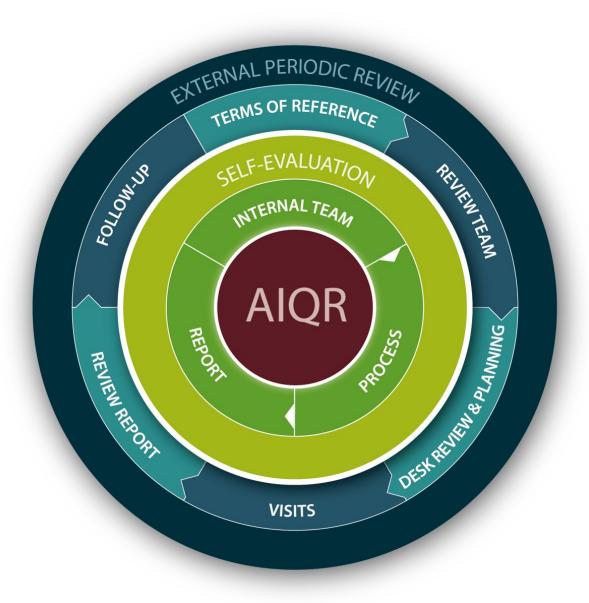# Dundalk Institute of Technology

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.

Founded in 1971, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is an autonomous Institute, established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992. DkIT has ensured a central role for quality assurance and enhancement in its Strategic Plan 2017-19, which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in underpinning strategic objectives and continuing to enhance DkIT's reputation.

DkIT is strategically positioned mid-way along the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, on the border with Northern Ireland. Within a 90 minute drive time from the campus there resides an estimated population of 3.29 million, which in 2011, accounted for approximately 52% of the population of the entire island *(A socio-economic profile of the DkIT catchment, AIRO, 2012).* This presents unique challenges and opportunities for the Institute economically, socially and culturally.

The demographic profile of DkIT's regional catchment area shows educational attainment to degree level among the population in a number of counties to be at low levels when compared to the State average of 16.4% *(A socio-economic profile of the DkIT catchment, AIRO, 2012).* While unemployment in the region has decreased, the labour force participation rate for the Border region is the lowest in Ireland at 56.5% *(Regional Skills Bulletin, 2016)*. Deprivation indices indicate some of the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland are located in this region. Additionally, the region encompasses rural and urban communities.

DkIT was founded in 1970 and recruits 89% of its learners from the region. As the leading Higher Education Institution in the North-East, DkIT is a major contributor to the educational, economic, social, and cultural development of the region. With circa 5,200 learners, 500 staff and an impressive 90 acre campus and the recent addition of state-of-the-art sports facilities, the Institute is a vibrant

learning community.

Through its excellence in learning and teaching, research and engagement, the Institute continues to be a transformational force.

To date, the Institute, through the Strategic Plan, has put particular emphasis on ensuring that the Institute differentiates itself within the sector in a sustainable manner by:

- Strategically positioning itself within the national HE landscape;
- Placing the learner at the centre of its strategy with a particular focus on flexible and lifelong learning provision, while continuing to deliver on its existing provision across all disciplines;
- Growing STEM provision;
- Enhancing the regional agenda and becoming the first port of call for employers and the community to support regional development with accredited and higher level CPD and training;
- Branding and marketing itself as an agile, innovative and responsive Institute.

A core focus in the heart of the DkIT 2017-19 Strategic Plan is on learners. DkIT will continue to facilitate meaningful learner engagement and work with learners as partners. DkIT will provide learners with both discipline-specific and employability skills required for the working world. In particular the Institute will have a clear focus on attracting and supporting a more diverse range of learners. This will require on-going innovation in curriculum development, delivery and assessment. This will be reflected, for example, in the development of common entry level programmes to support the transitions agenda from Further Education (FE) to HE. It therefore requires a holistic and integrated approach to learning and teaching, research and engagement within a flexible, adaptive and responsive organisational structure.

See: https://www.dkit.ie/presidents-office/documents-policies

DKIT has carried out an exercise in **Programmatic Portfolio Planning** for the period 2018 to 2028. The portfolio strategy supports the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise. The consultation process towards will guide the Institute towards the development of a set of

prioritised actions in the context of ensuring programme design and delivery is relevant to market needs. The competitive position both nationally and internationally will be established and opportunities for clustering will be recognised as we move forward.

We are working towards ensuring existing programmes are relevant in meeting the needs of business and society and developing and delivering programmes, directly and in collaboration with relevant sectoral partners, to meet specific industry and professional needs

The overall objective is to work towards developing and aligning a suite of programmes in DkIT that is relevant to future needs while simultaneously supporting a distinctive practice-based, research-informed learner experience.

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

The Academic Council at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amendments. The Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality. The President and Registrar are respectively, Chairman and Secretary of the Council. Academic Council approves action plans following reviews and these plans are then assigned to relevant academic and administrative areas for operationalisation.

The membership of Academic Council consists of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership currently standing at 54. See the Constitution of the Academic Council at
https://www.dkit.ie/academic-council

Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings. Where urgent matters arise, these are brought to the attention of the Governing Body by way of a special motion to facilitate Governing Body approval prior to the formal adoption of the minutes.

The Academic Council has the following sub-committee structure:
- Standing Committee
- Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee
- Academic Quality Sub-Committee
- Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee
- Research Sub-Committee
- Graduate Research Studies Board

All of the above committees contribute to the development of quality assurance policies and procedures at Institute level. In addition to Sub-committees of Academic Council, working groups are

regularly established to scope out best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies. This practice ensures that quality assurance is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute.

DkIT continues to strengthen its strategic alliance with Dublin City University (DCU) through the further development of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School. During 2015/16 the Terms of Reference for the DkIT Graduate Studies Research Board were changed to increase the membership from Academic Schools, with a view to facilitating cross departmental learning and collective experience. The composition of the committee is now in line with the DCU Graduate Studies Research Board. Both DCU and DkIT also have representatives on the other Institution's GRSB. The sharing of best practice with DCU has served to enhance research quality assurance at DkIT. This has also involved further development of the institute's postgraduate research degree regulations in line with those at DCU and taking in account external developments in terms of national policy development.

Details can be found at https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgradaute-students-registered-dcu-awards

The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of these quality policies rests ultimately with the Leadership Team and falls particularly within the remit of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The Leadership Team ensures that activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken.

At School and Departmental level, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality policies.

The academic management of programmes is the responsibility of the Programme Boards. Opportunities for enhancement of quality policies and procedures are frequently identified through Programme Board feedback and annual reporting to Academic Council. Student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Programme Boards ensuring the student voice is heard at this level. Stage Convenors (who provide pastoral care to students) and Programme Directors (who support Heads of Department in the management and operation of programmes) also contribute to

Programme Boards, providing a robust front line approach to programme management. Programme Boards provide valuable feedback on all issues including quality assurance and enhancement via their Annual Reports at Institute level and also their participation in Faculty Boards at School level which contain academic faculty members, School management, School administration and student representatives.

Further fora, which contribute to the implementation, monitoring and review of quality policies and procedures, include both (i) the **Academic Heads Forum** – consisting of Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments, and (ii) the **Institute Management and Planning Committee**, consisting of representative academic and functional area managers. In 2018, a **Heads of Function Group** was established through the Registrar's Office which brings together Registry, Quality Assurance, International Office, Research, Student Services and Library to meet once a month to ensure the seamless integration of services provided through the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

In 2017/18 DkIT continued to ensure that Quality Assurance was firmly embedded within all day to day aspects of work at the Institute to ensure that a quality culture underpins all of its activities. All staff within the Institute contribute to the culture of quality and there is acceptance that this is a 'continual process' as new challenges and new ways of educating students and developing faculty and staff continue to be central to the work of the Institute. The publication of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015 supported this premise and provided support for the important roles of external stakeholders in addition to internal stakeholders. The role of higher education within society and as a platform for development is elucidated which is useful in the regional and national remit of Institutes of Technology.

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.

DkIT has two separate policies on programme approval and programme monitoring, to reflect the distinctness of these elements within the ESG (2015). The two policies are as follows:

1. Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes

2. Policy on the Annual Monitoring of Programmes

See https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approvalprogrammes

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy

As DkIT has placed strategic importance on the development of part time programmes, the Registrar's Office developed Guidelines on the Development of Part-Time Programmes. These guidelines provided extensive support on the generation of new programme offerings through the utilisation of appropriate existing modules. They can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approvalprogrammes

Policies and criteria for review of programmes for the 2018/19 School Programmatic Reviews were agreed by Academic Council in 2017 and can be viewed at:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/programmatic-review-handbook

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.

All programme validation documents are required to present a teaching and learning strategy and an assessment strategy. This ensures that assessment is student centred and presented within the programme in a manageable way to ensure learners are equipped to competently succeed within their programme of study with adequate time allowed for assessment preparation. Associated statistics on student progression within programmes are also reviewed annually and barriers to progression are discussed at programme level by Programme Boards.

Groupwork Framework Guides were produced through the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching in 2016 and the effectiveness of these guidelines and associated supports is currently under review.   The Assessment and Learning policy was completely reviewed in 2016 to establish 5 principles which are the basis for all student assessment in DkIT. A committee was set up by Academic Council in mid-2017 to develop a policy on Student Retention.   As this work evolved, the group decided to further develop this document to form a Student Success Strategy. This work is nearing completion and will shortly be presented to Academic Council.

The Groupwork Framework Guidelines can be viewed at:

https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework_guidelines_2016.pdf

The Institute's Policy on Assessment and Learning 2017 may be found at:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/assessment-learning

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.

At DkIT research students can achieve a QQI award if registered prior to September, 2014 and they are governed by separate policies and procedures from students who registered post September 2014.

For students who are submitting for QQI Research Awards, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgraduate-students-registered-qqi-awards

Since September 2014, registered postgraduate research students are studying for DCU awards through the DCU/DkIT Graduate School. The regulations applying to these latter awards are aligned to DCU regulations for research awards. These regulations are regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with DCU requirements.   The regulations are available at:https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgraduate-students-registered-dcu-awards

In terms of the development of structured PhD provision, the Research and Graduate Studies Office in collaboration with the academic schools and the Graduate Research Studies Office in Dublin City University, are currently developing a suite of discipline and generic skills modules which will allow all of the institutes postgraduate cohort to attain structured accredited training during their postgraduate research studies.

In line with QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines published in July 2016, DkIT ensures an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its research activities and has a very successful track record in relevant metrics and peer review.
The current research strategy of the institute (2017-2019) is founded upon three strategic imperatives, associated actions and a set of key performance indicators. Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to driving research excellence in a number of prioritised areas to include Health, Ageing and ICT, Energy and the Environment and the Creative Arts. Research in higher education pedagogy is increasing in capacity and a committee was recently established to further the development of a research centre in that area.

A crucial strategic objective is to ensure that learning and teaching on taught programmes remains research informed. This aligns with the overall vision of preparing learners for the working environment whereby learners are informed of the latest thinking and innovation within their discipline area and its application to the real world. To achieve this, DkIT must encourage and empower its staff to excel in their discipline area through engaging in research. In this way staff, are not only engaged in new discovery but also work directly with industry in applying new technologies and innovations with real world impact. In addition, the Institute will seek to increase the number of staff with PhDs through its learning and teaching supports and its recruitment strategy. DkIT's Research Strategy has been aligned to the Institute three year Strategic Plan launched in 2017.

Through the Research Office, Dundalk Institute of Technology was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Logo in October 2015 in recognition of its commitment to be an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out research and which understands the importance of providing its researchers with the training and means to be competitive and mobile. The award was made in light of DkIT's commitment to aligning its HR policies and practices with the European Commission's European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, one of only 4 Institutes of Technology to receive such an award.

DkIT continues to build its research supervision capacity through staff development to PhD qualification level. Standing at 34% DkIT exceeded the sectoral average of the proportion of full-time academic staff with Level 10 qualifications in 2016/2017. This figure is stands at nearly 45% In 2019 with the completion of doctoral studies by a further staff across the schools. In addition, the institute was the first across the sector to roll out the national pilot programme in research supervisory development and professional training. To date in excess of 76 academic members of staff have completed this formal training programme.

The primary benchmark employed for measuring the impact of the institutes research was the Scopus database (https://www.scopus.com). Through this analysis the following Overall the institute is ranked 4th in the sector in terms of total citations.

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.

DkIT aims to provide an efficient and student-friendly service on a range of matters from Admission through to Conferring and Transcripts Provision. The Institute does not currently have one overarching policy for all of these matters, but a range of individual policies apply as follows:

For applications, admissions and registration see:

https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration

For Transfer and Progression see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/transfer-progression-policy

For Recognition of Prior Learning, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/recognition-prior-learning-rplpolicy-practice

For Equal Access and Participation see:

https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Access_Policy_v2.pdf

For Student Supports see:

https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit

In order to extend the range of supports provided by DkIT to students with particular needs, the Academic Council adopted the Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the granting of reasonable accommodations in examinations to learners with disabilities.   Also, DkIT are now participating in the DARE scheme in relation to access.   See https://www.dkit.ie/staff-portal/disability-office

For Child Protection see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/child-protection-policy

For On-line Communication and Social Networking Policy, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/communicating-online-use-socialnetworking-sites-policy

For the Institute's Ethics Policy, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/ethics-policy

For the Academic Integrity Policy, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-integrity-policyprocedures

The procedure incorporates a penalty grid to improve consistency of penalties across academic schools.

For the Examinations and Assessment Policy and Procedure, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/documents-policies/examinations-policy

For the Student Voice Policy, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/student-voice-policy

For Exit Awards see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/exit-awards-policy

For Conferring see:

https://www.dkit.ie/study/awards-office/graduation.html

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.

Dundalk Institute of Technology has adopted a learner-centred approach to its educational provisions, aimed at enhancing the student learner experience and supporting learners through the adoption of innovative learning and teaching strategies. See the Institute's Strategic Plan (2017-2019) at:

https://www.dkit.ie/presidents-office/documents-policies

Recruitment and training of staff, including teaching staff, is managed through DkIT's Human Resources Department. Teaching staff are recruited in line with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992, Section 11 (1) (b). Additional detailed information is given to Selection Boards on Conflict of Interest and detailed Selection Procedures for Institute and Appointment Process of Staff following Selection Board. All managers are routinely updated on these procedures and their adherence to (a) The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004; (b) The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 and as amended and (c) The Protection of Employee (Fixed Term) Act, 2003.

https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource

https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures

The Institute values excellence in pedagogical standards and applicants with teaching qualifications, in addition to their academic/professional qualifications, are scored higher at application stage than those without teaching qualifications.

The Institute is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and actively promotes continuous professional development in this regard. The Institute offers a Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching and to date, 60 members of the Institute's academic staff have completed this programme, while the number of Certificates awarded to DkIT staff is 13, giving an overall total of 73 awards to DkIT staff. The Institute's Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT) delivers these programmes.

The Institute is committed to ensuring that learning and teaching remain research informed. Staff associated with the Institute's Research Centres teach on undergraduate programmes, supervise

postgraduate students and engage with undergraduate research projects ensuring they are at the forefront of their field of knowledge.

Standing at 44% DkIT exceeds the sectoral average of the proportion of fulltime academic staff with Level 10 qualifications in 2019. This supports the strategic goal of achieving academic and research excellence.

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.

Teaching and Learning is a constantly evolving activity at DkIT supported by the Institute's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). CELT provides online and face-to-face learning and teaching advice and supports for staff and students. See https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching

DkIT continued to prioritize continuing professional development for teaching staff. Master Classes and Professional Development events in Learning and Teaching are organised each semester.

Learning and Teaching enhancement activity in 2017/18 was focused on assessment, feedback, professional development of staff and preparation for Programmatic Reviews.   Considerable work has been undertaken to enhance assessment across the institute. This work emphasises 'assessment for learning' and the importance of a programmatic approach to assessment.

DkIT has been/is a lead or partner in a number of National Forum funded enhancement projects concerned with enhancement of assessment and feedback. The projects have focused primarily on the use of technology in enhancing transition and student assessment. The outcomes of these projects are now both informing policy and enhancing practice. This is evident in the Assessment and Learning Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/assessment_learning_policy_23-05-17.pdf). This policy emphasises the importance of programmatic approaches to assessment and considerable work has been undertaken in promoting and supporting this.
A notable development in this area is the DkIT Framework for Assessed Group Work
https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework_guidelines_2016.pdf, approved by Academic Council in December 2016. It was developed in response to student feedback and is informed by significant consultation. It has been recognised as an example of good practice and features as a case study on leading change in assessment in the National Forum's resource on programme approaches to assessment http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Final-Programme-Assessment-Resource-with-doi-and-author-290617-1.pdf. Funding, under the National Forum's

2017/18 seminar Series , was also granted for a workshop exploring how to implement this framework https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/t-l-scholarship/national-seminar-series/national-seminar-series-20172018-list/ and it wasl also be presented to the SEDA Spring Assessment Conference 2018. The implementation of this framework was evaluated during 2017/18 and a proposal to report this to the journal *Higher Education Pedagogies, Special Issue on Transforming Assessment* has been accepted.

DkIT has a long standing commitment to the professional development of staff in learning and teaching. The impact of the accredited MA Learning and Teaching has been recognised nationally.

DkIT was awarded funding under the National Forum's 2016 Enhancement fund for two projects concerned with applying the PDF. L2L, led by DkIT, is exploring professional development in learning and teaching for librarians who teach: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/l2l-librarians-learning-support-learners-learning/.

The ATLAS project, https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/atlas-aligning-teaching-learning-across-technological-sector/, is concerned with mapping and aligning existing accredited provision, including the MA Learning and Teaching, to the PDF framework.

Two DkIT staff members were partially seconded to the National Forum to work on implementing pilots to test the PDF https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/pilot-study-implementation-national-professional-development-framework/ and their experience will inform future development.

DELTA Awards: Two applications (School of Health & Science and Department of Hospitality) from DkIT to the National Forum's DELTA awards https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/learning-impact-awards/disciplinary-excellence-learning-teaching-assessment-delta-2017/ were successful in getting to the second stage and the Department of Hospitality were successful in achieving the DELTA award.

The Institute's Policy on Assessment and Learning may be found at:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/assessment-learning

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.

To the best of its resourcing ability, DkIT seeks to ensure that environments and resources conducive to both individual and group learning are provided to learners and that learners have access to resources for effective study and to resources which increase educational opportunity. Full details of resources and supports are advised to students at induction when they first come to study at DkIT. Institute Open Days also inform prospective students of the supportive learning environment they will experience at DkIT. Supporting learning is continually reviewed and upgraded despite budgetary constraints because it is seen as the central aspect of the functions of the Institute. Robust feedback channels are in operation to ensure that any deficiencies in service to learners are brought to the attention of the relevant manager in a timely manner. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 7 which emphasises the need for adequacy of learner resources on an ongoing basis.

The Dundalk Institute of Technology Library supports teaching, learning and research with a range of supports to learners including:

- Purchasing, collecting and categorisation of resources in various formats, for which a suite of search options is provided.
- Making material available to borrow for varying amounts of time.
- Providing areas for study.
- Helping learners find resources through the Library Information Desk or Library Subject Support Team.
- Offering Information Literacy training.
- Developing online library guides
- Providing guidance on how to avoid plagiarism by referencing. The library also offer an introduction to the Mendeley Reference Manager.

Many of these supports are available on line to ensure learners can avail of what they need out of hours. Extensive databases are made available to learners to again support out of hours learning and revision in preparation for examinations. The library extends its opening hours in the two weeks before examination sessions to again support learners and also ensures that core text books can only be borrowed for shorter periods, ensuring maximum sharing of resources.

See: https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-library/support/support-learning

Additional study support for numeracy and literacy and ICT is provided by the Student Academic Support Services. See: https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit/student-academic-support-services

The Institute also provides access to a variety of student supports to promote and support learning and ensure student wellbeing. These are outlined at: https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit

The procedure for programme-based funding is managed at a School level. Heads of School currently manage non-pay budgets within their areas and award funding on a per programme basis. This model of support, agreed at Executive Board, ensures that learners on every programme within the Institute can avail of the relevant resources to underpin their programme of learning (including specialist training days, site visits, learning support materials (e.g. on-line logins for specialist activities), software licences for programme-specific software (e.g. SAGE for Accounting Students). Reductions in funding to the IoT sector have greatly impacted this resourcing but the procedure remains intact.

Details of Human Resource policies can be found at:
https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures

The Institute strives to maintain its position among the top three performing IoTs within the sector in terms of research funding. It is as a direct result of this funding that the Institute can successfully deliver its strategic research objectives aimed at meeting its three year vision. The Institute currently has strong research collaborations with its counterparts in Northern Ireland and Scotland through its engagement in the EU INTERREG Programmes.

DkIT is committed to driving research excellence in a number of prioritised areas to include Health, Ageing and ICT, Energy and the Environment and the Creative Arts. The formation of these "Research Clusters" has come about through an internal strategic prioritisation exercise and is in line with the National Research Prioritisation exercise and the ambitions set out in Innovation 2020. The strategic development and support of the research agenda at DkIT is led by the Head of research and supported through the Research Office. The supports and resources available to all staff across the institute include:

- Suite of internal support funding schemes

- Suite of targeted training programmes for staff, career researchers and postgraduate students

- Advice and guidance on research proposal writing

- Career framework development for all career researchers

- Support and guidance to all postgraduate researchers during the lifecycle of their degree

- Suite of research related policies and procedures governing research

The Research Office offers a number of supports to emerging and established researchers and details of activities, initiatives and supports are outlined at the links below:

https://www.dkit.ie/research
https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-support

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.

Dundalk Institute of Technology has published a set of IT Policy documents to provide advice and direction to its user base in the use of, and the management and delivery of IT systems and services that hold information and data relating to the business of the Institute. These policies have been prepared to advise users on the various governance aspects of using the Institute's IT services and the effective operation and delivery of such IT services.

See: https://www.dkit.ie/computer-services/policies-procedures

The Institute is a client of HEAnet Network Operations and uses Banner (academic records), Core (human resources), Agresso (finance) and Koha (library) as its primary information management tools. Records of student academic history are stored on Banner and used for the production of results transcripts, parchments and European Diploma Supplements. This information is retained indefinitely and allows DkIT to verify graduate results and awards retrospectively. The HEAnet Network Operations Centre (NOC) is operated from the HEAnet office in Dublin. The NOC implements, maintains and supports the HEAnet network and services. See: http://www.heanet.ie/services

The management of information within the Institute is shared across a number of databases, systems and via the DkIT website.

- Data on student registration, progression, awards and withdrawal is held on Banner.
- The Institute assesses student feedback through QA surveys using EvaSys (See: http://www.evasys.co.uk/start.html) and the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE).
- Detailed information on Study Programmes is held and published on http://courses.dkit.ie/
- At student registration, the Institute carries out the Equal Access Survey on the socio-economic, ethnic/cultural and disability background of new entrants on behalf of the HEA. This information provides for the funding of services and support for students. It also supports the HEA and institutions in fulfilling their core equality functions as set out in legislation.

Each year the Careers and Employability Office surveys graduates using the graduate destination survey. This provides the Institute with information on graduate employment and further training.

Management of DkIT's website rests with the Marketing and Communications Office who work closely with IT Services. https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/marketing-and-communications-office/

Programme level information detailing validated design, content and assessment is held within the curriculum management system AKARI Document with differing levels of access granted to users. This ensures only authorised and recorded changes are made to modules and programmes.

Obligations under Data Protection legislation are regularly updated and notified to all internal users to ensure compliance with requirements. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 8.7.

At Institute Leadership level in 2018/19 work continues to strengthen the user-friendliness of data outputs for executive decision making. This will be an ongoing focus underpinned initially by the appointment of a Data Officer but in tandem with realignment of IT systems to ensure current and robust data searches are easily undertaken. It is proposed to provide, in time, synchronized data to all levels of Institute management to that there is a greater awareness of key metrics within the Institute.

For research, the institute employs a research management system
(https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp). The primary roles of this system are as follows:
- Tracks all research related proposals from development through to post award
- Tracks the progress of each postgraduate research student through their online annual progress monitoring
- Embeds the research track records of active researchers

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.

Programme Boards monitor programme delivery. Programme Boards:

- are focused on critical self-reflection;

- make decisions based on the facts derived from the operation of the programme in the preceding period, including quantitative data relating to, for example, student recruitment and performance;

- identify issues which have been critical in the delivery of the programme that year, in particular any operational issues which are significant and/or unresolved;

- show how any issues raised by external examiners or by other external bodies have been addressed;

- identify mechanisms by which student feedback has been gathered, addressed; and communicated back to students (or if not addressed, the reason why); contain student representatives within their membership

- facilitate input from external stakeholders/employers etc, as appropriate

- report on the outcome of actions undertaken as a result of previous reports;

- provide an action plan for the future, as appropriate.

See

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy

The Institute also works with **External Examiners** to quality assure assessment. For the DkIT policy on External Examiners, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/external-examiners-duties-procedures

Programmatic review is a quinquennial quality review process which gives the Academic Schools an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation and review of their programmes. Such review is a core statutory obligation for the Institute under Section 28(2) of the Qualifications, Education and Training

Act. It is intended to be a positive, supportive and open process and results in the production of a five year plan for the School and should align with the Institute's Strategic plan.

The self-evaluation process, with inputs from experts and stakeholders (internal and external), involves the production of a self study report (SER). The self-evaluation comprises a critical evaluation of all aspects of each programme being reviewed – its strategy, learning outcomes, modules, assessment, resources etc. in keeping with current best practice. Review of the SER by external peers results in a Programmatic Review Report which includes a set of recommendations and conditions. The School provides a response to this report and both the report and the response are published on the Institute website. For the Institute policy in this regard, see:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/periodic-review/programmatic-review

The Institute also undergoes cyclical **Institutional Review** by QQI.   The last Institutional Review took place in 2017-2019 and the preliminary report from QQI is due in March 2019.

Programme validation reports; programmatic review reports and the 2009 Institutional Review Report are available at:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement

In 2018 the Institute undertook a Programmatic Portfolio Planning Exercise which will support the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise.

This consultative process explored national and societal needs which will shape our programmatic planning and future portfolios. The outcomes of the exercise are also informing the School Programmatic Reviews which are ongoing during 2018/19 and will be completed by June 2019.

Internal self-monitoring of learner satisfaction is moving increasingly towards use of ISSE data and reports (Irish Survey of Student Engagement). While response rates vary annually, this survey is seen as an important benchmarking tool for DkIT to gain insight into learner feedback on a comparative basis. It is important to note that through concerted efforts on the part if the Institute, participation rates increased from 13% in 2016 to 38% in 2017 and 32% in 2018. Feedback from ISSE surveys is presented at Academic Council and recommendations for enhancement are agreed at this level where the

academic community can debate and support each other in these efforts. From time to time external experts in specific aspects of education provision are invited to present to Academic Council to ensure knowledge of best practice is continually enhanced. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 11.2.

For the research agenda there are several key elements in self-evaluation and monitoring the institute's research performance, these include but are not limited to:

- Research Centre annual reports
- Research centre and group designation processes
- Establishment of research cluster governance structures centred around the prioritised research themes
- Intellectual Property and research committees
- Research centre review committees
- Benchmarking of research dissemination through employment of the SCOPUS database
- On line surveys to researchers and postgraduate students with respect to training

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.

Engagement with stakeholders is a central part of DkIT's Strategy. See https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/industry-communityengagement

Such engagement is integral to ongoing programme development and delivery. Each School has an Industry Advisory Board which meets annually to exchange information and to feed into the curriculum. Industry and Community Stakeholders/Practitioners are always consulted when programmes are being developed and it is a requirement that an industry representative/practitioner sits on validation panels and programmatic review panels. See: Sections 2.3 and 3. of the Institute Policy on Programme Design and Approval at:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes

The DkIT Careers and Employability Centre co-ordinates the work placements of over 900 students per year within academic programmes of the Schools of Business & Humanities, Health & Science, Informatics & Creative Arts and Engineering. Work placement is a partnership between the student, the host organisation and the Institute. The Placement Office is the central point of contact for each of these parties in relation to the preparation, logistics, administration, management and on-going development of work placement.

Placement ensures learners are equipped to meet the applied learning outcomes of their programmes. Placement sites are carefully vetted in advance of placement and detailed outlines are provided to the industry partner on the learning required by the student while on placement. Industry sites identify supervisors who are then trained in Placement Supervision by the Placement Office in advance of students going on placement. In some programmes the Placement Supervisors input to the assessment of the student in addition to the academic faculty member. Where this occurs detailed marking schemes and training are provided for industry Placement Supervisors. See:

https://www.dkit.ie/placement-office

A working group was established by Academic Council in early 2015/16 to review the student placement procedures. The first of these policy documents (Student Placement Terms and Conditions) was approved by Academic Council in May 2016 and these are regularly updated. https://www.dkit.ie/placement-office/policy-documentation-publications/dkit-work-placement-terms-conditions.

Guest speakers enhance student learning. The Institute leverages off its strong engagement with industry through the hosting of its Industry Day and Careers Fair on campus. This provides opportunities for industry to meet with students and potential graduate recruits and for academics to meet with industry to discuss future skills needs and thus provide an additional avenue to feed into programme development. DkIT academic schools are also increasingly engaging with Industry and Community organisations in the execution of 'live' student projects.

Similarly the value of tangible links to industry is also reflected in the makeup of interview panels for academic recruitment. Contemporary knowledge in the subject field is tested by industry experts to ensure learners are facilitated in their learning by suitably qualified and experienced academic faculty members.

The Regional Development Centre (RDC) at Dundalk Institute of Technology acting as the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industrial, commercial and business life of the region has been an engine for regional economic growth and development since 1989. See: http://www.rdc.ie/ During 2018, the RDC had an average occupancy rate of 96%. Client satisfaction surveys are conducted annually at the RDC. For 2018, survey results were very positive with the RDC rated 94.7% average across all categories.

The RDC continues to utilise our in-house entrepreneur support programme called the "Ideas Foundry" which is based on "So what? who cares? why you?®" - a proven, systematic methodology to explore the value proposition for business ideas. The methodology is based on more than 20 years of academic and entrepreneurial expertise; and is used by researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs and organisations across 17 countries - including use as a proposal assessment tool by the European Space Agency. This methodology can be tailored for one-to-one or group workshops and has been used most recently in a group format in conjunction with the Creative Spark Community Enterprise Centre.

The primary enterprise development programme offered by the RDC is however Enterprise Ireland's

New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (NFP) which supports up to 60 regional entrepreneurs on a Phase 1 annually and 13-14 entrepreneurs on its Phase 2 annually.

The RDC supported 45 entrepreneurs/start-ups during 2018 and 29 student entrepreneurs. These included regional 'spin-in' entrepreneurs from across the North East region via the Enterprise Ireland funded New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme, general incubation clients from the region and our spinout companies from research incubating with us, and our collaboration with Creative Spark "virtual incubation" programme.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has been identified as a leading exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship in higher education both Nationally and Internationally. In 2017 the collaborative approach of the Regional Development Centre and School of Engineering to delivering on the Level 8 Engineering Entrepreneurship degree resulted in a significant acknowledgement being awarded National Winner of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards in the category of "Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills". A number of graduates from this programme have gone on to win national entrepreneurship awards and are regular recipients of the DkIT annual Presidents Award for Entrepreneurial Student of the Year.

In 2017, DKIT staff members from the Regional Development Centre, the Life Long Learning Centre and the School of Business and Humanities were founding members of the "North East Lean Network". DKIT representation also allows DKIT to be represented in shaping how the network evolves over the coming years and gives us the opportunity to promote DKIT offerings such as the Lean Six Sigma programme to its membership. The formation of this network is a significant initiative and lines up with a national drive for business operations excellence across the country, heavily endorsed by the state agencies Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Local Enterprise Offices.

In 2018 the RDC facilitated 24 Innovation Voucher engagements with industry and 6 Intertrade Ireland Fusion Project engagements with Industry. Two of the Fusion projects developed by School of Engineering staff in DkIT and supported by the Regional Development Centre have been awarded exemplar status by Intertrade Ireland. Of a total of five projects which received awards two of them were from DkIT.

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).

Dundalk Institute of Technology formed a strategic alliance with **Dublin City University** in 2012. In 2014 the DCU-DkIT Graduate School was established and DCU became a linked provider of postgraduate research awards at DkIT. DkIT is also a partner with DCU in the DCU-led consortium under the national TTSI2 programme (Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative, cycle 2).

DkIT is a member of the **Dublin Leinster II Cluster** (also known as the **MEND Cluster**) together with Dublin City University, Maynooth University and Athlone Institute of Technology. The Cluster has made considerable progress in implementing objectives agreed by the Cluster HEIs with the HEA. These objectives are designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and improve access and transition. They comprise a number of components, namely:

- Coherence of provision**:** the analytic and preparatory work required to enable a more co-ordinated provision, through mapping of existing provision, development of protocols for collaboration, and preparing for interoperable student records systems;
- Collaboration with Further Education**:** a network of FE providers, a regional 'one stop shop' portal, a comprehensive mapping of progression paths, and foundation courses to assist transition;
- Enhanced Student Learning Supports**:** enhanced supports for student learning and retention through increased resourcing and leveraging of complementary expertise across the cluster.

Following the very positive assessment by the Higher Education Authority which reported that "the cluster has both achieved the minimum outcomes and has moved beyond that to deliver more ambitious outcomes", the MEND Cluster was considered a best practice exemplar for the sector. DkIT is currently working towards or actively participating in a number of access initiatives which have been rolled out by MEND, including Path 2 and Path 3.

Dundalk Institute of Technology is a founder member of the North East Further & Higher Education

Alliance **(NEFHEA),** which is a major, regional higher and further education initiative comprising higher and further education institutions in the North East. Other members include Drogheda Institute of Further Education, Monaghan Institute, Cavan Institute, O'Fiaich College, Dunboyne College of Further Education and Beaufort College.   Recently the group were joined by the Southern Regional College, as part of a long term strategy to engage more intensively with possible collaborative partners from Northern Ireland.

Formed in 2007, NEFHEA is under-pinned by a Memorandum of Understanding. Members are committed to working together to enhance progression opportunities for students from further to higher education; to collaborating on course design and development in response to regional needs and to sharing expertise and resources. NEFHEA has particularly focussed on enabling more students from further education institutes to join DkIT academic programmes. The section on Progression Arrangements details the arrangements currently in place. In general these progression arrangements enable students from further education institutes who have successfully completed their programmes to join the second year of specific DkIT programmes. See: https://www.dkit.ie/north-east-further-higher-education-alliancenefhea

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.

The Institute's Policy on Public Information is available in Section 7 of the Quality Manual. See

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/quality-manual

This policy is currently under review in to bring it into line with the revised European Standards and Guidelines (2015).   The consultation process is nearing conclusion and the final document will be presented to Academic Council before summer 2019.

DkIT resolved to fully inform potential learners of full details in relation to all programmes of study offered at DkIT. Each semester academic managers undertake a review of their programme information in published Institute prospectus and also on the DkIT website.

The DkIT prospectus for 2018/19 is available at :

https://www.dkit.ie/think-dkit/undergraduate-mini-guide-prospectus-201819

Details of current programmes on offer at DkIT is available at:

https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/study-dkit/courses-dkit

Additionally, in line with Section 9 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) written reports on quality evaluations are also published on the DkIT website to ensure that successes and achievement milestones are communicated to the public. Samples of these reports are available at:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement

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.

DkIT does not currently delivery any programmes with linked providers but is a linked provider of DUC in the delivery of postgraduate research awards.

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.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand.

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.

DkIT delivers three suites of programmes collaboratively with external partners. Graduates of these programmes receive DkIT awards:

1. The DkIT *BSc (Hons) in Agriculture* and *BSc (Hons) in Agri-Food* programmes are delivered collaboratively with Teagasc at Ballyhaise College, Co. Cavan.

2. The *Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours)* degree is delivered fully at DkIT and the first 2 years are also delivered collaboratively with Monaghan Institute.   Students from Monaghan join the DkIT cohort in stage 3 of the programme.

3. The *BA in Applied Early Childhood Studies* is delivered on a part-time basis in conjunction with Cork College of Commerce.

Collaborative delivery is carried out in accordance with the institute policy on Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Awards:

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/collaborative-provision-transnational-provision-joint-awards

DkIT recently entered into formal articulation arrangements (through MoUs) with the following international universities:

- Langfang University China
- Shanxi Agricultural University China
- Wuhan Institute of Technology China
- Beijing Union University China
- TAR University College Malaysia
- Molloy College, New York

There are currently 74 Erasmus bilateral agreements in place with EU partner HEIs.

16. Additional Notes
Any additional notes can be entered here.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand.

> **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	2017/18 and 2018/19
Areas/Units	Institutional Review
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	Not yet complete

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Programmatic Reviews: • School of Health and Science • School of Engineering • School of Informatics and Creative Arts • School of Business and Humanities • Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	Not yet complete

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Library
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	

Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	
Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	[AIQR-Part-1-2019.docx](#) [AIQR Part 1 2018_DkIT.docx](#)
PRSBs	6
Awarding Bodies	2
QA Bodies	0
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	The Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	a. BSc (Hons) in Midwifery; b. BSc (Hons) in General Nursing; c. BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing; d. BSc (Hons) in Intellectual Disability Nursing; e. Higher Diploma in Midwifery See https://www.dkit.ie/nursing-midwifery-health-studies
Date of last review or accreditation	01-01-2018
Next review year	2023
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

Date of last review or accreditation	01-12-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Date of last review or accreditation	01-01-2018
Next review year	2022
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	North South Education and Training Standards for Youth Work (NSETS)
Date of last review or accreditation	10-06-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Veterinary Council of Ireland
Date of last review or accreditation	05-06-2014
Next review year	2019
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	2
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)	Dundalk Institute of Technology currently operates three arrangements for collaborative provision in line with DkIT's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards. https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/collaborative-provision-transnational-provision-joint-awards 1.Cavan Monaghan Education & Training Board (Monaghan Institute). There is an option for the first two years of the Bachelor of Business (Honours) to be taken at Monaghan Institute, with those students then transferring to join the 3rd year students in DkIT.
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Business (Honours) https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bb-hons-business-monaghan-institute
Date of last review	06-05-2015
Next review year	2019
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	2. Teagasc Ballyhaise College, County Cavan. The DkIT Agriculture programmes (NFQ levels 6,7,8 and 9) are delivered collaboratively by DkIT and the academic staff in Ballyhaise College, with the face to face delivery divided between the two campuses across the four years of the undergraduate programmes. In the case of the MSc in Agricultural Biotechnology, the programme is based at DkIT with Teagasc experts delivering some master classes.
Date of last review	18-03-2015
Next review year	2019
Articulation Agreements	80
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Body	Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Finland.
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	01-10-2014
Next Review Year	2021

Section: Articulation Agreements	Second Set of Records
Name of the Body	Catholic University of Lyon, France
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	10-03-2014
Review year for agreements	2021
Section: Articulation Agreements	Third Set of Records
Name of the Body	University of Le Havre (IUT Le Harve), France
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	14-02-2014
Review year for agreements	2021
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	21-02-2018

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.

Changes to Academic Quality Governance:

The most significant changes to quality assurance and enhancement systems in 2017/18 were the changes to Governance as follows:

<u>October 2017:</u> Appointment of new President of DkIT, Dr. Michael Mulvey.
<u>November 2017:</u> Appointment of new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, Dr. Sheila Flanagan.
<u>March 2018:</u> New Academic Council and subcommittees established for 3-year term.

Other noteworthy quality assurance activities in 2017-18:

- Institutional Review
- Academic Portfolio Planning
- Preparation for Programmatic Review

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

Revisions to academic policies and procedures during 2017-18 were as follows:

Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DCU Awards):
These were amended by the Graduate Research Studies Board to bring English language requirements in line with the equivalent DCU regulations.   The regulations can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgraduate-students-registered-dcu-awards

DkIT Marks and Standards:
Some minor amendments to this policy were adopted in September 2017 to include a procedure for revocation of awards.   Further amendments were adopted in December 2017 to clarify the procedure for programme and module deferments. A complete revision and update to the policy was agreed by Academic Council in June 2018, including a change of title to *DkIT Assessment and Standards*.
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/assessment-standards

Continuous Assessment Procedures:
These procedures were revised and approved by Academic Council in May 2018. The new procedures ensure compatibility with the principles of the recently adopted *Assessment and Standards* policy.
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/continuous-assessment-policy-procedures

Monitoring of Programmes Policy:
A revised template for Annual Programme Board Reports was had undergone a one-year trial was adopted. The revised policy and form can be viewed at: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy

Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes:
This was revised to facilitate the extension of validation of programmes for one additional year under exceptional circumstances.
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Five scheduled meetings of **Academic Council** were held during 2017/18, in addition to 2 special meetings, one of which was called to deal with routine matters while the second specifically focused on the related issues of the ongoing academic planning portfolio process and the upcoming Institutional Review.   Regular items for Academic Council meetings included ratification of student results, ratification of programme validation reports, consideration of reports from subcommittees, consideration of annual programme monitoring report and recommendations, approval of external examiners, approval of conferring prizes, changes to entry requirements for specific programmes and ongoing work in relation to routes of entry for Northern Ireland candidates.   Presentations were made by colleagues with a view to keeping Academic Council informed of academic issues of relevance, e.g. student feedback, academic portfolio planning and Institutional Review. New academic policies and procedures approved by DkIT Academic Council in 2017/18 are outlined in section 1.2 above.

Four to five meetings of each of the six **Academic Council subcommittees** were held during 2016/17, giving a total of **27** subcommittee meetings.

Meetings of **Leadership Team** were held approximately once every two weeks.
Eleven meetings of the Institute **Governing Body** were held during 2017/18, one each month with the exception of August 2017.

Three meetings of the **Institute Management and Planning Committee** (IMPC) were held during 2017/18.   Topics discussed included data protection, international student repeat attending, admission of mature students, exam paper templates, retention of student electronic assessment materials, access rights to mailing list, data breaches and use of shared drives, broadsheet changes, conferring and the Institute Calendar.

Five meetings of the Institute **Academic Heads Forum** (AHF) were held in 2017/18 to discuss issues such as programmatic review processes, graduation, student retention, timetabling issues, Ambition framework, Technological University, TEL survey, plagiarism training, Moodle and collection of student fees. Some of these topics were also referred to IMPC. There were also presentations to the committee by the Assistant Registrar (Programme Monitoring Process and Conferring) and the E-Learning Co-ordinator (results of TEL Survey).

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

2.1.1. Academic Programme Development, Approval and Review:

The following programme validations were completed during 2017/18.   Validation panel reports with Academic School responses for each validation can be viewed at: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/approval-programmes/20172018
In addition to below a number of minor changes to modules and programmes were approved by the Academic Council Programme Evaluation Subcommittee, for implementation in 2018/19.

Full Validation (New Programmes):

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management
Bachelor of Science in (Honours) in Architectural Technology
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Engineering (common entry comprising 3 awards):
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electrical & Electronic Systems
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Science (common entry comprising 2 awards):
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Bioscience

BSc (Honours) in Computing in Cloud Computing
Bachelor of Science in Construction Management
Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology
Higher Diploma in Science in VR/AR Development
Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics

Differential Validation:

Major Awards (Re-Validation):
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Leadership and Management for the Early Years Sector
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery
Higher Diploma in Midwifery

Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose Awards:
Certificate in Higher and Professional Learning
Certificate in Assessment and Feedback
Certificate in the Recognition and Care of the Acutely Ill Woman in the Maternity Services
Certificate in the Recognition and Management of the Deteriorating Adult in the Emergency Dept.

Certificate in the Recognition and Management of the Deteriorating Adult
Certificate in Irish Traditional Music Studies
Certificate in Entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries
Certificate in Computing in Cloud Computing
Certificate in Data Centre Operations
Certificate in Digital Imaging and Data Wrangling
Certificate in Data Analytics
Certificate in AR/VR Development
Certificate in Emergency Nursing (consortium programme validated by AIT)

Single Modules:
Nutrition for Sport and Exercise
Authoring for the Web
Intermediate Audio Visual Production

The validation of a number of programmes in the School of Business and Humanities, School of Health and Science and Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching was extended for one additional year through a new Academic Council approval process. This synchronised the programmatic review process across the Institute. All Academic Schools are undergoing a programmatic review in 2018/19.

2.1.2. Annual Programme Reviews:

All DkIT taught programmes were reviewed by the relevant Programme Boards and reported in the Annual Programme Board reports for 2017/18. Submission of these reports commenced in December 2018 and is ongoing. To date 30 reports covering 50 programmes have been submitted to the Registrar's Office. A summary of the reports will be reviewed by the Academic Quality Subcommittee and from there will be presented (with recommendations) to the May meeting of DkIT Academic Council.   All reports were submitted using a new template which has been adopted by Academic Council.   The template and an example of a completed report can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy

2.1.3. Activities involving Regulatory Bodies:

In 2017/18, The BA in Accounting and Finance programme retained maximum exemptions (9) from ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants).

All Nursing and Midwifery undergraduate programmes were re-accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) during the first quarter of 2018:
*   Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing (formerly Psychiatric Nursing)
*   Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing
*   Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing
*   Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery
*   Higher Diploma in Midwifery

The School of Engineering presented all Engineering programmes eligible for EI (Engineers Ireland) accreditation in April 2018 and was successful in having all programmes accredited for another 5 years.

An annual report was submitted to the Veterinary Council of Ireland in relation to the VCI-accredited Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing.

2.1.4. Preparation for Programmatic Reviews:

Preparation for upcoming Programmatic Reviews continued during 2017/18.
The review will be carried out by the four DkIT Academic Schools between 2018 and 2019 and will be a 2-stage process as follows:

Part 1: School Self-Evaluation
Part 2: Review of all Academic Programmes

A toolkit provided by the Registrar's Office to Schools included:
- Handbook for Programmatic Review, approved by Academic Council in February 2017 (https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/programmatic-review-handbook)
- Document templates for Part 1 and Part 2 reports
- Data on student admissions, progression and graduations, graduate destinations and student feedback.
- Publications on Institute, Regional, National and International policies relevant to Higher Education.
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Resources
- Akari Document Software User Manual (developed by a working group of IMPC and referencing DkIT policies and procedures)
- Relevant Institute Policies and Procedures

Training was provided in preparation for the review in the following areas.
- Programme approach to Assessment
- Writing modules and Learning Outcomes
- Designing programmes using Akari Document software

The time line for the external panel visits is as follows:
- Week 11th February: School of Health and Science / Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Week 11th March: School of Engineering
- Week 8th April: School of Informatics and Creative Arts
- Week 6th May: School of Business and Humanities

Each panel will be chaired by an external Registrar and will comprise academic and industry experts to cover all of the disciplinary areas within the School. The DkIT Assistant Registrar or Registrar and an external learner will also be members of the panel. One day will be devoted to a review of the School Self-Study, including meetings with School staff and learners, other institute support staff where relevant (e.g. Placement Office, CELT) and appropriate external stakeholders (e.g. collaborative provision partners, clinical partners). Following this, the programme re-validations will take place in parallel sessions over two or three days and each session will be chaired by an external Registrar or

external Head of School.   Reporting templates have been agreed by Academic Council and the final reports will be presented to Council at the scheduled May and June 2019 meetings.

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	12 new major awards (excluding exit awards) and 12 non-major awards were validated
Number of **Programme Reviews** completed in the reporting year	6 major awards were re-validated
Number of **Research Reviews** completed in the reporting year	
Number of **School/Department/Faculty Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Service Unit Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations** completed in the reporting year	1

2.3 Profile of reviewers and chairs internal approval/evaluations and review for reviews completed in the reporting period.

Composition of Panels	%

Internal	
National	90
UK	10 (NI)
EU	
Student	
Other	

Chair Profile	%
Internal	
Similar Institution	100
Different Institution	
International	

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.

3.1.1. Student Feedback:

Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to the enhancement of the student experience and the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms place a significant emphasis on the voice of the student in line with European Standards and Guidelines (2015). The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experience in the Institute.

The following formal feedback mechanisms were employed during 2017/18:

1. Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)
2. QA Feedback Process: All students were invited to provide online feedback after each semester using the QA3 template and resulting programme-based reports were generated for Heads of Department.
3. Annual survey of Mature Learners.
4. Student Services Survey to ascertain awareness and level of satisfaction with services provided.
5. Survey of users of the services of the Disability Office.

The data collected by these surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. The feedback from 1 and 2 above is considered by Programme Boards in each Department and actions plans are formulated. These form a constituent part of the annual programme board reports. The reports are summarised and presented to the Academic Quality Sub-Committee of Academic Council. Reports from 3, 4, and 5 are used by relevant functional areas to enhance the services and supports provided to learners.

An analysis of the DkIT data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement 2018 was carried out and presented to Academic Council.   The response rate was slightly lower than the previous year at 32% compared with 38% in 2017 but still compared well with the sector average of 31%.   The feedback received was very similar to the previous year and generally very positive, with most respondents expressing satisfaction with their DkIT experience.   Free text comments were provided to the relevant schools for review by Programme Boards.
Some of the results are summarised as follows:
- 82% of respondents rated their educational experience as excellent or good.
- 81% of respondents said that they would definitely or probably choose the same institution again.
- As in previous years, students valued good teaching, small classes friendly supportive lecturers and the practical focus at DkIT:
  ➢ *'Good lecturers who make class fun and interesting and in turn engage the whole class'*

> ➢ *'Open door policy with staff'*
> ➢ *'Small classes are fantastic meaning you know your class and lecturers so much better'*
- Suggestions for improvement included an increase in active learning, more practical opportunities and upgrades to facilities.
- DkIT compared well to other institutions in relation to student support and feedback but there was some room for improvement in these areas.   For example:
  - 49% of respondents said that prompt and detailed feedback was provided *quite a bit* or *very much*, compared with 50% across all Institutes of Technology.
  - 36% said that they work on assessments that informed them how well they were learning *quite a bit* or *very much*. While this is comparable to the IoT average (35%) and the ISSE average (33%), there is obviously considerable scope for improvement.

Other sources of informal student feedback included student representation on programme boards faculty boards and Academic Council.

The Careers and Employability Office participated in the HEA Graduate Destination Survey in 2017/18. There were 583 respondents (56%), 94.2% of whom were in part-time or full-time employment, further study or about to commence employment. Over 90% of employed graduates are in the four counties of the DkIT region or in the greater Dublin area. The School-level data from the survey was communicated to the relevant areas for use in the Programmatic Reviews.   The HEA has published a report on the sector-wide outcomes of the 2017 Graduate Outcomes Survey. DKIT Careers and Employability Centre contributed an insight piece entitled: 'Regional Employability, SMEs and Graduate Outcomes Survey'.
http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/02/HEA-Graduate-Outcomes-Survey.pdf

3.1.2. Student Progression Data:

Student progression data for all students was computed for 2017/18 on a School, Department, programme, stage and NFQ level basis and circulated to Programme Boards for consideration. The overall progression rate for all students was 83%, which represented a further increase on the 2017/18 and 2016/17 rates of 82% and 79% respectively.   There was an increase in the first year progression rate from 75% in 2016/17 to 78% in 2017/18, which might be attributable to the initiatives being implemented across the institute to improve the first year experience in addition to learning support.   Progression data is discussed by Programme Boards and reported in the Annual Programme Board Reports.

3.1.3. Academic Portfolio Planning:

Under the leadership of the VPAA-Registrar, the Institute embarked on an academic portfolio planning exercise during 2017/18.   The portfolio strategy supports the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise.   DkIT is increasingly working towards ensuring existing programmes are relevant in meeting the needs of business and society and developing and delivering new offerings, directly and in collaboration with relevant sectoral partners, to meet specific industry and professional needs.   The overall objective is to work towards developing and aligning a suite of

programmes in DkIT that is relevant to future needs while simultaneously supporting a distinctive practice-based, research-informed learner experience.

The exercise commenced with a Portfolio Planning and Foresight Workshop in February 2018, at which presentations will be given by representatives of the Futures Academy (UK), IBEC, IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland.   This was followed by a School-based planning process in conjuction with the Registrar's Office, which included a detailed analysis of CAO application data, intake and progression on all major awards over the previous 5 years.   Meetings between Schools and the Registrar's Office were held to discuss the sustainability of existing programmes going forward and plans for programme revisions and new programme development over the next 10 years.   At the conclusion of the planning exercise, each School presented a Portfolio Plan to Academic Council. The plans were also presented to staff who have responsibility for programme promotion (e.g. Marketing Office, Schools Liaison, International Office). The plans will inform the upcoming Programmatic Reviews and School strategies for programme development and validation over the coming years.

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

3.2. Quality Assurance and Postgraduate Research:

Responsibility for quality assurance in relation to postgraduate student admission, progression and examination was moved from Registry to the Research and Graduate Studies Office. This office now has full responsibility for all aspects of postgraduate research quality assurance and enhancement. The office remains part of VPAA-Registrar's area of responsibility and all student admissions, transfers, changes to registration and appointment of examiners are subject to approval by the Graduate Studies Research Board, which is a subcommittee of Academic Council.   The GRSB is currently chaired by the Assistant Registrar, the Head of Research and Graduate Studies is the Vice-Chair and the Dean of Graduate Studies DCU is a member of the committee.   The DkIT Head of Research and Graduate Studies is a member of the DCU GRSB and this arrangement ensures continued integration of policies and procedures related to graduate studies quality assurance.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

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.

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1. Effectiveness
Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

3.1.External Examiners:

External Examiners are approved by Academic Council with a term of office of three years, which may be extended by one year in exceptional circumstances. External Examiners report annually to the Registrar and copies of these reports are circulated to the relevant Heads of Department and Programme Boards for consideration, action and feedback. In some cases the Registrar may append comments to those of the External Examiner. The terms of reference and procedures for external examiners were reviewed in Autumn 2018.

Feedback from External Examiners was generally positive and in many cases examiners commended specific examples of good practice. In particular, positive comments were made regarding the variety of assessments and use of innovation and technology. The standard of work produced by students was regarded as appropriate for the programme level, stage and outcomes and the marking of student work was consistent and fair. Some suggestions were made regarding changes to administration of assessment, including the presentation of information to examiners, the time allocated to meeting staff and the process for communicating responses to feedback. These were considered as part of the review of the procedures.

'The use of e-portfolios and online feedback systems are good innovative examples of teaching practice'.

'The scoring rubrics that I reviewed were superb, setting out clearly and consistently how marks are allocated to components'.

'The calibre of marking and feedback is of the highest order and needs to be noted.'

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

3.2. Annual Programme Board Reports:

An analysis of Annual Programme Board Reports for 2017/18 is currently being carried out by the Registrar's Office and will be presented to the Academic Quality Subcommittee of Academic Council in the near future.   The subcommittee will prepare recommendations based on the report, which will be submitted to Academic Council in May 2018.   Analysis of the reports to date suggests that the programme board structure is working well and in accordance with the Institute Monitoring of Programmes Policy. All Departments are now using the new template which includes the presentation of an action plan for the coming year and a discussion regarding the previous year's plan. Issues discussed and reported by programme boards included the following:

- Sources of evidence and information (student feedback, external examiner reports, data on intake/progression/graduation, industry feedback, graduate feedback);
- Programme entry requirements, content, learning outcomes, delivery modes and teaching/learning/assessment strategies;
- Administrative issues such as timetabling, student attendance and work placement;
- Engagement with external stakeholders such as industry, regulatory bodies and the community;
- Engagement with the Erasmus programme.
- Learner academic supports;
- Individual student performance / attendance;
- Quality assurance compliance and enhancement issues;
- Resource issues (e.g. accommodation, facilities, staffing, staff development).

Analysis of the reports to date suggests that students are generally satisfied with and enjoying their programme and described lecturers as enthusiastic, approachable and committed.   Students seem generally happy with the mix of assessment types employed and the balance between theory and practice.   Both staff and students find the provision of a schedule of continuous assessment at the start of each semester very useful in assisting with workload management on both sides.   Both staff and students expressed strong satisfaction with student supports, in particular new student induction, the Student Learning and Development Centre and the provision of Programme Directors and Year Convenors.   Students were highly satisfied with the number of opportunities to engage externally, including work placements.   Students were also very positive about the using of technology in teaching and assessment. Issues of concern to students were in the main around timetabling and management of work-loads, particularly the volume of assessment. This is an issue that will be addressed in the ongoing programmatic reviews through the requirement for programme teams to develop a programme-level assessment strategy. There are still concerns about group work management and assessment in some areas.

Programme Board reflections demonstrated that there are still a number of facilities and other resource issues which need to be addressed, particularly in the older parts of the campus, though many reports mentioned that they had recently experienced IT upgrades.   Teams were generally very satisfied with the quality and range of learning, teaching and assessment types on the programmes, with some plans for changes during the programmatic review. There is evidence that technology enhanced methods of learning, teaching, assessment and feedback are being used on programmes and that the level of this is continuing to increase. There is a high level of engagement with industry, the community and other collaborative partners, including internationally (see other sections of this report for examples).

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

3.3. Thematic areas for 2017/18:

The following thematic areas were identified for particular attention during 2017/18.

Student Group Work:

Feedback from both students and staff had indicated that student group work was a source of stress in many cases and needed more support and guidance.   During 2016/17, following a review of the literature and extensive consultation with staff and students, a framework for assessed group work was developed and approved by Academic Council. Training was provided for both staff and students and funding was obtained from the NFETL for a Seminar on group work which was held in January 2018.   https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching/information-staff/documents-policies-groupwork-framework-guidelines-2016
The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching carried out a review of the effectiveness of these guidelines during 2017/18. There is encouraging early evidence of impact in terms of student experience and lecturers' practice, however the impact at programme level is more limited.   Ongoing support is needed for full implementation.   A proposal to report this evaluation has been accepted for the *Journal of Higher Education Pedagogies* Special Issue on Transforming Assessment and the report currently under review.

Technology Enhanced Learning:

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching continued to support enhancement projects and to identify funding opportunities in this area.   CELT continued to offer training and support to staff in the area of TEL, with a view to increasing digital capacity among the academic community. 12 CPD events supporting the use of TEL were offered during 2017/18, attended by a total of 77 staff members.   Particular progress has been made in terms of using digital technologies to enhance assessment and feedback as a result of involvement in National Forum Enhancement projects such as Y1 Feedback, TEAM and Assessment for Learning Resources for First-Year Mathematics Modules.

Annual Programme Board reports indicated that there was an increased use of TEL among academic staff, particularly in the areas of assessment and feedback. The Student Learning and Development Centre also offered workshops on Moodle and Mahara (including specific workshops for part-time and advanced entry students) which were attended by a total of 200 students.

Student Feedback and Assessment Literacy:

As part of the overall developments in policy and practice in relation to assessment, a focus on academic feedback continued during 2016/17.   A section on academic feedback was included as part of first year induction for the first time in 2016/17. Students were provided with guidance on using feedback (http://www.heaacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft).   The Head of Learning and Teaching and Assistant Registrar attended some meetings of student representatives to raise awareness of these policies and to discuss their implications.
The principle of providing timely and effective academic feedback is a key component of the new Assessment and Learning Policy, which was approved by Academic Council in 2017:
Principle 2: Feedback is a Core Component of Assessment. The full policy can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/assessment-learning.

The revision of the Continuous Assessment Procedures in 2017/18 included a requirement for programme teams to indicate in the continuous assessment schedule, the timing and method of feedback for each assignment.

The theme of academic feedback was also strengthened through the continuation of the Information Literacy Prize, a collaborative initiative between CELT and DkIT Library which raises awareness of feedback. A poster showcasing this initiative won Best Poster Prize at the Assessment in Higher Education Conference in Manchester in 2017.

Student Academic Feedback was adopted as the thematic area for Academic Council in 2018/19.

Student Retention:

Student Retention was retained as the theme for Academic Council during 2017/18 with the continued roll out of initiatives to improve student academic success and progression. An analysis of progression data for 2017/18 showed yet another improvement in the overall student progression rate to 83% (from 78% in 2015/16).

In addition to the now established first year induction programme, a dedicated induction for advanced entry students was provided in 2017/18 and an award stage induction process is under development and trial.   The Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) offered pre-induction academic writing tutorials to mature students in addition to basic IT tutorials, while the Maths Learning Centre provided pre-entry Mathematics support. The SLDC supported 1342 students in 2017/18 at both one to one and scheduled tutorial sessions in academic writing, study skills, IT skills, etc. The Maths Learning Centre drop in sessions (Wednesday afternoons) were utilised by 121 learners during 2017/18, supporting 10705 hours of tutorials.   There were four 2-hour target group sessions attended by a total of 70 learners and 12 exam support sessions attended by 18 students.

The IT Learning Centre (ITLC) continued to support computing students with a tutor-supported learning environment offering one-to-one or small group tutorials in a wide range of computing

subject areas.   There is also web-based resource for students: http://itlc.comp.dkit.ie. During 2017/18, the centre delivered 283 tutorial sessions (80 more than 2016/17), totalling 680 hours, attended by 468 unique students from all computing programmes (a total of 1029 student hours). The centre is planning to extend its services more effectively to part-time learners. The centre is funded by the HEA IT Investment Fund.

A committee was established by Academic Council in June 2017, to develop an Institute Policy on Student Retention.   This has evolved into a Strategy for Student Success. Work on this strategy is nearing completion and it is planned to present it to Academic Council in March 2019. The Strategy outlines the DkIT framework to support student success throughout the student life cycle, from pre-entry stage through to Alumni.

Students as Partners:

The Institute is continuing to work on identifying ways to engage in partnership with students to enhance learning.   In 2017/18, there was increased engagement between the academic community and the Students Union and class representatives. The Head of Teaching and Learning and Assistant Registrar held meetings with class representatives to discuss issues such as the role of students on programme boards.   The participation of class reps in programme boards is now established practice across the Institute but is working better in some areas than others and needs further support.

In the latter part of 2017/18, the SU, CELT and Student Services collaborated to bid for funding to develop, in partnership, a way to recognise student engagement in Institute activities. This was successful in achieving funding from the National Forum Enhancement Fund and the partners are now collaborating to develop a Special Purpose Award and Digital Badges as a means to recognise student engagement activities formally.

Academic Planning

Under the leadership of the VPAA-Registrar, the Institute carried out an academic portfolio planning exercise during 2017/18.   The portfolio exercise aimed to support the delivery of the DkIT Strategic goals of providing a career oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise.   The overall objective was to work towards developing and aligning a suite of programmes in DkIT that is relevant to future needs while simultaneously supporting a distinctive practice-based, research-informed learner experience.

The exercise commenced with a Portfolio Planning and Foresight Workshop in February 2018, at which presentations will be given by representatives of the Futures Academy (UK), IBEC, IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland.   This was followed by a School-based planning process in conjuction with the Registrar's Office, which resulted in the development of School Academic Portfolios, containing plans for programme development and validation over the next 10 years.

Access Initiatives

During 2017/18, DkIT participated in (or committed to) a number of new student access initiatives, some of which are driven at national level and others by our membership of the MEND Cluster.

Path 2: 1916 Bursaries Programme: This is consistent with the MEND Cluster's strategic approach to promoting equity of access. It aims to enhance the educational aspirations and opportunities for the most socially disadvantaged people in the region, with specific groups targeted (e.g. socio-economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, Irish Travellers, lone parents and programme refugees). Candidates will be supported through the provision of comprehensive information about dedicated financial bursaries, pre-entry programme choice support, preparation for college and ongoing personal, professional and academic support post-entry.

Path 3: College Connect Programme: This is a MEND programme supporting progression from FE to HE in line with the National Plan for Equity of Access 2015-19.   It comprises a suite of participative activities to illuminate pathways and provide opportunities into and beyond higher education. It is planned to admit 400 additional students from disadvantaged groups into MEND HEIs over the course of the programme. The DkIT Community Connector commenced in October 2018.

Pathways: This was a collaborative initiative between DkIT and Louth Leader Partnership. It involves a 14-week 'taster' programme to those not currently in education, training or employment. Three modules are delivered over a 2-hour period each week. The programme was delivered in Dundalk Library, Drogheda Library and the Community Centre in Ardee and involved 38 participants in 2017/18, following an intensive series of information sessions delivered in May 2017. Subject areas included Marketing, Community Development and Active Citizenship and Creative Arts. It is planned to run the project again in 2018/19, subject to ongoing funding by Louth Leader Partnership.

Head Start: A 5-week college preparation programme took place in DkIT in April and May 2018.   This was specifically designed for mature students returning to education, providing preparation for assignments and exams, time management skills, presentation skills, introductions to Moodle and Mendeley, etc.

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.

4.1. Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT):

4.1.1. Staff Training and Professional Development:

- **Accredited CPD in Learning and Teaching.**

The MA in Learning and Teaching continued to be successful with another cohort of graduates receiving their awards at Conferring 2018; a total of 8 Master of Arts and 3 Certificates in Learning and Teaching were awarded, including 7 MAs and one certificate awarded to DkIT staff members. A new cohort of 19 colleagues joined the programme in September 2017, including 8 DkIT staff. A total of 60 DkIT staff members have now completed the Masters programme and 13 have completed the Certificate in Learning and Teaching. DkIT is also participating in the ATLAS project which is mapping and aligning existing accredited professional development in learning and teaching to the new Professional Development Framework. The outcomes have informed the recent revision of the Masters programme for Programmatic Review.

Also, in 2017/18, one of the modules on the Masters programme was validated as a 15-credit special purpose award, the Certificate in Assessment and Feedback.   Another short programme was also validated, the 10-credit special purpose award, Certificate in Higher and Professional Learning. This was developed in response to a demand from external colleagues (e.g. health sector, FE sector, industry) with a view to preparing learners for entry to level 9 programmes with an emphasis is on academic writing and research skills. These new offerings further increase the flexibility of DkIT's accredited professional development in learning and teaching.

- **Unaccredited CPD.**

A programme of seminars and workshops was offered in 2017/18 with particular emphasis on assessment and feedback.   A total of 150 staff members attended events, representing 94 staff members. In addition, as part of its 10th anniversary celebrations, CELT hosted a 'sharing practice' day on 14th June 2018.

Masterclasses
- Effective Support for International Students, Dr. Tom Farrelly, IT Tralee.

- Inclusive Teaching, Catherine O'Donoghue and Michael McMahon, Athlone IT.

Funded Seminars (supported by National Forum)
- Implementing mentoring and PD best practice in HE, Dr. Bernadette Brereton and Karen Dunne, DkIT.
- Assessed Group Work: Introducing a programme focused approach.
- Engaging with Feedback: lecturers and students working together to take a programme focused approach. Dr. Naomi Winstone, University of Surrey, Dr. Rob Nash, Aston University.

Sharing Practice Events:
- CELT 10th Anniversary Seminar.
- School of Informatics and Creative Arts Sharing Practice Seminar.
- Professional Development in DkIT, Dr. Terry Maguire and Roisin Donnelly (National Forum) and Dr. Jean McNiff (York St. John University), supported by the National forum funded L2L and ATLAS projects.

Other
- Academic Integrity: Issues and Policy at DkIT (CELT and Registrar's Office)
- Data Enabled Student Success (DESSI Workshop), Dr. Lee O'Farrell, National Forum
- Writing learning outcomes (CELT)
- Programme Assessment Strategies (CELT and Registrar's Office)
- Use of Akari Programme Development software – Programme and Module Setup (CELT and Registrar's Office)

Technology Enhanced Learning:
- Screencasting for Learning, Assessment and Feedback
- Assessment & Feedback using Moodle Assignments
- Turning Point Classroom Response System (Trial)
- Urkund (Trial)
- Assessment & Feedback using Moodle Quizzes
- Recording attendance in Moodle
- Microsoft OneNote Classbook
- Using the Progress bar in Moodle to increase engagement
- Starting out with Moodle: managing your Moodle page

4.1.2. Research and Scholarship in Learning and Teaching:

During 2017/18, DkIT was a lead or partner on 3 projects that won substantial funding from the National Forum Enhancement Fund. All involve collaboration with at least one MEND partner and there is some overlap between project teams. This is facilitating the development of strong collaborative relationships in the area of learning and teaching. The outputs are having a demonstrable impact on both policy and practice, particularly in the areas of assessment and digital capacity. The two projects (L2L and ATLAS) funded in 2016 are concerned with applying the new Professional Development Framework and are evaluated on an ongoing basis.

A total of seven applications were made by DkIT for the National Forum's DELTA awards. The award was available to discipline groups who can demonstrate a record of excellence in learning and teaching enhancement and commit to an ongoing, clearly articulated, shared process of continued enhancement.
https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/learning-impact-awards/disciplinary-excellence-learning-teaching-assessment-delta-2017/
Two of these applications (School of Health and Science and Department of Hospitality Studies) were among the 18 successful teams in getting to the second stage of the competition and the Department of Hospitality were one of 11 successful candidates in achieving a DELTA award which was presented at a ceremony in the Mansion House Dublin.

Continuing Projects:

TEAM (Technology Enhanced Assessment Methods in Science and Health Practical Setting): DkIT (Lead), AIT, Carlow IT, Sligo IT. This was funded under the 2015 Enhancement Fund and concluded in 2017/18. http://teamshp.ie/; https://vimeo.com/242404837.
This project was led by the School of Health and Science in DkIT and explored the potential to use digital technologies in practical teaching settings. Emphasis was placed on assessment for learning and assessment literacy. Across the partners, 42 pilot studies involving 41 staff members, 1591 students and 45 programmes were carried out. Students participated as partners in the project and a number of staff members have already generated outputs such as publications and conference presentations.

L2L (Librarians learning to help learners learn): DkIT (Lead), Carlow IT, DIT.
The participants have been disseminating the project outcomes through a series of seminars. Two examples from 2017/18 were:
'L2L Expanding Horizons: Personal Development for Library Staff who Teach.'
'Overview of L2L Project and importance of library lens.'
http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/l2l-librarians-learning-support-learners-learning

ATLAS (Aligning Teaching and Learning Across the Technology Sector). See
https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/atlas-aligning-teaching-and-learning-across-technological-sector

4.2. Research and Graduate Studies Office:

Following the funding successes of the previous year, a total of 23 new research postgraduate students were admitted in 2017/18, the highest number for an academic year to date. The year 2017/2018 also witnessed a further enhancement of the institute's reputation as one of the leading research intensive institutes of technology. During this academic year:

1. The total research income was €4.5M.
2. The Institute's success rate at securing European funding through the Horizon 2020 programme was above the sector norm.
3. The postgraduate research base grew to in excess of 65 students.
4. 76 research supervisors to date were formally trained through the Institute's structured research supervisory training programme and 10 more to complete in 2018/19.

5. There was further dissemination of the Institute's research output with the Institute was ranked 4th across the sector in terms of citations in 2017/18.
6. There was growth in research space to an excess of 2900m^2.
7. There was growth in the Institute's career researcher base with further recruitment of postdoctoral and research fellows.

During 2017/2018 the institute secured landscape funding in partnership with AIT to the value of €250K for year 1 with an emphasis on:

- Growing the number of staff with level 10 qualifications (e.g. 6 academic staff being supported to complete their PhD by August 31st 2019)
- Recruitment of 11 PhD research students
- Increasing the number of support staff within the Graduate Studies Office

The funding secured is for a three period subject to performance and will enable the institute to recruit 32 PhD researchers and ensure the institute increases the number of staff with level 10 qualifications beyond 45% FTE.

4.3. Entrepreneurship and External Engagement:

4.3.1. Regional Development Centre (RDC):

The Institute plays a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of the region. DkIT is part of a wider business and local community and the Regional Development Centre and Lifelong Learning Centre continue to provide support to the business and general community. The Regional Development Centre plays a pivotal role in supporting enterprise development including engagement with regional and national stakeholders and agencies such as the Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland, Chambers of Commerce and the IDA.
In 2017/18 the RCD assisted 45 entrepreneurs on the New Frontiers Programme, 19 tenants in incubation, 49 student entrepreneurs and 24 entrepreneurs/SMEs through innovation voucher and Fusion projects.
Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has been identified as a leading exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship in higher education both Nationally and Internationally. In 2017 the collaborative approach of the Regional Development Centre and School of Engineering to deliver on the Level 8 Engineering Entrepreneurship degree resulted in a significant acknowledgement being awarded National Winner of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards in the category of *"Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills"*.
In 2017 DKIT, staff from the Regional Development Centre, the Life Long Learning Centre and the Business School were founding members of the "North East Lean Network". DKIT representation also allows DKIT to be represented in shaping how the network evolves over the coming years and gives us the opportunity to promote DKIT offerings such as the Lean Six Sigma programme to its membership. The formation of this network is a significant initiative and lines up with a national drive for business operations excellence across the country, heavily endorsed by the state agencies Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Local Enterprise Offices. The Lean Six Sigma programme is now delivered off site to three industry partners.
In 2017 two projects developed by School of Engineering staff in DkIT and supported by the Regional Development Centre have been awarded exemplar status by Intertrade Ireland. These projects were

supported under the Intertrade Ireland Fusion programme which links industry and academia across the border. Of the five projects which received awards two of them were from DkIT.

In 2017, the RDC became the first campus-based incubator to offer 1GB dedicated broadband speeds to client companies. This ensures that businesses have the same access to high-speed internet as our counterparts based in the capital.

The Regulated Software Research Centre and DkIT research spin-out company Nova Leah awarded significant multi-million-euro investment from the Irish government backed Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund in two projects awarded.

The RDC with relevant schools and the LifeLong Learning Centre helped leverage state funding to support the development of new Springboard programmes in high demand areas such as data analytics, digital marketing, 3D computer animation, food & agri-business, food supply chain operations, applied electrical engineering and sound design. Programmes are offered at certificate and diploma level and all courses are 90-100% funded. Programmes have attracted participation from a wide selection of organisations including Becton Dickinson, Cargotech Engineering Ireland, Combilift, Anord Mardix, Multihog, State Street Bank, Yaptsone, Vesta Corporation and Intact Software.

The RDC is also the key architect of the recently developed DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme, a key strategic initiative aimed at providing a structured framework for the Institute to work with high profile organisations across industry, community and professions in the region. To date DkIT has signed partnership agreements with STATSports, Creative Spark and ABP Food Group.

4.3.2. Academic Schools:

Academic Schools also undertake consultative activities with industry and business through Industry Advisory Boards and other activities such as placements, guest lectures and participation in external discipline-specific events. Some examples are outlined below.

'Live' student projects with industry and other external stakeholders are also becoming more common in all schools. For example:

- The *Global Work Integrated Learning Project* in the School of Business and Humanities is now in its 5th year. This is a partnership between DkIT, Finland, Portugal and Australia.   In 2017, DkIT hosted this activity and in partnership with RMIT Melbourne it undertook a major piece of commercial research for the company Hanley Energy.   Five DkIT staff members and 70 students participated.
- A number of student projects in the School of Engineering were carried out in collaboration with local industry, e.g. Anord, Multihog, Herr Ltd., Glen Dimplex.
- In the Department of Visual and Human Centred Computing, building on collaborative partnerships developed during work placements, industry representation has been imbedded in final year projects (e.g. project proposals, technical advice, attendance at presentations, etc). These relationships will in turn be used to strengthen the Departments Industry Forum.

Schools also engaged in collaborative international partnerships. For example, students from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts participated in the following projects in 2017/18:

- September 2017: A two-week intensive Mobile Games Development project in the University of Lodz, a multidisciplinary project involving 56 students from 7 European countries.

- March 2018: Students from the BSc (Hons) in Games Development participated in an Erasmus funded project held in Artesis Plantijn University along with partners from Belgium, Portugal and Poland - 'Serious Gaming for Better Europe'.
- March 2018: Stage 2 Computing students participated in an intensive web application development project in France with University of Technology Warsaw and IUT Lens, France.
- April 2018: Students from the BSc (Hons) in Games Development took part in an intensive project in Pietarsaari, Finland. The students worked in international teams to develop apps to assist older people.
- February 2018: DkIT Music students participated in an intensive programme at the partner college Western Norway UAS as part of the project 'Agents of Change in Education', which focuses on the development of creative and innovative resources to support the teaching of STEM.

A number of DkIT students were successful in external competitions, some examples are:
- Students from programmes in the Creative Arts were successful in having their work screened at national and international film festivals, including some prize winners (e.g. Best Irish Short at the Dublin International Short Film and Music Festival 2017).
- In LIT in March 2018, DkIT competed in and won the All Ireland Robocode Challenge for a third time in a row.
- A software application designed for a final year module was accepted for dissemination at the iGBL (Irish Conference on Game Based Learning) in Cork in June 2017.

Staff from across the Institute represent DkIT on external committees and boards, some examples below:
- National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and Higher Education (Íontas Alliance)
- Irish National Water Forum
- All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE)
- Steering group of FACiLiTATE (national problem and enquiry based learning network)
- Midwifery National Competency Development Group
- SJOG Human Rights Committee
- Genesis Programme management committee
- Louth Healthy Ireland Consultation Group
- Ardree Food Hub Steering Committee
- VCI Veterinary Nursing Educators Group
- National Childhood Network

Staff members across the Institute also act as external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the sector and in HEIs across Europe and internationally.

4.3.3. Careers and Employability Centre:

This centre was established in 2016/17 and continues to act as a bridge between the DkIT community and industry partners.   It carried out the following activities in 2017/18.

Advice Service: Qualified guidance counsellors provided one-to-one advice, group workshops and information on career profession opportunities.

Placement: Dedicated placement officers support and manage the student placement process, including personal and professional profiling, CV and interview skills, work place culture and etiquette training, and ongoing guidance and support to students, host sites and academic supervisors throughout the placement experience. A total of 932 students were placed in 2017/18.

Induction: First year students were provided with a dedicated briefing session during induction. A key focus was to target student retention and to encourage students who are contemplating leaving their programme to consult with the Careers Officer.

DkIT Careers Connect: In partnership with AHECS (Association of Higher Education Careers Services), DkIT have established a dedicated and integrated Careers website for students, graduates and employers (http://www.careersconnect.dkit.ie).

DkIT Careers and Industry Fair: This was held on campus in November 2017 with over 60 employers from the region and nationally engaging with students, graduates and academics. The event was sponsored by ABP Foods.

GradIreland: DkIT is a partner with GradIreland and is actively engaged with key activities and ensuring DkIT student/graduate access to the GradIreland Career Fair, the National Student Challenge and GradIreland Live.

Employer Workshops and Guest Speakers: Presentation and workshops were delivered by employers and industry on issues related to career development and employability (e.g. INTEL, First Derivatives, Teaching Council, Combilift, ABP Foods, CIMA, Amazon).   The Centre also organised a Careers Insight Event on digital careers with DkIT alumni from Google, Facebook and Accenture.

DkIT Open Events: The Careers and Placement Office host stands and provide careers specific information at Open Day events, engaging with potential students, teachers, guidance counsellors and parents.

Graduate Outcomes Survey: The office participated in the HEA Graduates Outcomes Survey.   The results are communicated centrally and to academic schools, for use by programme boards, programme development teams and in periodic reviews.

4.4. Community Outreach:

DkIT has an important role to play in engaging with the local community and beyond. Some of the DkIT community outreach initiatives for 2017/18 are listed below:

- As part of the summer undergraduate research programme, students from both Science and Creative Arts worked together to develop STEAM workshops for primary school students. The workshops (named 'Space Cadets' and 'Pollinator') employ creative methods to teach scientific concepts. They ran as part of Science Week in both 2017 and 2018 and were also delivered in schools in Monaghan and Meath.
- The Fun Move Play project was launched in November 2017 and was a collaboration between Louth Local Sports Partnership and DkIT final year Health and Physical Activity students, supported by Sport Ireland and Coaching Ireland. Primary school children from the Louth

- area undertake fun based physical activity interventions organised by DkIT students over an 8 week period.
- Final year students in the Early Childhood Studies programme develop professional practice skills by setting up and running a Parent and Toddler Group on the DkIT campus. Participating families (20 per year) are local parents and carers and their young children.
- Science staff participated in the Cavan Monaghan Science Festival, delivering lectures and workshops.
- Scifest was held in DkIT in May 2018 with over 300 second level students in attendance.
- Over 1300 primary school students attended Science Week events in November 2017.
- The Dublin North/North East Recovery College based in DkIT focuses on health and wellness, provides educational courses, resources and creative spaces which are accessible to anyone in the community who has an interest in mental health recovery, including service users and mental health professionals. It is a collaborative initiative involving the DkIT Dept. of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies, the HSE, DCU, Irish Advocacy Network, Advancing Recovery Ireland and Respond Housing. The Recovery College hosts a summer and winter festival each year and DkIT hosted the Winter Festival in 2017.
- The School of Engineering was funded by the HEA to run two Engineering Entrepreneurship summer programmes for second level students in 2017/ 2018 (June 2017 and Dec 2018).
- The DkIT Library delivered Information Literacy Training at two local secondary schools and at Monaghan Institute.   A LibGuide and Digital Badge for Information Literacy for schools were created.
- The Department of Creative Arts Media and Music hosted a number of events for the public including the following:
    o Gap of the North Traditional Music Concert (Nov 2017)
    o The Boyd Massacre (play performed by DkIT students in Nov 2017)
    o Hear our Voices Concert (DkIT students and Rehab Care Dec 2017)
    o *In Dulci Jubilo* (Christmas concert in St. Nicholas church Dundalk)
    o Antigone (play performed by DkIT students Feb 2018)
    o Eirí na Greiné traditional music concert (Mar 2018)
    o Finian's Rainbow (musical performed by DkIT students, Mar 2018)
    o DkIT Choir and DkIT Chamber Choir Spring Concert (Mar 2018)
    o Film showcase in the IMC cinema (May 2018)
    o FÍS – Graduate showcase (June 2018)
    o Final Year Computing Project exhibition (May 2018)
- In the School of Informatics and Creative Arts, seven ICT summer camps were provided in 2017 for children and teenagers with a total of 109 attendees, aged from 12 to 16 years.
- In October 2017, DkIT hosted events for Maths Week Ireland in local primary and secondary schools.
- DkIT were partners in the Dundalk Town Centre Health Check (DTCHC) Project with the Heritage Council, Louth County Council and the Dundalk Business Improvement Scheme. This work was carried out by final year students on the BEng Civil Engineering.
- In March 2018, DkIT hosted the first GameJam pilot, sponsored by Nebula. This is a hackathon where people gather to plan, design and create one or more computer games within a short time period (24-72 hours).
- The Department of Visual and Human Centred Computing continued its relationship with the National Disability Authority/Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) to discuss collaborative opportunities at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The CEUD

- promotes and awards excellence in student projects which support the design of accessible environments.
- DkIT is a partner in Music Generation Louth (part of Music Generation – Ireland) which provides a range of educational opportunities for children and young people to learn music. Music lecturers from DkIT are also involved with the programme 'Pathways: Communities accessing local education' which provides adults with taster sessions of third level education.
- Students from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts participated in the Hour of Code in December 2017, supported by the ACM Student Chapter and the DkIT IT Learning Centre.
- The DkIT CoderDojo met every third Saturday between September and July, catering for children aged 8 to 16.
- The School of Informatics and Creative Arts hosted students from second level schools for taster classes in TY Week, January 2017.
- The DkIT Counselling Service facilitated workshops on managing distressed students and also facilitated focus groups for the National Advisory Committee of the EHSTE EU-funded 'it stops now' initiative.

4.5. Internationalisation:

In 2017/18, DkIT was one of the leading institutes in the sector for international learner recruitment. A total of 494 international students were registered on full time programmes in DkIT in 2017/18 and six MoUs were recently signed in relation to articulation agreements with international partner colleges.   Staff and student engagement with Erasmus was also very positive across the institute. In 2017/18, DkIT received 114 Erasmus students from partner colleges across Europe, 19 DkIT students participated in Erasmus work placements and 16 participated in Erasmus study abroad. Four DkIT staff were afforded teaching and work-shadowing opportunities in Europe. DkIT currently has 74 Erasmus bilateral agreements with European HEIs. In March 2018, DkIT hosted a visit from its French partner IUT Le Harve, as part of its intercultural exchange programme.   The DkIT ESN Society is a registered student society with a growing number of student members. The society hosted the ESN National Boards Meeting in DkIT in June 2018 and invited student delegates from European partner countries.
The International students are supported by the International Office.   During 2017/18 and International Intern was recruited to provide pastoral and practical support to Erasmus and International students and a number of cultural events were hosted to assist these students' integration in DkIT.

Examples of international activities that positively impacted on the institute in 2017/18 were:

- The Institute received a visit from the University of Worcester and the University of Lillebaelt (Denmark) in September 2017 for the purpose of increasing Nursing work-placements. Both of these universities are also engaged in an Erasmus Mobility research paper with DkIT Nursing faculty.
- The University of Krakow visited the Institute's Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies in October 2017 for the purpose of scoping out student exchange possibilities. DkIT made a reciprocal visit in April 2018. It is planned to follow up with establishing an exchange agreement.
- The University of Edinburgh Napier conducted Nursing Audits at DkIT in February 2018. One student was placed in a hospital attached to Edinburgh Napier University in 17/18.

- The Institute hosted a delegation from its German partner university Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen (THM) in November 2017 for 3 days and organised faculty-wide visits at DKIT. Arising from this visit, DkIT International Office sourced a valuable Engineering placement with Rittal GmbH, for a DkIT Mechanical Engineering student in 17/18. It is hoped to offer this placement again in 2018/2019.
- The Institute's partner college, Polytechnic Institute of Setubal, Portugal conducted a Teaching Mobility at the Institute in November 2017 for the purpose of establishing a new exchange field within Sports Science. Arisiing from that visit, an exchange agreement was signed for Sports Science and potential students were identified for Erasmus exchange in this discipline for 2018/19.
- *DkIT and IUT Bethune Telecollaboration*: Now in its 8th year, the project is aimed at Year 1 DkIT students of Business with French, and Year 1 IUT Bethune students of Chemistry with English. The project seeks to enhance language learning and intercultural competence through regular virtual exchanges on cultural aspects of life in Ireland and in France. The project is conducted via Gmail and Skype with an e-portfolio completed by students during the semester.
- A visit was conducted to a Portuguese partner network (CCISP) at the Polytechnic Institute of Leira in November 2017 by the Head of School of Business and Humanities. An articulation agreement was signed between IP Leira and DkIT following the visit for the objective of developing student and staff exchanges.
- The Institute hosted a visit from its Finnish partner Satakunta UAS in January 2018 to the DkIT Hospitality Department. Satakunta UAS is a long-established partner of DkIT and it provided 2 excellent Social Care placements in 2017, along with 4 excellent Nursing placements conducted at Pori Hospital.

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.

Building Capacity in Technology Enhanced Learning:

CELT continued to build on their considerable progress in this area with a view to supporting the Institute strategy to increase the numbers of part-time students across the Institute. Involvement in National Forum Enhancement projects such as Y1 Feedback, What Works and Why and TEAM has contributed significantly to this.

- A programme of 12 CPD workshops were offered to staff over the academic year, attended by a total of 77 colleagues.
- At the 2017 EdTech Conference, 17 DkIT staff members and 8 students contributed to 15 presentations.
- In April 2018, a Data Enabled Student Success (DESSI) workshop was held, facilitated by Dr. Lee O'Farrell from the National Forum.   The workshop opened a discussion about using strategy to develop an informed approach to using data and evidence.   This will inform the

- review of the Teaching and Learning Policy and the development of the Student Success Strategy in 2018/19.
- A number of National Forum enhancement projects with a technology focus continued and generated outputs and sharing of knowledge within the academic community of DkIT and beyond.
- Annual Programme Board reports indicate an increasing level of use of Technology Enhanced Learning by the academic community. An increasing number of lecturers are using technology to provide feedback. Another recent example is the use of online virtual laboratories in engineering which students can use to prepare for practical classes.

A TEL survey carried out in 2016 gathered data on the extent to which technology was used to enhance the student learning experience, with 160 responses from staff members.   The findings indicated a high use of VLE in DkIT (mainly Moodle), with more staff using a greater range of features compared with a similar survey in 2014.   A follow-up survey will be carried out in 2019.

DkIT also supports the development of digital capacity among the student community. Students are shown how to use Moodle and online Library resources as part of their induction.   The e-Learning Unit, in conjuction with the Student Learning and Development Centre, supports the ongoing development of digital skills among students via the programme of workshops and one to one support.

In recognition of the increasing demands on student supports and need for more flexibility as a result of increased part-time learners, CELT (in collaboration with Student Services, IT Services, Maths Learning Centre, Registry, Students Union and Library) developed a proposal for HEA Innovation and Transformation funding in 2017/18.   The proposal is to develop a framework, informed by a needs analysis, to deliver greater flexibility and accessibility to student supports using the VLE.   This was successful in obtaining funding work began in January 2019.

Developments in Policy and Practice in relation to Student Assessment:

Considerable work has been undertaken over a number of years to enhance student assessment across the Institute.   This work emphasises the philosophy of 'Assessment for Learning' and the importance of a programme-based approach to assessment.

A specific Assessment and Learning Policy was developed by members of the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee and approved by Academic Council in May 2017. This was informed by the work of the enhancement projects that DkIT has been involved with in collaboration with MEND cluster partners and other Institutions. The policy promotes a programme-focused approach to assessment, which is to be applied in the current programmatic review process.   There is also an emphasis on feedback as an important source of student learning and on student assessment literacy. Other policies and developments reflect these principles.

The annual DkIT Information Literacy Prize (a collaboration between CELT, the DkIT Library and academic staff developed as part of the Y1 Feedback project) is now an established Institute event and promotes awareness of feedback, reinforcing that engaging with feedback is valued.   As such it plays a role in DkIT's efforts to promote assessment literacy among students (principles 2 and 5 of the Assessment and Learning Policy).   A poster showcasing this work won Best Poster prize at the 2017 Assessment in Higher Education Conference in Manchester and an account of the work has

been published in Practitioner Research in Higher Education
(https://ojs.cumbria.ac.uk/index.php/prhe/article/view/466). In 2017/18 the third iteration of the
prize was introduced to first year as part of induction which included a short session on the
importance of engaging with feedback. All first year students received a guide to using feedback
adapted from the DEFT toolkit developed by the University of Surrey
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft)

The DkIT framework and guidelines for assessed groupwork has been recognised as an example of
good practice and features as a case study on leading change in assessment in the National Forum's
resource on programme approaches to assessment:
https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework_guidelines_2016.pdf,
http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Final-Programme-Assessment-
Resource-with-doi-and-author-290617-1.pdf. A workshop exploring how to implement this
framework was funded under the 2018 National Forum seminar series and took place in January
2018.   The initial implementation of the framework was evaluated during 2017/18 and the outcomes
of this suggest that the framework is having a positive impact on both the staff and student
experience of group work. The evaluation demonstrated the need for ongoing support in interpreting
and developing the framework.

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.

5.1.2. Development and Review of Policies and Procedures:

The following work in relation to policy development and review is planned for 2018/19:

- Review of the Duties and Procedures for External Examiners.
- Review of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures.
- Completion of the Student Success Strategy.
- Review of the Learning and Teaching Policy (this will be subsumed into the Assessment and
  Learning Policy).
- Review of the Technology Enhanced Learning Policy.
- Review of the Student Voice Policy.

- Development of a DkIT Academic Quality Manual.

5.1.3. Learning and Teaching:

The objectives of CELT, in collaboration with the DkIT Academic Community are as follows:
- To participate in the development of a Student Success Strategy.
- To continue to support the implementation of the Assessment & Learning Policy, particularly in relation to feedback and student assessment literacy.
- To develop greater capacity to work in partnership with students.
- To develop more flexible and accessible learner support for all students.
- To begin work on revising the Technology Enhanced Learning Policy.
- To begin to develop a framework to support professional development in learning and teaching for all staff for whom it is relevant.

5.1.4. Research:

DkIT will continue to build its research capacity with a review to achieving the metrics required for Technological University status. The research supervisory development and professional training programme will continue as will other training and supports for staff and students. As a linked provider for DCU, DkIT will continue its work on building the quality assurance arrangements and administrative structures for the DCU/DkIT Graduate School.

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.

5.2.1. Programmatic Reviews:

All academic schools are at different stages of the Programmatic Review process. The School Self-Study phase was completed by Autumn 2018. The Academic Schools were aligned with regard to the re-validation of programmes and there is a plan (approved by Academic Council) to validate School SERs and revised programmes between February and May 2019 as follows:
February 2019: School of Health and Science / CELT
March 2019: School of Engineering
April 2019: School of Informatics and Creative Arts
May 2019: School of Business and Humanities

5.2.2. Institutional Review:

One of the major pieces of work for the Institute in 2018/19 is the completion of the Institutional Review process.   The Institutional Review commenced in December 2017 with an exploratory meeting with QQI.   A Steering Committee chaired by the VPAA-Registrar commenced work on the co-ordination of the review in January 2018 and four Task Groups were constituted to address the following thematic areas:

1. QA Compliance and Operation/Management as an Awarding Body.
2. Quality Enhancement.
3. Access, Transfer and Progression.
4. International Learners.

The work of the task groups was presented to Academic Council in May 2018 and assembled into an ISER report which was submitted to QQI by the VPAA-Registrar on 3rd September 2018.   This was followed by a review by a QQI-appointed International Panel in December 2018. Meetings were held with various representative groups of staff, students and external stakeholders over the course of a week-long panel visit. The draft panel report is due from QQI in March 2019 and the final report will be available in April 2019.

5.2.2. Programme Validations:

The following programme validations are planned for 2018/19:

Re-validation of **all** programmes through the Programmatic Review process.

Validation of the following **new** programmes:
- Master of Science in Data Science
- Bachelor of Science in Building Surveying
- Postgraduate Diploma in the Prevention and Management of Aggression and Violence
- Certificate in Respiratory Care in Adult Nursing
- Certificate in Community Intellectual Disability Nursing
- Certificate in Sound Design and Implementation for Interactive Media
- Certificate in Applied Electrical Engineering
- Certificate in Data Analytics for Business
- Certificate in Perinatal Mental Health
- Certificate in Understanding Athlete Monitoring Technology

5.2.3. Regulatory Bodies:

- The BSc (Hons) in Building Surveying will be submitted to SCSI (Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland) for accreditation in 2019.

5.2.4. Research Centres:

The Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) is due for its 3-yearly external review in 2019.

5.2.5. Service Unit Reviews:

The DkIT library is planning to carry out an external peer review of all of its services and activities in 2018/19.

5.3 Other Plans

Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

6.1 The Institution and External Review
A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

The Institutional Review process is ongoing and a full report from QQI is pending. Following the informal panel feedback and DkIT conclusions from the review process, a number of new goals, objectives and KPIs in a range of functional areas across the Institute have been established and work in relation to the achievement of these goals is ongoing.   The full impact of the review will be reported on in the 2020 AIQR.

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.

The Institutional Review process facilitated a full reflection on Institute activities relating to quality assurance and enhancement.   The review indicated that DkIT has developed a framework of quality assurance policies and procedures that ensure compliance with ESG and QQI requirements. There has been a move from a culture of quality compliance to one of enhancement in the 9 year period since the last review. There is a focus on promoting learner-centredness and in working with learners as partners.

The role of programme boards in quality assurance is evolving and assuming greater importance in the development and delivery of programmes.

Enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment has been a key driver and has resulted in DkIT winning a number of national awards and developing capacity in scholarship in this area.   The focus on professional development in learning and teaching has had a transformative effect on the culture within the institution.

Schools are increasingly engaging with external stakeholders, ensuring that programmes are relevant and that learners have 'real world' opportunities.

The Institute is a leading member of a large number of collaborative partnerships including the MEND cluster, DCU/DkIT Graduate School, NEFHEA Alliance, collaborative delivery arrangements with Teagasc, Monaghan Institute and Cork College of Commerce, 74 Erasmus agreements, 6 international articulation agreements and a number of recent formal MoUs with local industry partners.

The review identified a number of thematic areas for future focus including staff professional development, enhancing learning support, improving internal and external communication processes, enhancing support for policy implementation and evaluation and driving strategically focused research and innovation. The Institute will also progress systematically the outcomes of the programmatic portfolio review, ensuring that all programmes are fit for purpose and address the challenge of establishing a strong presence in part-time and bespoke programmes.

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

1. Strategic targeting of Northern Ireland and defined International student markets.
2. Student academic feedback and assessment literacy
3. Continued enhancement of digital capacity and flexible learning modes.
4. Building capacity in relation to both postgraduate research students and supervisors.
5. Increased provision of part-time and flexible programmes.
6. Participation in national and cluster-based access initiatives.