

Griffith College  
2020

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**Annual Quality Report (Griffith College)  
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM  
Reporting Period 2019-2020**

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Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - <i>Internal QA Framework</i>	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - <i>Programme Development and Delivery</i>	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - <i>QA of Research Activities and Programmes</i>			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
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2.3 - <i>Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i>	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - <i>Learner Resources and Supports</i>	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - <i>Information and Data Management</i>	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - <i>Public Information and Communication</i>	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - <i>Programme Delivery and Development</i>	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - <i>Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - <i>Details of Arrangements with Third Parties</i>				
2.0 - <i>Programme Development and Delivery</i>	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - <i>Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - <i>QA of Research Activities and Programmes</i>	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the Annual Quality Report (AQR) for Griffith College for the reporting period **01 September 2019 to 31 August 2020**.

It is being submitted by 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The AQR has been approved by the college's Academic and Professional Council (APC) and is submitted on behalf of APC by **Jack Leahy**.

**QAE Policies, Procedures and Guidelines are listed at <https://www.griffith.ie/about/quality-assurance-enhancement>.**

### About the Institution

The college was established in 1974, and incorporated in 1978 as Business and Accounting Training (BAT) College. BAT College relocated to Griffith Barracks in 1991 and changed its name to Griffith College Dublin. Between 1992 and 1996 the college's initial degree courses (in Computing and Business) were validated by the University of Ulster. In 1992 the college became a designated institute of Ireland's National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) - the predecessor of the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

The college offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes accredited by QQI leading to awards at levels 6 to 9 on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It also offers programmes leading to academic awards from Heriot-Watt University. A number of the college's QQI accredited programmes are delivered on a collaborative or partnership basis. Collaborative programmes are delivered with Pulse College, Innopharma Labs and Globe Business College, Munich. Other programmes involve particular support and association from industry bodies, for example, the Irish Sports Council and the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME).

The college's professional programmes prepare learners for the examinations of professional bodies, for example the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA Ireland) and the Law Society of Ireland. The college also provides a range of training programmes leading to certification from professional bodies such as Cisco, Microsoft, London City and Guilds Institute and the Business and Technology Council (BTEC). The college's Leinster School of Music and Drama provides tuition and examinations for learners of all ages learning musical instruments, singing and drama.

The range of programmes offered by the college covers a broad range of disciplines. These include accountancy, animation, audio and music technology, business, computing science, education and training, English language, fashion and interior design, photography, film and TV production, hospitality management, industrial engineering, journalism and media communications, law and pharmaceutical science.

The college attracts a richly diverse learner population involving traditional full-time learners undertaking programmes of one or more years' duration at undergraduate or postgraduate level, mature learners attending on

a part-time evening basis, learners undertaking programmes involving work experience, Springboard learners returning to the workforce or taking programmes in conjunction with their workplace commitments, and online learners.

The college's learner population includes Irish and international learners, both EU and non-EU. International learners include learners taking the entirety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and visiting students undertaking Erasmus, study abroad and exchange programmes. The college has extensive access, transfer and progression arrangements enabling learners from local Further Education (FE) colleges access the college's programmes. The college has agreed quality assurance procedures with QQI in respect of the recognition of prior learning, both credited and experiential, enabling learners to access the college's programmes. Where appropriate, learners accessing the college's programmes may enter with advanced standing. Graduates of the college's programmes can progress to other national and international awards.

The college's programmes are delivered from a number of campuses, training centres and online. The college's main campus is located on South Circular Road on the seven-acre historic site formerly known as Griffith Barracks. This site also provides on-campus accommodation for 640 learners. The college's five-acre campus in Cork is on Wellington Road and was formerly known as Marymount Hospice. The college's city-based campuses are located on O'Connell Avenue in Limerick and on Dublin's Wolfe Tone Street. Except for Wolfe Tone Street where a long-term lease arrangement is in place, centres are owned by the college.

The college has an annual learner population of approximately 7,000.

The college is a founding member of HECA, the Higher Education and Colleges Association. It has a long tradition of engagement with accreditation agencies, contributing to the development of higher education in Ireland. It established the International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy (ICEP) to support the development of teaching and learning practices in higher education. Its senior staff have served as members of HETAC's council and programme awards committees. The college is committed to the provision of quality education for national and international learners alike - leading the development of the Irish Higher Education and Quality Network's (IHEQN's) procedures for international learners.

The college's quality assurance systems are detailed in its Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) handbook - which contains the college's policies, procedures and guidelines. These arrangements are governed by the college's Academic and Professional Council (APC) and subject to ongoing review and development. Changes arising from QQI and other accreditation bodies are adopted and integrated in line with agreed implementation schedules.

### **Preparing the Annual Quality Report**

The Annual Quality Report was prepared by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department, with monitoring and input from the Academic and Professional Council (APC) and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee (QAES).

The document was drafted by members of the QAE team, with regular review, correction, and further input from relevant department heads and college management. An update was delivered every week at the QAES meeting, with drafts regularly tabled for feedback and discussion points tabled in order to produce objectives and updates. Data on collaborative partners, articulation agreements and PRSBs was prepared by the Programme Directors Committee.

AQR was a standing agenda item for APC in November, December, January, February and March of 2020/21. The first two meetings heard updates as to the project plan, and the final three meetings reviewed and approved draft documents.

## Part A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

### 1.0 Internal QA Framework

#### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

The college's approach to governance and management of quality is outlined in:

- QAE A0 - Scope of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- QAE A1 - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy
- QAE A2 - Academic and Professional Council
- QAE A2a - Membership of APC
- QAE A3 - Academic and Professional Council Terms of Reference
- QAE A4 - Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Other Centres

Below is a summary of these processes and the framework they create:

##### **Scope of Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

The college's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Policies, Procedures, Practices and Guidelines, as outlined in its QAE manuals, apply to programmes delivered by Griffith College. Griffith College is understood to incorporate the college's constituent campuses and teaching centres in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick and all partner institutions where Griffith College programmes are provided.

The scope of the college's QAE system extends to:

- All programmes provided by the college which lead to further or higher education academic awards governed by Irish or overseas awarding bodies.
- All programmes provided by the college which prepare learners for the examinations of executive, vocational, technical and professional bodies, whether nationally or internationally based.
- All forms of programme delivery and study mode, including full-time, part-time and distance provision.

External agencies and awarding bodies stipulate rules and regulations in respect of their awards. These criteria typically complement and extend those already outlined in the college's QAE manual, serving to add precision in respect of several procedures. Where the college provides a programme leading to the award of an external agency, it is understood that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement measures used to govern the programme include all those prescribed by the external agency in addition to those described in the college QAE manual. These two sets of requirements are typically retained as distinct documents.

The college's activities are influenced and governed by a variety of other external agencies and contexts, both nationally and internationally. The college works to ensure that its QAE documentation continues to reflect and comply with all prevailing national and international legislation as it evolves. The college is committed to advancing and embracing national and international educational developments.



### **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures**

The college continues to develop its QAE processes in the light of experience gained in delivering its programmes, the direction provided by external parties, and to enhance the quality and effectiveness of its programme provision. The quality assurance and enhancement measures developed by the college and the processes which flow from them seek to balance college-wide responsibilities and faculty responsibilities.

The college has developed a set of principles which form the basis for the design, agreement, and implementation of its QAE policies. These principles are outlined in *QAE A1 - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy*.

In keeping with the principle of collective agreement, all QAE proposals and supporting documentation are subject to the approval of the Academic and Professional Council (APC), which meets monthly and has overall responsibility for safeguarding the QAE practices of the college. All changes to QAE policies or procedures come through the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Office and, with supporting documentation, must be presented to and approved by APC.

### **Academic and Professional Council (APC)**

The college has a number of boards and committees responsible for the various aspects of its management. They collectively form a framework which ensures the implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of all QAE measures.

The Academic and Professional Council (APC) and its sub-committees are responsible for all aspects of the design, delivery, development and implementation of professional and academic programmes of study in the college.

The membership of the APC includes representation from academic faculties, professional schools, academic administration, support and service departments, Griffith College Students' Union, lecturing staff, and management.

Responsibilities of the APC are defined as:

- To ensure that the college academic policies relating to teaching and learning are consonant with the college mission and strategic plan
- To ensure the implementation of the academic regulations of the college
- To monitor the design, development and implementation of programmes of study in accordance with the functions of the college
- To ensure that the curriculum offered through the college is current, relevant, at an appropriate standard, and professional
- To make recommendations to the board of management for the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of learners
- To ensure that the quality and standard of provision is routinely monitored through annual monitoring, validation, stakeholder feedback, and review procedures

- To ensure that the regulatory framework governing the assessment and examination of learners is operated fairly
- To monitor and review college academic management and feedback.

With regards to QAE, the APC provides the opportunity to consider best practice, to foster collaboration and to encourage critical evaluation - culminating in consensus on the Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies, procedures, practices and guidelines adopted by the college. The APC receives reports on an ongoing basis from its sub-committees - thus ensuring that it is kept abreast of operational Quality Assurance and Enhancement issues. All QAE proposals must be approved by the APC.

In addition to the APC, the college has several management organs which include college, learner and external representation as appropriate and hold specific responsibilities related to the implementation, monitoring and review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes. Specific roles and responsibilities are associated with each of these management organs which are indicated within the college's Quality Assurance and Enhancement documentation. The roles and responsibilities of these forums are revised as appropriate and in accordance with QAE and organisational developments.

In keeping with the established principle of communication, all agreed policies, procedures, practices and guidelines are circulated to stakeholders through a variety of appropriate channels. In addition, the rationale for the introduction of Quality Assurance and Enhancement measures is communicated to stakeholders and supporting implementation guidelines are devised if deemed appropriate and useful

This section provides information on the overarching quality assurance system, its governance and management in the institution.

### **Representation of learners and external stakeholders**

The college takes particular care to ensure that learners and their representatives can participate fully in the governance and management of quality. To this end, learners and their representatives currently hold seats on:

- Academic and Professional Council (2)
- QAE Sub-Committee (QAES)
- Programme Committees
- Learner Wellbeing Group

The participation of learners in these committees is supported in some instances by the practice of the committee chair and/or secretary meeting the learners in advance of the meeting to discuss the agenda in greater detail.

Each class cohort nominates at least one class representative, whose role is recognised at programme, faculty and college level. Class representatives are engaged as part of the module evaluation procedure, offering informal and semi-formal feedback on behalf of the class.

The college resources learner representation through its engagement with the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). The programme provides training for learner representatives and resources for institutional staff to increase capacity for effective learner representation.

External stakeholders are formally represented through a seat on the APC. Industry, graduate and employer input is collected as part of the annual programme review procedure and forms an important part of the programme review report which is submitted alongside the revised programme document during programme re-validation. Industry and employability considerations form part of the programme proposal process from an early stage.

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Collaborative provision of programmes is guided by *QAE L1 - Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards*. The policy sets out the procedures, practices and guidelines by which the college identifies, secures, manages and monitors collaborative provision, transnational provision, and joint awards. This policy was reviewed in 2019, prior to re-engagement, to ensure consistency with QQI's *Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012)*. This policy provides the basis for existing collaborative agreements with Innopharma Labs, Pulse College Windmill Lane Studios, and Globe Business College Munich.

The policy states the college's strategy to further extend and develop the range of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards. New arrangements are considered where if it is determined that they would be congruent with the college's mission, ethos, and capacity. The benefit to learners, the college and its partners is also considered. Such arrangements are subject to a great deal of work by the college to assess the reputation and academic and financial standing of prospective institutions.

The college's collaborative and transnational arrangements are the subject of regular review by the Management Board and the PPRC.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The programme development process is guided by *QAE B1 - Programme Proposal Procedure*. The procedure applies to all new programme proposals, whether academic or professional, of any duration, and whether formally accredited or non-accredited.

The purpose of the process is to determine the viability, appropriateness and quality of proposed programmes within a reasonable timeframe.

Programme proposals are first brought to the Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC), which meets monthly. Additional meetings may be held if the need arises. The PPRC features representatives of the QAE team in addition to finance and marketing (both international and domestic) representatives, nominees of the APC, the head of Short Courses, and an industry advisor. The initial proposal is outlined in *QAE BA1 - Programme Proposal Form* and gives information about the target market for the programme, the proposed model(s) of delivery, outline costings, and academic details. A bespoke programme proposal form has also been developed by QAED for short, non-accredited programmes. The Programme Director or Head of Faculty who has submitted the proposal form attends the meeting to respond to any queries.

Normally a programme proposal will be discussed on multiple occasions before a decision of PPRC is referred to APC or the Management Board. Initial approval gives rise to further development of the proposal, with an emphasis on the academic content, financial arrangements and the viability of the programme market.

The PPRC may recommend approval of the proposal, request further information, or recommend that the proposal not be approved. For a formally accredited programme the recommendation of the PPRC is forwarded to the Management Board. For a short non-accredited course, the recommendation of the PPRC is forwarded to the APC.

The Management Board is chaired by the college President and charged with evaluating the programme proposal in terms of resource implications, budgetary allocation and strategic fit with college strategy. The Management Board, or the PPRC in the case of short courses, communicates its recommendation to the APC. The APC considers the academic merit of the programme and can make a final decision as to whether to operate the programme (in the case of a non-accredited programme) or to submit for validation (for a validated programme).

The process of submitting a programme for validation by QQI is governed by QAE B3a and QAE B3b. These procedures have recently been approved by QQI as part of an application for devolution of responsibility for validation sub-processes. Approval from QQI has afforded the college some additional responsibilities for arranging and managing independent evaluation panels within the college's existing scope of provision. A separate procedure outlines the procedure for the validation of programmes where devolution of responsibility does not apply.

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

### Information about the programme

The college provides summary information to learners about its programmes as part of its marketing activities. It also provides detailed information to prospective learners as part of their admissions and induction processes. The college's programme information policy is set out in *QAE C1 Programme Information Provision Policy*.

This states that in any summary marketing medium used by the college, at least the following information is made available to prospective learners:

- the name of the awarding body and its recognition internationally
- the status of validation, e.g., validated, subject to validation
- the NFQ framework level designation of the programme
- the full programme title and any variations of the title which may be open to the learner.

It also states that in any detailed communication medium the college uses to describe its programmes the following additional information is made available to prospective learners:

- details of any interim awards associated with the programme
- details of any recognition by professional / regulatory bodies
- the duration of the programme and the learning modes offered
- maximum / minimum time periods permitted for completion
- entry requirements and assessment procedures for entry
- transfer and progression routes into and from the programme
- the credit associated with the programme
- the English language level required for entry
- documentation required from international learners
- bonding arrangements associated with the programme.

As part of the faculty's induction, learners are introduced to the faculty staff and provided with programme information such as the Faculty Handbook, Semester Schedule Handbook, their timetable, assessment grid, module information, information about their programme director, year head and administrator. In addition, e-learning induction sessions are conducted by the Digital Learning Department (DLD) for learners studying in blended mode.

### Entry procedures

All applications to the college's programmes are managed by Griffith College's Admissions Department in line with QAE procedures previously agreed with QQI. The college accepts all qualifying applicants who meet the academic entry requirements stipulated for the programme subject to the numbers of learners being within the approved minimum and maximum numbers.

All learners are required to be proficient in English. Where a candidate's first language is not English, they are required to provide proof of proficiency in the English language through satisfactory performance on an internationally recognised test.

The English language entry requirements for programmes are CEF B2+ or equivalent. Candidates with English language levels below CEF B2+ must first reach this minimum standard before enrolling. As applicable, learners are required to meet minimum proficiency requirements for general learning, discipline-specific learning, and mathematics.

The college considers applications from candidates wishing to enter a programme on the basis of their prior accredited or prior experiential learning. In all such cases, candidates are required to submit evidence of their prior accredited and experiential learning so that it can be evaluated on an individual basis by the college. International applicants with supporting formal qualifications are checked against tools such as the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NAIRC) for comparison to the National Framework of Qualifications, and in line with the college's recognition of prior accredited learning.

All applications for advanced admission to the programme are logged to support the consideration of subsequent applications from identical programmes. All non-standard applications are subject to the college QAE procedures governing the area. Decisions regarding learner admission are based on the reasonable expectation that they can fulfil and benefit from the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award. The college's current policies on Recognition of Prior Accredited Learning and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning are outlined in *QAE C3 Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure*.

### **Transfer arrangements**

Where applicable, specific arrangements for transfer out of the programme are detailed in the relevant programme documentation and communications to learners. In the absence of specific arrangements other providers who have similar programmes have enrolled Griffith College learners who wished to transfer, for various reasons, in the past. It is also the case that the college has enrolled learners from cognate programmes into its programme. Every such case has required the mapping of the modules the learner has completed on their previous programme into the Griffith College programme.

### **Certification**

The college's Examinations Office coordinates all communication between the college and QQI with respect to learner registration, performance and eligibility for award certification. Learners are only put forward for certification where they have successfully completed all constituent modules of a programme. Each module's assessment requires the satisfactory attainment of module learning outcomes, which collectively deliver on the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs).

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The college is a voluntary provider and does not make QQI awards. Programmes are proposed for validation as per QQI's procedures for programme validation.



## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The college quality assures and enhances its teaching and learning through a variety of mechanisms and resources aimed at both learners and staff engaged in teaching.

### Teaching and learning support structures

The college has a faculty of teaching and learning. The head of this faculty is the college's Head of Teaching and Learning, who has a prominent role in supporting the quality of teaching and learning in the college.

The faculty offers a Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development and embedded Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma programmes. The programmes have been designed to meet the needs of educators and practitioners who support adult learners. Lecturers in the college may complete the Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma with full financial support from the college; newly appointed lecturers are expected to complete at least the certificate within two years of their appointment.

The faculty is supported by the Digital Learning Department, which provides support and training with all forms of digital learning, from use of Moodle activities and Zoom conferencing to creating e-lectures in the eLearning labs and supporting blended delivery.

During the 2019-20 academic year the college established its Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) group. The mission of the group is to promote the enhancement of teaching and learning with the cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders. Between March and May the group provided training and resources for lecturers in transitioning to emergency online learning and assessment.

### Supports for learners

In addition to providing supports for teaching, the college quality assures and enhances the learning experience on its programmes by providing academic supports for learners. These include:

#### *Academic learning support*

Academic learning support is provided through the Learning Support Coordinator, who is responsible for implementing *QAE D5 - Academic Learner Support Policy*. This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities associated with the management of, and participation in, learning support for learners with disabilities. It also illustrates recommended procedures and practices for successful provision of learning support, including reasonable accommodations.

#### *Ongoing feedback mechanisms*

Ongoing feedback, whether formal or informal, is actively sought throughout the year by a number of means. Learner feedback methods include:

- Learner feedback questionnaires (e.g. on module delivery and college facilities)
- Class representative meetings
- Programme Committee Meetings

- Discussion with faculty members

Faculties and programme teams also receive feedback on teaching and learning in the form of:

- Lecturer module feedback reports (completed by lecturers in respect of their modules)
- External feedback sources (e.g. graduate feedback, industry feedback)
- Feedback from class representatives

### *Language Support*

The English language entry requirements for the programme are CEF B2+ or equivalent. Candidates with English language levels below CEF B2+ must first reach this minimum standard before enrolling on the academic programme.

In cases where a learner does not have the requisite language level for admission to a programme, they are required to undertake a preparatory language support programme through Griffith Institution of Language (GIL). GIL's foundation programmes equip learners with the relevant English language level to subsequently undertake an academic programme.

### *General Supports*

The college operates a suite of learner support services which serve to help learners participate in their programmes. These services are outlined in section 3.0.

### *Complaints procedure*

As per *QAE J4 - Learner Complaints Procedure*, the college aims to identify and quickly resolve any difficulties which may be experienced by a learner or a cohort of learners during the programme of their studies. For matters which are not or cannot be reported during ongoing feedback activities, learners may use this procedure to bring on-going matters of concern to the attention of the college and enable investigation of those concerns.

### **External examining**

The college's approach to the nomination and appointment of External Examiners is outlined in *QAE E1 - Procedure for Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners*. This procedure was updated prior to re-engagement to reflect QQI's *Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining*.

The procedure provides that the academic or professional qualifications held by the External Examiner should be appropriate to the award being examined. An academic nominee normally holds a qualification in the appropriate discipline at a minimum one level higher than that of the programme to which they have been nominated. The subject of the qualification(s) should generally be in a cognate discipline to what is to be examined in the programme.

External Examiners engaged by the college normally have prior experience of external examining at the appropriate level. Prospective nominees without external examining experience at the appropriate level will be expected to have extensive internal examining or other relevant experience.

Nominations are assessed by the Examinations Office who submits the nomination forms for approval by the APC. The Examinations Officer will forward a recommendation with the relevant documentation, indicating the outcome of their assessment as to the proposed Examiner's suitability. The Examinations Office is also responsible for the induction of external examiners.

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

### Library

The learners, lecturers, and other staff at all campuses are supported by the library and information services. As well as a physical stock of books, journals, reference materials, and multi-media the library has physical resources such as:

- Computers
- Scanners/copiers/printers
- Group study rooms
- Loanable equipment

Griffith College Library Services employs dedicated and knowledgeable staff including three professionally qualified librarians, two other full-time staff, and seven part time workers. As well as issue desk enquiries the library supports lecturers and learners with classes and workshops. It also supports lecturers and programme development with references reviews and arranging access to research materials.

The library provides access to a wide range of databases from EBSCO, Lexis Nexis, Mintel, Westlaw, Justis, Hein, and Sage among others as well as ebooks from several suppliers.

As an emergency cover during the initial pandemic response period the library invested in a subscription to Perlego which provided access to a huge number of textbooks. The college also subscribes to Bloomsbury Professional law resources online, initially as a response to the pivot to online learning, but now on a permanent basis in response to learner demand.

As well as the additional online resources mentioned above the library staff responded to the disruption in semester two 2020 by expanding remote services including:

- Moving the learning support services (searching, academic writing, referencing, and avoiding similarity) fully online
- Providing drop-in Zoom sessions for learners to interact with the library in a less formal situation
- Enhancing document supply with the possibility of scanning and emailing selected sections of texts
- Click and collect lending of textbooks
- Members of the team dividing their time with e-learning support and the Digital Learning Department
- Members of the team providing technical support for the Exams Department

### IT Infrastructure

All learners at Griffith College have access to IT facilities and support. Griffith College IT Services encompasses a dedicated Support team running the IT Help Desk and a second level support team which manages all hosted services for all students across all campuses. Hosted services include Moodle, student email accounts, and

college websites. A small supply for IT equipment (such as laptops) is available for borrowing by learners from the library.

MyGriffith is the college's student portal and acts as the central resource for learners' online interactions with the college. These include:

- Online Registration
- Online Payments
- Exam Results
- Faculty contact details
- Links to other systems and services

The college uses Moodle as its virtual learning environment (VLE). Moodle is the primary resource for learner notes, class videos, assignments, timetables, and additional resources.

IT Services maintains computer labs on campuses, with a mix of Dell PCs, Apple computers and laptop spaces. These labs are all configured to print material in the printing centres.

IT Services works in conjunction with the Digital Learning Department to provide videos and learning materials to assist learners and staff in enhancing their knowledge and experience of relevant technologies. Resources are available for topics such as Moodle, Zoom, security and user awareness, Microsoft Office, and the use of other learning technologies such as Turnitin.

## **Student supports**

### *Students' Union*

Griffith College Students' Union (GCSU) is a central learner support resource. GCSU also operates a variety of sports clubs and societies and provides a space on the campuses for learners to congregate and engage in leisure activities. The SU runs a variety of annual trips, both within Ireland and without, and regular on-campus events and activities.

The SU building provides a drop-in space, with facilities for heating and eating lunch, accessing support through one of the team or simply relaxing during down-time.

Learners elect representatives on an annual basis to lead its engagement with college management and other stakeholders. GCSU is led by the SU President the Vice President for Welfare & Campaigns, and the Vice President for Campaigns. Their work is supported by a network of class representatives, elected annually by their classes at the start of the academic year.

The elected representatives are supported by an SU Manager, Assistant Manager and Sports & Societies Officer who are full-time staff members.

### *Counselling Service*

A third-party counselling service provides confidential support to learners, residents, staff and lecturers of the Griffith College community. The service is free of charge for the first four consultations and may be extended for learners who require further support. The external counselling service is available for appointments 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. A 24-hour emergency phone service operates Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The college has provided training in mental health first aid for staff members across the campuses.

#### *Learner Academic Support*

The Learning Support Office works with learners and staff to promote a positive and successful learning experience for learners with disabilities and specific learning difficulties.

A range of supports are available, including:

- Needs assessment - Confidential meeting to assess learning needs and the learner's accompanying documentation in order to agree the appropriate supports that may be required.
- Reasonable accommodations - Reasonable accommodations aim to remove the impact of a disability within the learning environment, so that learners can demonstrate their full level of academic potential. Examples include spelling and grammar waiver, additional time, scribe and reader support and low distraction venues during examinations.
- Invitations to key skills workshops - Topics include time management, planning for success in assessments and exam revision techniques.
- One-to-one support meetings

#### *Appeals procedure*

The college operates an appeals procedure which allows learners to contest the outcome of certain procedures on defined grounds. Learners are entitled to appeal:

- Examinations board decisions (e.g. the determination that a learner has failed to progress and is therefore academically withdrawn)
- Academic misconduct decisions (e.g. the determination that major academic misconduct has occurred, and a particular punishment applies)
- Penalties applied for late submission of assessed work
- Refusal or partial refusal of a request to defer studies
- Disciplinary board decisions
- Decisions of a desk-based review
- Decisions of an Appeal Board
- Outcome of a formal complaint

Applicants to the college are also entitled to appeal:

- An admissions decision
- A recognition of prior learning (RPL) decision

The appeals procedure is managed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department (QAED) to ensure that learners have an opportunity to appeal against decisions independently of those who made them. Where a decision has been made by a member of QAED, that person is not involved in the event that an appeal against that decision is made.

#### *Complaints procedure*

The college operates a complaints procedure for learners. Learners are asked to attempt to resolve an issue with the relevant Faculty or Department head prior to submitting a formal complaint. Formal complaints are assessed independently of the faculty or department against which they are made. The procedure provides that the person reviewing the complaint attempt to resolve it to the satisfaction of the learner.

#### *Learner Services Office*

The college operates a learner services office, which is available for walk-in queries and opens until 6.30pm at least once a week. The learner services office comprises the examinations office, the learner registration officer, the admissions team, and support for learners visiting on exchange.

#### *International Supports*

Griffith College's International team is committed to ensuring a high-quality academic, cultural and social experience for our entire international student body. The International Office's services include:

- A team of dedicated Student Services Officers responsible for dealing with international student queries and pastoral support
- A Visa Support Liaison to support applicants and existing learners with applications for and issues with their visas
- Regional exchange and study abroad coordinators.

The International Office provides a walk-in service and assists faculties.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Research activities in the college are overseen by the Research Ethics Committee, which reports to the APC as required. The operations and guiding principles of the committee are set out in *Griffith College Research Committee Guiding Principles*.

The purpose of the committee is to review research projects before they commence in order to assess their ethical implications and to provide guidance, support and approval to researchers on ethical issues.

Ethical approval is sought from the committee through submitting a Research Ethics Approval Form. The form requires that staff and learners engaged in research involving humans demonstrate due consideration of the ethical implications of their research proposal and to create and include an information sheet as part of their application for research approval. The committee also stipulates certain conditions regarding consent and confidentiality.

All researchers must be appropriately qualified and have sufficient experience to lead or conduct the research. In the case of student researchers, faculties must ensure that adequate training has been given.

Learners undertaking a dissertation as part of their studies are supported by discipline-specific modules in Research Methods. These modules help learners to develop the skills required to conduct research and explore the ethical considerations of accessing and using data. The modules conclude with considerations for presenting the research and findings in an appropriate manner.

The college does not presently offer any research programmes.



## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### Recruitment of Staff

Recruitment of staff is directed by *QAE 11 - Full-Time Staff Selection & Appointment Procedure*. The Human Resources (HR) Manager is responsible for its implementation. The procedure seeks to ensure that the best candidate for a position is appointed and is compliant with relevant employment legislation.

Prior to the beginning of the recruitment process, the HR Manager, the recruiter (the person requesting the recruitment of a staff member) and the Management Board will consult and agree the contractual basis for the proposed employment, whether the vacancy can be filled by means of redefinition of other positions, and whether the vacancy needs to be filled at all.

If it is agreed that the position is to be filled, a suitably comprehensive job specification is agreed with the Management Board. The position is then advertised first internally and then externally. The HR Manager then reviews applications with the recruiter and conducts a short-listing process. The college has guidelines for this process that seek to ensure that the most appropriate candidates are advanced to the next stage.

If no candidates are deemed suitable to advance to interview stage, the HR Manager and recruiter consider whether the job specification requires review prior to re-advertising.

Short-listed candidates are contacted for interview and briefed on the process, which may include a brief presentation (e.g. a mock lecture in the case of appointing a lecturer) or an assessment of a particular skill.

A first interview is serviced by an interview panel consisting, normally, of the HR Manager and the recruiter. The procedure provides for a fair process, where candidates are assessed independently immediately after the interview, based on specified selection criteria and based on the same questions as other candidates.

Any second interview will also be attended by a member of the relevant faculty or department and follows the same principles of fairness and consistency. The Director of Academic Programmes attends the second interview with the Programme Director, or, in an instance where a Programme Director position is being recruited for, the Director of Academic Programmes normally attends the second interview.

An applicant deemed as being the most suitable is provisionally offered the position, pending references and any necessary verification of qualifications, within 10 days of the interview. If the applicant's references are satisfactory, If a suitable candidate has not been identified, the HR Manager and the recruiter determine a suitable programme of action which may include advertising the position for a second time.

**Management of Staff**

Performance management of college staff is outlined in *QAE 12 - Performance Review and Staff Development Principles*. The college endeavours to create performance review processes that are positive, goal-oriented and productive. The task of reviewing the performance of individuals is normally carried out by line managers on a quarterly basis, focussing on the role and the performance of the individual.

**Development of Staff**

The college has a strong commitment to staff development and is keen to support staff development initiatives as appropriate and beneficial to the individual and the college as a whole. Staff development practices are provided for in *QAE 13 - Staff Development Practices*.

All full-time members of staff wishing to undertake academic or professional programmes offered by the college may do so at a discounted fee of 50% of the programme fee. In doing so, the college requires them however to maintain exemplary attendance and commitment levels throughout thus respecting the reputation of the award, and of the college itself.

All lecturers, both full-time and part-time are provided with opportunities for increased involvement and advancement in the college (e.g. through participation in Programme Committees, lecturer training sessions, social events, etc.)

The college also provides funding in relation to conference attendance, professional development events, and other development opportunities that may arise.

Lecturing staff members are actively encouraged to pursue advanced postgraduate and doctoral studies related to their field of interest. In the case of full-time College lecturers, the college assesses each application for financial support on its merits, considering budgets and the needs of the college. The college will endeavour to support such applications up to a level of 50% of the fee involved. Staff members are also supported in terms of study leave.

The college runs a Level 9 Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development (MAELD). Lecturing staff are expected to complete the Certificate ELD within two years of appointment. Staff may avail of places on the Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma programmes free of charge.

**Principles of Equality and Diversity**

Guidelines are issued to those involved in the process of short-listing and interviewing. Such individuals are reminded to avoid:

- Making negative assumptions or decisions on the basis of perceived overqualification or, conversely, giving positive advantage to an applicant with qualifications above the stated requirement
- Making negative assumptions about overseas qualifications with which they are unfamiliar
- Recommending for interview any applicant, whether internal or external, who does not meet the essential criteria Predetermining the number of applicants to be interviewed
- Selecting candidates in a manner that could be construed as unfair discrimination under equality legislation

Great care is taken at all stages of the recruitment process to ensure that applicants are assessed in accordance with a set job specification that is clear and realistic.

Prior to interview candidates are asked if they require any accommodations in order to participate in the interview process. This applies to phone, virtual, and in-person interviews. The HR team will strive to meet requests, including but not limited to by using an accessible interview venue, facilitating virtual interviews, the use of an interpreter and holding an interview outside of business hours.

Griffith College is an equality opportunities employer and prospective candidates are informed of this in the job specification.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

The college is in the process of developing a new Academic Information System to manage all learner records from registration through to graduation. This system, THEMIS, has involved an investment of over 500,000 euro so far, with a final projected budget of approximately one million euro. The new system is currently being phased in with a final target date of academic year 2022/23.

The existing system, Scholar, still maintains the core learner records, and in the current academic year, 2020/21 all assessment records have been managed through THEMIS. For the 2021/22 intake all admissions and registration functionality will be managed by THEMIS, with programme management to follow after that. The plan is that Scholar will be completely phased out for the 2022/23 learner intake.

To date, Scholar has been used to populate a variety of reports that inform practice and decision-making, including programme review reports, the annual programme reports, and learner progression and retention reports. It is planned that Themis will also provide this information, with enhanced reporting and analytical tools.

The college has developed a number of analytics dashboards using Microsoft's PowerBI. Examples of its uses are:

- APR and QQI Programmatic Review submissions. Data visuals used to enhance submissions for programme review and design.
- Data Reports used to identify potential learners at risk through a Learner Activity Report allowing for potential interventions where necessary.
- Operations Reports used to identify potential problem areas in how the college functions which will improve services given and enhancing the overall delivery of programmes to learners.

Retention data has been benchmarked in recent years with the progressions statistics as published by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Graduation and award data published by QQI allow us to benchmark award statistics against other QQI providers.

Moodle is the college virtual learning environment (VLE). Notices, class notes, reading materials, and supporting documents are all posted to Moodle, as are links to videos and online support materials. The use of Forums allows learners to engage with their peers and tutors, and assessments can be submitted through the system. Moodle is the main academic communication tool with learners.

The management of room bookings and timetables is through the CMIS timetabling system. All room bookings and timetable management are handled through CMIS.

Financial management in the college is supported by Sage and Diveport, systems which allow real-time monitoring of budgets and budget forecasting.

Bookings in the Griffith Halls of Residence is supported by the use of the Mercury Property Management System (PMS).

All of these systems allow day to day operational management of the specific areas they address, but also allow reporting to support management decisions.

The college's records retention schedule was prepared in anticipation of the General Data Protection Regulation in 2018. It is maintained by the GDPR Committee.

Collaborative Partner Agreements include a commitment by all involved parties to adhere to data protection best practice with regard to all organisational obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The college's data protection policy is maintained and managed by the data protection officer, who is a director and a member of the management board.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

### General

The college uses a wide variety of channels to communicate with learners, the public, and staff. These include:

- The college website, [www.griffith.ie](http://www.griffith.ie), which provides up-to-date information on programmes, QAE, application procedures, and college news;
- Social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and Youtube. These channels link to news, updates for learners, application information and other relevant updates;
- College email addresses are used to communicate with learners, staff and students, both en masse and in distinct cohorts.
- Moodle. Learners receive up-to-date programme information through Moodle, in addition to updates from College services and the students' union.
- Phone enquiries are taken through college reception and phone numbers for staff members are available on their website profiles. Enquiries are also taken by national and international teams directly via dedicated phone numbers.
- Marketing Officers meet prospective learners - whether virtually, over the phone or in person - to discuss programme information and applications.
- Handbooks for learners, international learners and lecturers provide information on QAE, the college, services, and other important information.
- New learners are provided with a two-day induction at the start of their period of study, offering details of the college, its services, and tours of the campus. Induction is managed by a cross-department working group and compliments efforts at faculty level.
- Computer monitors and screens are used to display important information throughout the campuses.
- Open days, physical and virtual, on the Dublin, Cork and Limerick campuses aim to provide prospective applicants with access to the campus and representatives of faculties and services.
- A dedicated Schools Liaison Officer oversees communication with teachers, guidance counsellors and second level students. A range of workshops and events, virtual and onsite, are undertaken annually to communicate to this second level audience.
- National learner recruitment campaigns are undertaken throughout the year, promoting the college's QQI programmes at its campuses in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. A range of communications channels are used, including radio, outdoor, print, digital and social media activity. This is supported by publicity activity to national and local media.
- The national and international Marketing Officers are also available to meet prospective learners virtually via Zoom for one-to-one sessions.
- The Marketing Department utilises its CRM platform Hubspot to correspond regularly with prospective learners and applicants, promoting various events, alumni profiles, newsletters, application deadlines and other relevant information. Hubspot is used by the Marketing Department to record subscription preferences to ensure we are following GDPR best practice.
- The national and international Marketing Officers also regularly hold faculty or course specific webinars/information events via Zoom for prospective learners, partner universities and agents.

### **Education and Training Programmes.**

The Marketing Department is responsible for the promotion of the college's programmes. The college operates three QAE policies and procedures in relation to public information:

- *QAE E6 - Programme Information Provision Policy.* The objective of this policy is to ensure that prospective learners are provided with sufficient information regarding all aspects of their programme of interest. The procedure details the information that must be made available to prospective learners. Detailed information about the programme, its content, its recognition and its duration are provided. The Marketing Department and International Office are responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- *QAE K1 - Procedure for Compiling and Approving Academic Marketing Material.* This procedure governs the preparation and approval of marketing material for the college prospectus and website. It also outlines the Marketing Department's contribution to the development of individual faculty marketing material relating to academic programmes. The Marketing Department works with faculties to develop marketing material, with final sign-off from the faculty in question.
- *QAE K2 - Procedure for Compiling and Approving College Handbooks for Academic Programmes.* This procedure concerns the preparation of information for and the approval of college handbooks. The QAE Department is responsible for compiling the Learner Handbook, International Learner Handbook and Lecturer handbook and ensuring they are compatible with one another. These handbooks are prepared in consultation with the Students' Union, the Management Board, and the Director of Academic Programmes.

### **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies and Procedures**

QAE policies, procedures and guidelines are published on the college website and on the virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle. The QAE section of the college website also includes quick links to policies, procedures, guidelines and the relevant forms that are particularly relevant to learners, e.g. complaints procedure, appeals forms and the learner code of conduct.

### **Evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations**

The college is committed to transparency with regards the findings of independent quality assurance evaluations and is committed to publishing any such reports. The quality assurance and enhancement section of the website features reports from the re-engagement panel, programme validation and re-validation panels,

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### Evaluation of programmes

The college monitors and evaluates its programmes on an ongoing basis. Feedback and monitoring reports are referred to the APC and the Management Board for attention and any necessary action.

### Feedback mechanisms

#### *Learners*

The college provides learners with formal, semi-formal and informal opportunities to give feedback on their experience. At a module level, learners give formal feedback through a module evaluation survey at least once per semester. Learners and their class representatives are encouraged to discuss matters of concern or to give feedback on positive experiences to the lecturing and programme teams. Learner representatives sit on Programme Committees and are supported in doing so by the college's participation in the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP).

#### *Lecturers*

At the end of each module delivery, the lecturer(s) on a module complete a feedback form. This form constitutes an experience-based evaluation of the module's learning outcomes, assessments, and content.

#### *Graduates and Alumni*

As per QAE F3 - Gathering External Feedback Procedure, graduates of the college are canvassed for their feedback within six months of completing their studies. Alumni are canvassed for their feedback on an ad hoc basis in order to inform programme reviews, institutional reviews and other institutional developments as they arise. Graduate feedback is organised by the Graduation Office; Alumni feedback is organised by the Alumni Office.

### Internal Reviews

#### *Annual Programme Reports*

Annual Programme Reports (APR) are prepared in respect of each QQI-validated programme in the college. The APR is prepared by the programme team at the end of the academic year and reports on the experience of delivering the programme. The APR draws from feedback from learners, lecturers, and external experts and reflects on learner attainment. The completed reports are sent to the Head of Faculty (HF) for approval.

#### *Periodic*

A function of the college's Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC) is to proactively review academic and professional programmes in the college based on indicators that an existing programme is academically and/or financially inviable.



### *Cyclical*

Each of the college's QQI-validated programmes is subject to extensive review at least once every five years. Faculties and programme teams extensively review the module content of the programme, its learning outcomes, and its assessments. A revised programme document is prepared alongside a report of a review of the programme in the validation period in question. This report considers feedback from industry, external examiners, learners, lecturers and graduates and the performance of the programme from the point of view of admissions, assessment performance, progression, completion and graduate outcomes. The report and the revised programme document are considered by an external peer review panel, which comprises academic and discipline experts, learner representatives, and industry experts.

## **Evaluation of QAE**

### *Re-engagement*

As a voluntary provider, the college's quality assurance and enhancement policies, procedures and guidelines are subject to review by QQI as per Re-engagement with QQI - Overarching Policy for All Providers.

### *QAE procedure annual review*

As per QAE A0 - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, QAE policies, procedures and guidelines are subject to annual review by the APC. This policy ensures that procedures remain current and reflect QQI's policy papers.

### *Evaluation of faculties*

As per QAE G2 - Faculty Review Procedure, Faculty Reviews take place each year, normally immediately after the summer examination boards, in order to inform planning for the next academic year. These review meetings provide an opportunity for Faculty members and college management to identify, evaluate and address any issues surrounding the successful running of the faculty.

### *Evaluation of departments*

As per QAE G3 - Department Review Procedure, a department's activities are subject to review at least once every two years. The objectives of Department Reviews include: to review the Department's performance as a business unit within the college; to review the Department's performance as a service unit within the college; to review the Department's projected development in terms of itself and the college as a whole; to consider the effectiveness of the Department's links with the Faculties and with other departments within the college; to identify and disseminate good practice; to provide a report on the Department's development to the Management Board (and a summary to the Academic & Professional Council); and to advise the college's annual budgetary review process.

### *Engagement of external examiners*

The college's procedures for the recruitment, training and support of external examiners were updated in November 2018 to reflect recent policy changes by QQI.

### *Recruitment of external examiners*

The college's recruitment of external examiners is governed by QAE E1 - Procedure for Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners. Examiners are nominated by the programme director on the basis of their academic and/or professional qualifications. The examinations office assesses the nomination to ensure that the nominee is suitably qualified, suitably experienced, and that there are no conflicts of interest. Nominations are then forwarded to the APC for approval, accompanied by a recommendation from the examinations office.

### *Training & Support of external examiners*

The college comprehensively inducts its external examiners to ensure that their role can be executed without obstruction. QAE E2 Roles & Responsibilities of External Examiners provides extensive information as to the college's expectation of its external examiners as well as the college's responsibilities in supporting their work. The examinations office provides a first port-of-call for queries and assistance.

## **Engagement of external experts**

### *Industry*

The college president employs an advisor to liaise with industry and contribute to relevant College processes and initiatives, such as programme development, funding and grant applications, and work-based learning initiatives.

### *Mock panels/reviews*

The college regularly engages external experts in the process of preparing for a validation event, planned development in procedure, or a large-scale review (e.g. re-engagement). This can take the form of a review of documentation, a review of processes or structures, or the hosting of a "mock" panel event.

### *Engagement with external QAE*

Through its participation in professional and sectoral networks and its engagement with the requirements of validating bodies, the college engages with external QAE developments and best practice approaches to ensure its procedures are current and fit for purpose.

### *Engagement with external groups*

College staff are active participants in a wide range of professional and sectoral networks. Participation ensures that the college actively contributes to QAE development and is abreast of developments in best practice. Such networks include:

- The National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, of which two college staff are Associates
- Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA), at board level, and at its working groups and sub-committees
- The National Student Engagement Programme
- QQI's standing committees and ad hoc working groups, e.g. the working group that considered the AQR template.

*Requirements of awarding and professional bodies*

Awarding bodies for College programmes regularly issue new or updated QAE policy and procedure guidelines. Normally such guidelines have been developed in consultation with providers. This requires the college to reflect the new guidelines in its own QAE manual, either by updating an existing procedure or by developing a new one.

## 9. Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

#### Guide:

Indicate the total number of arrangements in place with each of the following (i) PRSBs, (ii) awarding bodies, or (iii) QA bodies in the table below.

In the boxes below, provide details of any programmes for which accreditation/approval has been extended, or which have been newly accredited/approved, during the reporting period. Details of more than five arrangements may be included if necessary. If available, links to publications related to the arrangement, such as accreditation/approval reports, may be included alongside details of the arrangement.

If available, include links to a list of all other relevant arrangements approved prior to the reporting period.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	6
Awarding bodies	4
QA bodies	1

<b>1. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PSRB
Name of body:	Public Relations Institute of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MA in Journalism and Public Relations, Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Public Relations
Date of accreditation or last review	2020
Date of next review	2024

<b>2. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Awarding Body
Name of body:	Institute of Commercial Management (ICM)
Programme titles and links to publications	Diplomas in Business, Marketing, Human Resource Management, Project Management
Date of accreditation or last review	March 2020
Date of next review	March 2021

<b>3. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Awarding Body
Name of body:	Association of Chartered, Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma in Accounting & Business, ACCA Qualification
Date of accreditation or last review	April 2020
Date of next review	April 2021

<b>4. Type of arrangement</b>	QA body
Name of body:	ACELS
Programme titles and links to publications	All English Language programmes
Date of accreditation or last review	January 2020
Date of next review	Reviews and inspects take place on an ad hoc basis

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	12
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

## 9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	106, including Study Abroad partners
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Griffith College

2019-20

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**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE  
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**

**Annual Quality Report - Griffith College**

**Reporting Period 2019-20**

# 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

## 1.1 Strategic QA Developments and Enhancements

### Activities and enhancements arising from the reengagement process

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2019 an independent peer review panel visited Griffith College on behalf of QQI to undertake a site visit as part of the re-engagement process. In preparation for the site visit, the college had completed a self-evaluation against the QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines. Based on this self-evaluation in addition to the panel's own findings, the college immediately began the implementation of a series of quality assurance improvements and enhancements.

Through the re-engagement self-evaluation, the college identified the need to improve the participation of learners in governance and their engagement with QAE processes. The panel supported this objective and encouraged the college to improve practice in this area through a specific advice.

The panel recommended approval of the college's application and praised a number of the college's strengths. The panel also issued a list of recommendations and specific advices, namely:

- [Mandatory change] - remedy the situation whereby the same individual, who was also a major shareholder, was the chair of the three largest committees
- [Mandatory change] - increase externality within units of governance
- [Mandatory change] - change the composition of the APC and its sub-committees to reflect greater representation of academic staff and learners
- [Specific advice] - achieve a greater balance between informal practices and more formal structures and documentation
- [Specific advice] - demonstrate greater rigour in the approach to benchmarking
- [Specific advice] - progress the stated plan to develop criteria to assist in the identification and selection of external expert candidates for the board of directors

The college addressed the mandatory changes and issued a suite of proposed measures to the panel within two weeks of the date of the report. These measures, which were accepted by the panel as satisfactory, were:

- A proposal to appoint an external chair to the APC, to satisfy the mandatory changes in respect of chairpersonship and externality
- A proposal for a reformed membership of the APC, including greater external representation, an additional seat for learner representatives, two seats for elected representatives of academic staff, a seat for a programme director from a collaborative partner, and a seat for a representative of the departments which provide support services to learners. Commensurate changes were also proposed to the membership of the sub-committees of APC.

These changes are further detailed in sections 1.2 and 2.0.



The college has addressed the specific advices arising from the re-engagement process and continues to enhance its quality assurance systems on an ongoing basis. Further details are available in section 1.2.

### **Devolution of responsibility for validation sub-processes**

In November 2019 the college met with representatives of QQI to progress the college's interest in devolution of responsibility for arranging some validation sub-processes. On the advice of QQI, the college drafted some minor changes to its existing programme validation procedures. The APC approved two procedures:

- QAE B2 - Programme Validation Procedure with DR
- QAE B3 - Programme Validation Procedure without DR

Upon approval of the procedures, the college agreed a memorandum of understanding with QQI and applied as per *Devolution of Responsibility for arranging (Programme Validation Related) Independent Evaluation Reports at QQI's request: OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES*. The application was approved at the February 2020 meeting of the Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC).

### **New policies, procedures and guidelines**

The college adopted or made changes to the following QAE documents:

- *QAE B2 - Programme Validation Procedure with DR* - new procedure
- *QAE B3 - Programme Validation Procedure without DR* - amendment to existing procedure
- *QAE C7 - Procedure for a Return from a Break in Studies* - new procedure
- *QAE J3 - Learner Code of Conduct* - amendment to existing procedure
- *QAE J6 - Academic Misconduct Procedure* - amendment to existing procedure
- *QAE A2 - Academic and Professional Council* - amendment to existing procedure
- *QAE A2a - Membership of APC* - new procedure
- *QAE A3 - Academic and Professional Council Terms of Reference* - amendment to existing procedure
- *QAE G1 - Procedure for Annual Programme Reporting* - amendment to existing procedure
- *QAE GA1 - Annual Programme Report Template* - amendment to existing

Rationale and context for the specific changes, in addition to the details of the changes themselves, are included in the relevant sections of this report.

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	<p align="center"><b>Planned objectives (Previous AQR)</b></p> <p align="center">Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</p>	<p align="center"><b>Update on Status</b></p> <p align="center">Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.</p> <p align="center">If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.</p>
1	Evidence separation of academic and commercial decision-making ( <b>Mandatory change</b> )	<b>Complete:</b> The college appointed an external chair to the Academic and Professional Council, who assumed the role on 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2019.
2	Increase externality within units of governance ( <b>Mandatory change</b> )	<b>Complete:</b> The college appointed an external chair to the Academic and Professional Council and established an external industry advisor seat on the same body.
3	Reflect greater representation of academic staff and learners in Academic & Professional Council and its sub-committees ( <b>Mandatory change</b> )	<b>Complete:</b> Additional seats for learner representatives were established on the Academic and Professional Council and QAES. Additional measures were introduced to support their participation in these committees.
4	Increase formalisation of practice, structures, and documentation ( <b>specific advice</b> )	<b>Complete:</b> The college has identified a number of practices and structures that are being subjected to increased formalisation. This includes formally documenting feedback and actions taken to address it, revising the format of Annual Programme Reports to ensure their timely completion, and recording the approval of APC for certain processes and proposals.
5	Adopt a more rigorous approach to benchmarking quality of programmes, teaching and learning, and QAE processes against national standards ( <b>specific advice</b> )	<b>Complete:</b> During the reporting period, the college has undertaken a substantial programme of external engagement in order to improve the rigour of its benchmarking. The college, through its staff members, is an active participant in sectoral networks such as the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and the HECA Quality Enhancement Forum (HAQEF). The

		<p>college has continued to engage external experts in reviewing its practices, programmes and processes.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the college participated in the INDEx survey on learners' experience of digital learning alongside the university, technological, and private provider sectors.</p> <p>In recent years QQI published award statistics annually for providers in the sector. These have proved a valuable benchmarking source for the college in looking at the award profile of programmes.</p> <p>Progression data for the University and IoT sector have been published by the HEA on regular occasions. The college carries out an annual analysis of retention at programme level and the HEA data has proved very useful in this process. Currently the HEA have published data for cohorts up to 2017/18.</p>
6	<p>Introduce more formal structures for collecting and acting on learner feedback and consider role of learners within such structures (specific advice)</p>	<p><b>Complete:</b> The introduction of a second learner representative seat on the APC has helped ensure more opportunity for feedback from learners. A standing committee of APC with learner representation was established during the second semester to develop and consider time-sensitive proposals for teaching and learning, which allowed for timely learner input into major decisions. Additional learner feedback surveys have been established and reports submitted to the relevant bodies for action.</p> <p>The college expects to report greater learner engagement on sub-committees of APC at the next opportunity.</p>
7	<p>Expand externality on board of directors (specific advice)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b> The college continues to work on defining terms of reference for additional external representative seats on the board of directors.</p>

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Academic and Professional Council	7 <sup>th</sup> September 4 <sup>th</sup> October 1 <sup>st</sup> November 6 <sup>th</sup> December 10 <sup>th</sup> January 7 <sup>th</sup> February 6 <sup>th</sup> March 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 1 <sup>st</sup> May 5 <sup>th</sup> June
Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee	Weekly on Tuesday mornings
Programme Proposal and Review Committee	14 <sup>th</sup> September 11 <sup>th</sup> October 8 <sup>th</sup> November 13 <sup>th</sup> December 17 <sup>th</sup> January 14 <sup>th</sup> February 13 <sup>th</sup> March 10 <sup>th</sup> April 8 <sup>th</sup> May 12 <sup>th</sup> June
Programme Directors' Committee	18 <sup>th</sup> October 15 <sup>th</sup> November 24 <sup>th</sup> January 21 <sup>st</sup> February 20 <sup>th</sup> March 17 <sup>th</sup> April 15 <sup>th</sup> May 19 <sup>th</sup> June

### **1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Developments**

The college appointed an experienced former President of an Institute of Technology as Chair of the Academic Council.

A member of the college's faculty of teaching and learning assumed the role of acting head of faculty following the departure of the incumbent.

A new position of Project Manager for Programme Development was created and filled. A Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer was promoted to the position of Project Manager for QAE and given additional responsibilities.

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review	Links to relevant publications
Programme Review (quinquennial) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24135, Master of Science in Accounting and Finance Management, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24136, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Accounting and Finance Management, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019	<a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41043_Panel_Reports_PG24135.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41043_Panel_Reports_PG24135.pdf</a>
Programme Review (quinquennial) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24029, Master of Science in International Business Management, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24031, Master of Business Administration in International Business, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24030, Postgraduate Diploma in Business in International Business Management Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019	<a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-40616_Panel_Reports_PG24029.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-40616_Panel_Reports_PG24029.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-40618_Panel_Reports_PG24031.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-40618_Panel_Reports_PG24031.pdf</a>
Programme Review (quinquennial) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24231, Master of Science in Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24232, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG24233, Master of Science in International Business and Law, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24234, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in International Business and Law, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019	<a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41316_Panel_Reports_PG24231.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41316_Panel_Reports_PG24231.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41318_Panel_Reports_PG24233.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41318_Panel_Reports_PG24233.pdf</a>

<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24138, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communications and Media Production, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>PG24139, Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>PG24141, Certificate in Photography, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24140, Bachelor of Arts in Photographic Media, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41069_Panel_Reports_PG24138.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41069_Panel_Reports_PG24138.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41070_Panel_Reports_PG24139.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41070_Panel_Reports_PG24139.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41072_Panel_Reports_PG24141.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41072_Panel_Reports_PG24141.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41071_Panel_Reports_PG24140.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41071_Panel_Reports_PG24140.pdf</a></p>
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24175, Master of Law in International Human Rights Law, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24176, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Commercial Law, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24173, Master of Laws in International Commercial Law, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24174, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Law, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24171, Master of Laws in International Law, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24172, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Human Rights Law, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24170, Bachelor of Laws (Honours), Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41230_Panel_Reports_PG24176.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41230_Panel_Reports_PG24176.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41224_Panel_Reports_PG24170.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41224_Panel_Reports_PG24170.pdf</a></p>
<p>Programme Review, in collaboration with Innopharma Labs Ltd (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24161, Bachelor of Arts in Pharmaceutical Business Operations, Level 7, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41180_Panel_Reports_PG24161.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41180_Panel_Reports_PG24161.pdf</a></p>

<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24209, Master of Science in Computing, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24210, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Computing, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24211, Master of Science in Interactive Digital Media, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24212, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Interactive Digital Media, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41285_Panel_Reports_PG24209.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41285_Panel_Reports_PG24209.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41287_Panel_Reports_PG24211.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41287_Panel_Reports_PG24211.pdf</a></p>
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24213, Certificate in Mediation, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 20 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41290_Panel_Reports_PG24213.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41290_Panel_Reports_PG24213.pdf</a></p>
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24216, Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Communications, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24217, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Journalism and Media Communications, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24220, Master of Arts in TV and Radio Journalism, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24221, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in TV and Radio Journalism, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24218, Master of Arts in Journalism and Public Relations, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24219, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Journalism and Public Relations, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41298_Panel_Reports_PG24217.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41298_Panel_Reports_PG24217.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41302_Panel_Reports_PG24221.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41302_Panel_Reports_PG24221.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41300_Panel_Reports_PG24219.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41300_Panel_Reports_PG24219.pdf</a></p>



<p>Programme Review, in collaboration with The Leinster School of Music and Drama (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24227, Higher Diploma in Arts in Drama Education, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG24228, Certificate in Drama Education, Level 8, Minor Award, 45 Credits</li> <li>• PG24229, Certificate in Drama Performance, Level 8, Minor Award, 20 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 12/09/2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41310_Panel_Reports_PG24227.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41310_Panel_Reports_PG24227.pdf</a></p>
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24240, Master of Arts in Education, Learning and Development, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24241, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Education, Learning and Development, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG24242, Certificate in Education, Learning and Development, Level 9, Minor Award, 20 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>PAEC meeting - 05/12/19</p>	<p><a href="https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41325_Panel_Reports_PG24240_R.pdf">https://www.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-41325_Panel_Reports_PG24240_R.pdf</a></p>

## 1.4.2 External Experts in IQA System

### (i) Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes					1	11	
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes					1	11	
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes							
Average panel size for each process type*					5	7	

## (ii) Expert Review Teams/Panel Profiles involved in IQA Composition

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other or unspecified						Similar	Different
Chair	12	8	4		12					1	12
Secretary	12	6	6		12					3	9
Academic/ Discipline Specific	26	13	13		22	4				3	23
Student Representative	12	5	7		12					1	11
QA											
Teaching & Learning	3		3		2	1				1	2
External Industry /Third Mission	11	5	6		11					N/a	N/a

## 2.0 IQA System - Enhancement and Impacts

### Governance and Management of Quality

The college has implemented the recommendations of the re-engagement peer evaluation pane with respect to governance and management of quality.

#### *Committee Membership*

An experienced former President of an Institute of Technology was appointed as chair of the Academic and Professional Council. In assuming the role, this individual replaced College President Prof. Diarmuid Hegarty, and ensured independent external oversight of the committee.

Committee membership was overhauled to ensure greater representation of departments, lecturing staff, service staff and learners. An internal evaluation of committee membership also removed several seats to ensure that all who were members of the committee had good reason for their membership. Initially, the additional seats were:

- An additional seat for learner representatives, increasing from one to two.
- A representative of full-time lecturers who do not also have management responsibilities, elected by such full-time lecturers.
- A representative of part-time lecturers, elected by part-time lecturers
- A representative of the Programme Directors Committee, nominated by that committee
- A representative of the Faculty Administrators Committee, nominated by that committee
- A representative of the departments that provide support to learners, nominated by the International Office, Learning Support Office, and Learner Services Office.

Following a mid-year reflection on the effectiveness of the committee, two further seats were established:

- The Head of Academic Programmes, which had been removed from the committee after the first evaluation
- A representative of the Marketing Department. Previously, the domestic marketing and international marketing teams each nominated a representative to “share” one seat on a rotational basis.

The Chair of and Secretary to the APC agreed at the start of the year to prioritise the improved participation of learner representatives. To that end they met regularly with learner representatives in advance of meetings concerning the business of the committee. This has significantly improved the capacity of learner representatives to meaningfully engage with and contribute to academic governance.

The introduction of lecturer representatives has seen an increased number of related items tabled at APC, while the lecturer representatives have consistently collected and organised feedback and brought it to the council.

### *(Re-)Establishment of Committees*

During the reporting period the college established two additional sub-committees of the Academic and Professional Council (outlined below). Minutes from these meetings are included in the documentation for meetings of the Academic and Professional Council.

Prior to this academic year the college operated an *ad hoc* Programme Proposal Committee involving members of the college's academic and professional council and the management board. This was replaced by a new permanent Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC) with broader terms of reference and a new membership. This committee meets monthly to review proposals for new programmes and to act in respect of programmes for which there are indicators of underperformance. Recommendations from the PPRC are made to the college's APC and the management board.

The committee met on a monthly basis throughout the period in question. This has ensured a smooth, consistent flow of business and has ensured that the college's QQI programme proposals in respect of validations are of a high standard.

The Faculty Administrators' Committee was set up as a forum for Faculty Administrators to discuss and propose solutions to common issues and to plan collectively for upcoming events and deadlines. This committee met on four occasions in the period.

### *APC Standing Committee*

A standing committee of the APC was established in the second semester in order to give interim approval to urgent proposals for teaching, learning and assessment arising as a result of COVID restrictions. The committee included the APC Chair and Secretary, the Director of Academic Programmes, a Head of Faculty and the President of Griffith College Students' Union.

### **Assessment of Learners**

In the context of significant COVID-related disruption arising from the circumstances of the second semester, the college made special arrangements for learners completing examinations in 2020.

### *Conduct of examinations*

Learners were not required to physically present themselves on the campus to complete an examination. Rather, examinations were held online with virtual invigilation. The college made the following arrangements for formal time-limited examinations:

- The examinations were scheduled to take place online at traditional Irish time slots. Examination papers were made available at least 15 minutes in advance, and learners were given an additional period of at least 15 minutes after the examination to submit their completed work.
- Learners were facilitated to submit their examination on a computer, for example by typing responses using Word, Excel, or a similar programme. Where learners were not able to complete their examinations online, they were facilitated in completing the examination through handwritten responses.

- It was understood that learners may access their course notes and other sources during the examination. Given the strict time constraints, learners were advised of the risks of losing valuable time searching for new understandings of topics.
- Learners were required to consent to the college's terms and conditions for the examination. They were required to be online and viewable by college invigilators for the duration of the exams and the additional periods before and afterwards. Candidates requiring to temporarily leave the venue during an examination could request to do so by alerting or texting the invigilator.

#### *Preventing undue disadvantage*

In order not to disadvantage learners in relation to their grades and award classification, the college introduced the below (temporary) amendments to its QAE procedures to ensure that learners could appropriately evidence their knowledge, skills and competences, in order to secure the module and / or programme grades their performance merited.

- Learners who are not able to complete their end-of-semester (May 2020) assessments were permitted apply to defer their assessment until the August sitting.
- Where a learner failed the end-of-semester (May 2020) assessment, (for reasons other than those of academic misconduct) they were permitted to re-sit / re-take the assessment in August (repeat sitting) without losing a sitting.
- Learners taking assessments as a first attempt in May 2020, who passed the assessment, and who felt they performed poorer than they would otherwise have done, were given the choice to register to re-sit / re-take the assessment in August (repeat sitting) without losing a sitting. In these circumstances, learners were given the higher of the two marks achieved.
- Learners in final (award) year were facilitated to graduate with the highest performance grade they specifically evidenced.
- Details on how to register for repeat sittings were issued along with the May results.
- The college waived all August 2020 repeat / re-sit fees arising from end-of-semester May 2020 examinations and assessments that might otherwise have applied.

## **Supports for Learners**

Prior to re-engagement, the college had expressed to QQI its intention to review its supports for learners and its engagement with learners and their representatives. In December 2019 the Learner Wellbeing Group was established by the Director of Academic Programmes and tasked with making recommendations to the management board.

The group constituted learners and their representatives, members of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Department, and representatives from the departments that provide support services to learners. It met throughout the first four months of the calendar year and submitted a report to management board in May 2020. Its recommendations are wide-ranging and relate to the availability of support services, the organisation of the college's support for learners and what indicators are relevant in understanding the effectiveness of supports.

## **Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review**

### *Annual Programme Reports*

During the reporting period the college reviewed and updated its Annual Programme Report template and the QAE procedure that governed its operation. Annual reports, prepared by the programme committee, are an important part of the college's monitoring.

An initial consultation with programme directors was undertaken in April 2020. The purpose of this consultation was to collect insights as to the experience of those who complete the reports and to identify potential improvements. A significant focus of these discussions related to the data and information that is included in the reports. Based on these consultations a revised template and procedure were prepared by the QAE Department and discussed by the Programme Directors' Committee. Finally, the revised template and procedures were approved by the APC in June.

Programme Directors felt that the new documents were clearer, more manageable, and included the appropriate data in the assessment of the quality of programme delivery. It was also felt that the new template was well aligned with QQI's template for the Programme Review Report, and that this would contribute to improved quality of documentation for re-validation.

In the next reporting period, the college will receive reports in respect of the 2019-20 academic year.

### *Self-evaluation of faculties, programmes, and units*

In January 2020 the APC approved a template for a self-evaluation report. The report template is aligned to the Core Quality Assurance Guidelines and is to be completed by heads of faculties, departments, services units and by coordinators of activities within the college. In addition to reporting against Core QA criteria, the report also articulates any planned improvements or resource needs. It is presented by the relevant head to the APC for approval.

In March 2020 the APC received a report from the head of the committee responsible for organising learner induction. Further reviews and reports will be tabled in accordance with a schedule determined by APC. It is envisioned that such reports to APC will replace the current procedures for department and faculty review.

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

### *Update to procedures*

In May 2020 the APC approved minor updates to the Learner Code of Conduct and Academic Misconduct Procedures. These updates reflected the new provision of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2018. The college's procedures are now explicit in designating as misconduct the act of assisting another learner to cheat in an academic setting.

### *Participation in the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)*

The college's Head of Faculty for the Graduate Business School was appointed to the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). This individual coordinated the college's participation in NAIN activities and its contribution to surveys and data reporting initiatives.

### *Support from TLA Group*

The TLA Group assisted lecturers in revising their planned examinations considering the new arrangements for online supervision.

### *Information to Learners*

In light of the move to online examinations, and having heard concerns from learners as to the consequences for the integrity of their awards, the college published [extensive guidance](#) in relation to online examinations with a focus on academic integrity.



### 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

#### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators
1	Re-establish a cycle of internal reviews	<p>During the reporting period the APC approved a schedule of internal reviews which was not fulfilled due to COVID-related disruption. In the next reporting period, the APC will reconsider the schedule and the terms of reference of the report, and up to four faculties, departments, or service delivery units will be reviewed.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> The successful review by APC of up to four reports within the reporting period.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Director of Academic Programmes, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officers and Department Members, Secretary to APC)</p>
2	Teaching & Learning Strategy Development	<p>Lead by the Faculty of Teaching and Learning, the college will develop a teaching and learning strategy for the institution that builds on the experience of emergency online provision.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Substantial evidence of progress towards a teaching &amp; learning strategy, e.g., the engagement of external experts, production of a draft roadmap, consideration of reports by relevant committees, approval of the strategy document by APC.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Director of Academic Programmes, Programme Directors, Faculty of Teaching and Learning</p>

3	Improve QAE of research	<p>In order to improve and formalise the college's QAE for research, the college aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise the role of the Research Ethics Committee in the QAE documentation and ensure the committee's minutes are include with APC documentation</li> <li>• Work with Faculties to establish formal research guidelines for learners</li> <li>• Enhance the supports available to staff members who wish to undertake or who are undertaking research</li> </ul> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Approval of sub-committee terms of reference by APC, committee activity as demonstrated by submission of minutes to APC agenda, availability of further supports to members of college community engaged in research.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Secretary to APC, Director of Academic Programmes, Research Ethics Committee, QAE Department</p>
4	Full implementation of new APR	<p>In June 2020 the APC approved a new procedure for the completion of annual programme reports and a new template for same. In the next reporting period the college aims to have fully implemented the new procedure.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> submission of reports for all relevant programmes, consideration of aggregate reports by the APC.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Programme Committees, Programme Directors</p>

5	Review of collaborative delivery arrangements	<p>Considering the specific advice of the re-engagement panel (May 2019), the college is identifying ways to formalise its QAE processes. One such process is the monitoring and review of collaborative agreements, which heretofore have taken place on an informal basis due to the frequency of contact between parties.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Documented evidence of engagement between the college and its collaborative partners regarding the relationship between the parties, the delivery of programmes, and other matters related to collaborative provision.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Programme delivery teams in collaborative partners, Director and Head of Academic Programmes. QAE Department, Head of Academic Administration</p>
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## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24402, Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>• PG24403, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG22058, Certificate in Pharmaceutical Data Analytics, Level 9, Special Purpose Award, 40 Credits [closed]</li> <li>• PG24404, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Business Operations, Level 8, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>Completed - PAEC: 10/09/19</p>	<p>(previous review - 16/09/15)</p>
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24406, Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial and Systems Engineering, Level 7, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG22123, Certificate in Continuous Improvement Engineering Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits [closing]</li> <li>• PG22126, Certificate in Environment and Sustainability in Industrial Engineering Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits [closing]</li> <li>• PG22122, Certificate in Industrial Engineering Principles Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 10 Credits [closing]</li> <li>• PG22125, Certificate in Logistics and Supply Chain Management Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits [closing]</li> <li>• PG22124, Certificate in Project Management in Industrial Engineering Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits [closing]</li> <li>• PG22127, Certificate in Work Measurement and Methods Engineering Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits [closing]</li> </ul>	<p>Completed - PAEC: 15/10/19</p>	<p>(previous review - 16/09/15)</p>
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG24411, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>• PG24410, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>Completed - PAEC: 15/10/19</p>	<p>(previous review - 16/09/15)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24417, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (HRM), Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>PG24422, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (Marketing), Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> </ul>		
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24423, Bachelor of Arts in Marketing, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>PG24424, Bachelor of Arts in Business, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>PG24429/PG24430, Higher Certificate in Business, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits</li> </ul>	Completed - PAEC: 15/10/19	(previous review - 16/09/15)
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG24425, Master of Science in Network and Information Security, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24427, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Network and Information Security, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>PG24426, Master of Science in Big Data Management and Analytics, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits</li> <li>PG24428, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Big Data Management and Analytics, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	Completed - PAEC: 15/10/19	(previous review - 16/09/15)
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial) - Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG22077, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Hospitality Management, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> <li>PG22079, Diploma in International Hospitality Management, Level 7, Minor Award, 120 Credits</li> </ul>	Planned for Completion at PAEC: 06/20	16/09/15
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial) - Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG20399, BA in Film and TV Production, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> </ul>	Planned for Completion at PAEC: 06/20	Dec 2013
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial) - Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG21104, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Design Communications, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits</li> </ul>	Planned for Completion at PAEC: 06/20	Sept 2014
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial) - Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG22052, Diploma in Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Graphic Illustration, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits</li> </ul>	Planned for Completion at PAEC: 06/20	16/09/15

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG22054, Certificate in Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Graphic Illustration, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 30 Credits</li> <li>• PG22056, Diploma in Entrepreneurship and Project Management in the Built Environment, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG22057, Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Project Management in the Built Environment, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 30 Credits</li> <li>• PG22059, Diploma in Retrofit, Conservation and Sustainability, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits</li> <li>• PG22060, Certificate in Retrofit, Conservation and Sustainability, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 30 Credits</li> </ul>		
<p>Programme Review (quinquennial) - Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG22559, Diploma in Legal Studies and Practice, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 20 Credits</li> <li>• PG22521, Certificate in Legal Practice Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 20 Credits</li> </ul>	<p>Planned for Completion at PAEC: 06/20</p>	<p>20/07/16</p>

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

#### **(Quinquennial) Programme Reviews - to be completed pre Sept 2022**

PG23508, Certificate in Dual Career Development (Sport), Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 20 Credits

PG22715, Master of Science in International Pharmaceutical Business Management, Level 9, Masters Degree, 90 Credits

PG22724, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in International Pharmaceutical Business Management, Level 9, Postgraduate Diploma, 60 Credits

PG22983, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio and Music Technology, Level 8, Honours Bachelor Degree, 210 Credits

PG22984, Certificate in Audio and Music Technology, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits

PG23343, Bachelor of Arts in Animation, Level 7, Ordinary Bachelor Degree, 180 Credits

PG23335, Certificate in Animation, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits

#### **(Quinquennial) Programme Reviews - to be completed pre Sept 2023**

PG23961, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion Design, Level 8, Honours Bachelor Degree, 180 Credits

PG23962, Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design, Level 7, Ordinary Bachelor Degree, 180 Credits

PG23963, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Interior Architecture, Level 8, Honours Bachelor Degree, 180 Credits

PG23964, Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design, Level 7, Ordinary Bachelor Degree, 180 Credits

PG23965, Certificate in Art and Design, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits

PG24023, Certificate in Advanced Taxation Planning and Advice, Level 8, Special Purpose Award, 15 Credits

PG24027, Certificate in Legal Studies, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### IQA Response to Emergency Situations/Covid-19 Pandemic

#### *Griffith College Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Group*

In March 2020 the government announced strict restrictions aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19. The resultant closure of third-level institutions presented a situation whereby all teaching was to be delivered online at short notice.

In order to support and quality assure and enhance its T&L arrangements during this period, the college re-purposed its Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Group. This group comprised teaching and learning experts drawn from across the college, including representatives of the Digital Learning Department, the Faculty of Teaching and Learning, the Library and QAED.

The group was able to draw on existing expertise in delivering existing blended learning programmes, and much of the infrastructure and expertise required was already in place at the time of the TLA group's re-development. The group coordinated the college's approach in its response to staff needs for assistance in engaging with alternative teaching and learning provision, and alternative online supervised assessments, to facilitate finishing out the academic year under the COVID-19 restrictions.

#### *Resources*

To support academic staff, the group established a helpdesk-style email account, which responded to requests for assistance on a "taxi rank" basis. A TLA Moodle page containing a variety of multi-media resources with a strong focus on best practice in online teaching, learning and assessment was launched in April 2020.

The group hosted a series of drop-in sessions through Zoom, focusing on subjects such as remote classroom setup, assessment design, use of Zoom for teaching, pedagogical advice, and technical guides to online delivery. Other resources provided through the Moodle page included guidelines on remote assessment for lecturers and learners, and learner feedback, and links to useful good practice publications prepared by other institutions.

#### *Evidence of success*

At the end of the semester, the TLA group coordinated (Programme Director-led) focus groups on the emergency teaching online and online examinations arrangements. Feedback received strongly indicated that the supports provided by the TLA group were highly valued by lecturers. Many responses provided constructive suggestions for how the resources could be improved in future, and this has been reflected in the current materials and arrangements.

#### *Outcomes*

Lecturer perspectives on the COVID-19 contingency arrangements were sought at the end of May 2020 through a survey emailed to all lecturers. Of the 73 lecturers who responded:

- 80.3% agreed or strongly agreed that the college had provided access to sufficient technological resources



- 88.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the college's supports were effective in maintaining standards in teaching and learning.

A synchronous survey of learners and their experiences found that many of the supports cited as most helpful related to online TLA provisions, including:

- Examination information sessions
- Recorded lectures
- Lecturers' responsiveness through email
- Lecturers' use of online learning tools such as Zoom and Moodle

The TLA group continues to review and develop the college's resources to ensure that they make the best use of national and international practice, models, examples and resources from institutions around the world.

**Additional theme identified by institution: Programme Development*****Griffith College Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC)****Context*

The Programme Proposal and Review Committee (PPRC) was established in September 2019 to provide early and considered evaluation of programme proposals by a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, involving programme proposers, quality assurance, marketing, finance and external industry stakeholders. It replaced the less formal and more ad hoc evaluation of programmes previously undertaken by programme teams, quality assurance and management board.

The PPRC serves as an initial sounding board for new programme proposals, welcoming submissions from individuals or programme teams. Subsequent consideration by PPRC involves a detailed evaluation of programme proposal forms outlining the rationale, target audience, MIPLOs, Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy for the programme along with evidence of industry support.

In addition to new programmes, the PPRC also has a role in assessing the ongoing viability of existing programmes, for example in the case of low intake numbers. Where possible, solutions are advanced to address the challenges, for example through a re-design of the programme, or through more effective marketing. In certain cases, the PPRC may recommend a discontinuation of the programme.

Recommendations arising from PPRC supporting the development / re-development / discontinuation of programmes are forwarded to the college's APC and management board. Programmes recommended for development are then advanced in accordance with the college's QAE procedures, prior to being submitted to QQI.

*Purpose*

The PPRC was established with two broad functions:

- To review and progress proposals for new programmes
- To review the performance of existing programmes

In support of its functions, its membership includes representation of relevant stakeholders in the review of programme proposals and existing programmes, namely:

- Director of Academic Programmes (or nominee), Chair
- QAE representative, Convener and Secretary
- Marketing representative
- International marketing representative
- Finance representative
- Industry representative
- Short Courses representative
- Careers Office representative
- 2 x Management Board nominees

- Learner representative (GCSU nominee)

Other individuals are invited to attend meetings as necessary to support the business of the PPRC, e.g. to speak to a programme proposal or to offer additional expertise.

### *Programme proposals*

During the reporting period, the PPRC has received and considered 20 programme proposals. The committee also considered two differential validations from the Graduate Business School.

In total, 16 proposals were approved for further development. Of these programmes, six have subsequently been (re)validated and are now ready for enrolment. Of the remaining 10 proposals approved by the PPRC, six are still in-development and four have not progressed.

Finally, four proposals were refused based on one or more of the following reasons:

- A lack of a viable cohort evidenced
- A lack of job opportunities for graduates
- Incompatible with the college's development strategy
- Lack of long-term sustainability
- Financial compatibility out of line with college needs

Overall, thorough consideration is given to all proposals and findings are shared with the respective programme proposal teams. Often, PPRC subcommittees are formed to support proposers in gathering further evidence of programme viability, with a particular emphasis placed on industry stakeholders, as well as potential demand and feasibility. Subsequently, subcommittee members report findings to the PPRC where a decision is made whether to proceed with the development of the proposal or not.

### *Programme monitoring*

In establishing the terms of reference for the PPRC, it was agreed that underperforming programmes - defined as those with 10 learners or fewer - would be prioritised for support and meetings arranged with the relevant programme teams. Some of these solution-oriented meetings were held in late 2019 and early 2020. The main issues with currently underperforming programmes were highlighted and plans developed to enhance numbers, with guidance from marketing, finance and other relevant stakeholders.

From the outset, the PPRC has aimed to establish a positive line of communication with programme teams, and to ensure that timely and proactive support can be given to all programmes, especially those with low numbers.

### *Outcomes and future activities*

The primary achievements of the PPRC are that it has helped to produce high-quality programme proposal documents and created a forum for proactive and constructive intervention where there is evidence that a programme is underperforming. These achievements directly benefit learners on the programmes, both existing and new programmes.

Going forward, it is envisaged that the PPRC's visibility and influence across the college will increase, facilitating the creation of more industry-led and future-proofed programmes for learners. With the current development proposals including short programmes, collaborative provisions, potential Springboard+ proposals, and microcredentials, as well as 'regular' major awards, the PPRC has a significant role in the college's planning and governance activities.

# Griffith College – QAE System Diagram

