appendix A: Headings from the QQI Core (Statutory) Quality Assurance Guidelines, 2016

1. **Governance and Management of Quality**
   1.1 Governance
   1.2 Management of quality assurance
   1.3 Embedding a quality culture

2. **Documented approach to Quality Assurance**
   2.1 Documented policies and procedures
   2.2 A comprehensive system

3. **Programmes of Education and Training**
   3.1 Programme development and approval
   3.2 Learner admission, progression and recognition
   3.3 Programme monitoring and review
   3.4 Protection for enrolled learners

4. **Staff Recruitment, Management and Development**
   4.1 Staff recruitment
   4.2 Staff communication
   4.3 Staff development

5. **Teaching and Learning**
   5.1 Teaching and Learning
   5.2 A provider environment that promotes learning
   5.3 National and international effective practice
   5.4 Learning environment

6. **Assessment of Learner Achievement – General Guidelines**
   6.1 Assessment of Learning Achievement

7. **Supports for Learners**
   7.1 Supports for Learners

8. **Management Information and Data**
   8.1 Information Systems
   8.2 Learner information systems
   8.3 Management information system
   8.4 Information for further planning
   8.5 Completion rates
   8.6 Records maintenance and retention
   8.7 Data protection and freedom of information

9. **Public Information and Communication**
   9.1 Public Information
   9.2 Learner information
   9.3 Publication of quality assurance evaluation reports

10. **Other parties involved in Education and Training**
    10.1 Peer relationships with the broader education and training community
    10.2 External partnerships and second providers
    10.3 Expert panellists, examiners and authenticators

11. **Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review**
    11.1 Provider owned internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring
    11.2 Internal self-monitoring
    11.3 Self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement
    11.4 Provider-owned quality assurance engages with external quality assurance

Appendix B: Mapping QQI Core (Statutory) Quality Assurance Guidelines, 2016 and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015

QQI Core (Statutory) Quality Assurance Guidelines, 2016	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015
1. Governance and Management of Quality	2. Policy for Quality Assurance
2. Documented approach to Quality Assurance	1. Policy for quality assurance 10. Cyclical external quality assurance
3. Programmes of Education and Training	2. Design and approval of programmes 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	5.Teaching staff
5. Teaching and Learning	3.Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
6. Assessment of Learner Achievement – General Guidelines	3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
7. Supports for Learners	6. Learning resources and student support
8. Management Information and Data	7. Information management
9. Public Information and Communication	8. Public information
10. Other parties involved in Education and Training	
11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Appendix C: Maynooth University Quality Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY QUALITY COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION:

The Quality Committee is established as a joint standing committee of the Governing Authority and Academic Council by the two statutory bodies. The Quality Committee shall have an oversight role in relation to the discharge of the University's obligations for internal and external quality assurance and quality enhancement.

MEMBERSHIP:

The members of the Committee will be appointed jointly by the Governing Authority and Academic Council. The term of office of the Committee shall be co-terminous with the term of office of the Governing Authority. The membership of the Committee shall be:

- the President (ex-officio) or his/her nominee (the President or his/her nominee shall chair the Committee);
- the Director of Quality(ex-officio);
- three members nominated by Academic Council (one from each faculty of the University, each of whom shall be a member of Academic Council);
- a member of the Governing Authority drawn from the academic members;
- a member of the Governing Authority drawn from the administrative, professional and technical staff members;
- at least one external member of the Governing Authority;
- the President of Maynooth Students' Union (or his or her nominee); and
- the postgraduate student representative on the Governing Authority.

Appointments to the Committee should be informed by the objective of achieving gender balance to the greatest extent possible.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

The Committee shall meet at least four times per annum, normally at least once in each quarter year.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS:

The Director of Quality will act as Secretary to the Committee. In the event that the Director is unable to attend a meeting, the Chairperson will make alternative arrangements for the preparation of minutes. Other members of staff may, at the invitation of the Committee, attend for all or part of a meeting of the Committee. In addition, outside experts may be asked by the Committee to attend all or part of a Committee meeting.

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MANDATE:

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.