



Maynooth University Quality Committee
Meeting 2nd October 2023 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present: Dr Alison FitzGerald (Chair), Dr Teresa Lee (Secretary), Dr Antonio Cascelli, Professor Joseph Coughlan, Ms Sian Cowman, Professor Fiona Lyddy, Mr Gerry O’Sullivan.

Apologies: Ms Alex Balfe, Ms Joan O’Riordan Bruton, Ms Sarah Searson.

In Attendance: Ms Helen Berry.

Agenda Item	Key Points/Decisions	Actions, if any (Follow-up by)
1. Declaration of Interest.	The Chair asked the Committee members if they had any conflicts of interest.	No conflicts.
2. Minutes.	The draft minutes of the meeting of 29 th May were accepted as accurate.	Minutes adopted.
3. Membership Update.	The Chair welcomed the two new MSU members, Ms Alex Balfe (MSU President) and Ms Sian Cowman (Doctoral Postgraduate Representative). The Director of Quality explained that they take up their positions as Committee members arising from their membership of Governing Authority.	For note.
4. Matters Arising.	<p>4.1 International Education Mark (IEM)</p> <p>The Director of Quality introduced this item. She stated that QQI has indicated that the IEM will be launched officially this October when finalised documentation will be released. The Director of Quality has commenced a piece of work with Prof. Patrick McCole (VP International) and Claire Doran (Director of Internationalisation),</p>	For note.

	<p>evaluating MU's broad alignment to an advanced draft of the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners</i>.</p> <p>4.2 External Audit of the Strategy and Quality Office The Director of Quality stated that the final draft of the Audit Report has been received from Mazars. The Director of Quality is currently reviewing the draft and preparing a response. The final report will go to the Audit & Risk Committee for sign off.</p>	For note.
<p>5. External Review of Governing Authority 2023.</p>	<p>5.1 MU GA Review Report-02.06.23 [Final] – Quality Committee The Chair introduced this item as a confidential document for note. The Committee discussed the conclusions of the Report pertaining to the Quality Committee and found it to be extremely positive with very useful commentary, indicating that the Committee is doing its job well. Training for the new Committee cycle was considered important. Focus on the student experience as an indicator of quality and securing the input of Executive Deans in quality enhancements as areas to focus on over the next 12 months were also welcomed.</p> <p>The Committee unanimously recommended the importance of retaining the external members on the Quality Committee and that it remains a joint Committee of Governing Authority and Academic Council.</p>	For note.
<p>6. Third Cycle of Quality Reviews.</p>	<p>6.1. Quality Reviews: Follow up reports (Outcomes report). The Director of Quality introduced this item and gave an overview of the Report. The Report is the result of an analysis of the status of implementation of recommendations from the quality reviews of the academic units in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Science & Engineering. The results are grouped according to six broad themes (<i>Governance & Organisation, Resources & Facilities, Staffing & Staff Development, Teaching, Learning & Assessment, Research, and Internal & External Engagement</i>). Sub-themes within each of these categories are highlighted with the level of implementation in each faculty against each of these sub-themes. Within each sub-theme indicators of the areas of focus of the recommendations are provided.</p> <p>A discussion followed and some changes to the format of the Report were recommended. It was suggested that some sections of the report be subdivided further in an effort to provide greater context. The need to include some flags of caution as an aid to the interpretation of results was also mentioned. The importance of setting out parameters to guide the next quality review cycle was discussed, as was placing more emphasis on supporting and guiding Departments ahead of their quality reviews. It was stressed that this is particularly important for units preparing their self-assessment reports (SARs) where more detailed guidance would be</p>	It was agreed that this and similar reports provided previously to Committee members be made available to new members when they are appointed.

	<p>beneficial: this might include the provision of questionnaire-like templates that, when completed, could be incorporated into the SAR.</p> <p>It was agreed that while the Report is helpful to this Committee, the Preliminary Analysis Report (Item 4.1) presented at the Quality Committee meeting on 29th May 2023 was a preferable format.</p> <p>The Director of Quality stated the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy follow-up reports have been requested and are due to be returned between November 2023 and January 2024.</p> <p>6.2. Faculty analysis reports (update). The Director of Quality introduced this item. It relates to closing the feedback loop and how certain issues are addressed as part of the quality review process. The Director of Quality proposed a model to the VPA who discussed it with the Deans at a meeting in September. Overall, the Deans saw the merit in the proposed solution and added some further suggestions.</p> <p>Quality Committee members were satisfied overall with the model proposed but expressed concern over lines of communication and the challenges of finding responsible parties for certain recommendations. It was suggested that it may be beneficial for the Dean to coordinate the collation of some of the responses, especially in cases where several entities across the University need to be involved in addressing a recommendation. It was agreed that the Deans should be involved early in the process, and this was especially important for new Heads of Department.</p> <p>A need to place a greater emphasis on the reporting of commendations was also highlighted.</p>	
<p>7. Fourth Cycle of Quality Reviews</p>	<p>7.1 Student participation in quality review processes (update). The Director of Quality introduced this item and stated that Tom O’Hara, the Quality Officer has been engaging with Alex Balfe, the MSU President in arranging for the next two workshops exploring this area. The student workshop is scheduled to take place on the 23rd October with the staff/student workshop to take place on the 29th November 2023.</p> <p>7.2 Quality Review of the Research and Development Office. The Director of Quality introduced this item. The Research Development office site visit took place from 27th - 29th June 2023. It was a very positive experience for the RDO and the Peer Review Group. The Peer Review</p>	<p>For note.</p> <p>For note.</p>

	Group submitted their report in mid-August. The RDO are currently in the process of preparing their draft QIP with a submission date set for the 10 th November.	
8. QQI Matters.	<p>8.1 Towards a white paper on the national academic integrity regulatory policy approach (update). The Director of Quality introduced this item outlining that all HEIs are expected to address matters of academic integrity and to have robust processes and procedures in place, in addition to raising awareness across the student body. QQI has indicated that they may ask (through the Annual Quality Report) for quantitative data in relation to incidences and types of breaches. QQI has also indicated that they will update their guidelines and processes in line with this policy.</p> <p>8.2. QQI Project: An analysis of the variation in Honours Bachelor’s Degree classifications 2012-2022 (update). This project was established by QQI in response to concerns in respect of grade inflation across the HE sector. This sectoral-wide project will evaluate a range of qualitative and quantitative material over the reporting period.</p>	<p>The Director of Quality to feedback concerns regarding any changes to reporting requirements to QQI.</p> <p>For note.</p>
9. Student Complaints Procedure	The Director of Quality introduced this item. It was reported that changes to the Student Complaints Procedure was approved at the Academic Council meeting of 11 th September 2023 and that a Student Complaints Committee is now in place. The Student Complaints Officer (Mr Tom O Hara) is engaging with various units and entities such as MSU and various administrative offices outlining the new procedure and addressing questions. The Student Complaints Officer and Director of Quality will present on the new procedure at the three faculty meetings taking place in October. A dedicated student complaints website is due to go live after these meetings have taken place.	For note.
AOB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As this is the last meeting of the current Committee, an efficient turnaround of the minutes is required for submission to Governing Authority. The draft minutes will be issued electronically to members for their approval. It was not possible to invite the VP International to this meeting due to the full agenda. It was proposed that this could be considered for a future meeting of the new Committee. The Quality Review schedule for Cycle 4 will be brought to the new Committee to address. The Chair thanked the Secretary, Administrator and all the Committee members for their excellent participation, teamwork, and collegiality over the course of their term on the Committee. 	Committee members to approve the draft minutes electronically.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee thanked the Chair for the excellent Chairing of the Committee, keeping everything on track, focussed and timely. 	
Date of next meeting.	This is the last meeting of the current Committee. The new Governing Authority structure may impact on the membership of the new Committee. No meeting dates will be finalised until the changeover in Governing Authority has taken place.	For note.