



CINNTE 

QQI REVIEW

## CINNTE CYCLICAL REVIEW

Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities and other Designated Awarding Bodies  
Addendum for the Review of Technological Universities

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### Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities and other Designated Awarding Bodies Addendum for the Review of Technological Universities

#### Section 1 Background

This document is an addendum to the CINNTE Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities and other Designated Awarding Bodies. It is applicable for the CINNTE Institutional Review Cycle Schedule 2017-2023<sup>1</sup> (see appendix 1) and will expire in 2023 on completion of this cycle of institutional reviews.

The purpose of this addendum is to provide supplementary information for new technological universities undergoing an institutional review, and for the external review teams conducting a review of this type of institution; it acts as an accompaniment to the main Terms of Reference and should be read in conjunction with these.

This addendum takes cognisance of material changes to the higher education landscape in Ireland, specifically, the establishment of new technological universities. It provides an enabling framework within the Terms of Reference to facilitate and further enhance the institutional review of the new institutions.

#### 1.1 Context

In 2016 QQI adopted a policy on cyclical review in higher education, which sets out the scope, purposes, criteria, model and procedures for the review process. These are detailed in the CINNTE Cyclical Review Handbook for the Review of Universities and Designated Awarding Bodies<sup>1</sup>. The Terms of Reference for review is also contained within the CINNTE Handbook.

The Technological Universities Act 2018 provides for the establishment of technological universities, as well as setting out their functions and governance structure. This Addendum to the Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities and Designated Awarding Bodies, provides supplemental information for the quality review of new technological universities within the CINNTE Review Cycle Schedule 2017-2013.

The CINNTE schedule of cyclical reviews has been revised to reflect the planned establishment of new technological universities; the institutional review of each new technological university will commence 18 months from the date of establishment of that technological university with the submission to QQI of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER).

#### 1.2 Purpose

The Policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions highlights four purposes for individual institutional reviews, as set out in the CINNTE handbook. These are consistent in this addendum, with some amendments to the measures as outlined in the table below.

Purpose	Achieved and Measured Through:
<b>1. To encourage a QA culture and the enhancement of the student learning environment and experience within institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasising the student and the student learning experience in reviews</li> <li>providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them</li> <li>exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures</li> <li>exploring quality as well as quality assurance with a focus on the development of an integrated quality system within the new institution</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/CINNTE%20Review%20Handbook%20DAB%20website.pdf>

Purpose	Achieved and Measured Through:
<b>2. To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasising the governance of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution</li> <li>pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level</li> <li>evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards</li> <li>evaluating how the institution intends to identify and measure itself against its own benchmarks and metrics to support quality assurance governance and procedures</li> <li>emphasising the improvement of quality assurance procedures</li> </ul>
<b>3. To contribute to public confidence in the quality of institutions by promoting transparency and public awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent</li> <li>publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences</li> <li>evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible</li> </ul>
<b>4. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution;</li> <li>ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence</li> <li>facilitating the institution to identify measurement, comparison and analytic techniques, based on quantitative data relevant to its evolving mission and context, to support quality assurance</li> <li>promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation</li> </ul>

#### Section 2 Objectives and Criteria

The objectives and criteria for the CINNTE cyclical review are detailed within the Terms of Reference and remain consistent in this addendum, with some additional details as outlined below.

The overarching theme for the institutional review of a newly formed technological university is: ensuring a forward-looking perspective.

#### 2.1 Review Objectives

Enhancing academic quality and excellence should be a key goal of each newly formed technological university. It is recognised that these new institutions will need to move from an implicit strategy based on the sum of the dissolved institutions, to a common global mission, strategy and goals, and that it will take time to mainstream an institution-wide quality assurance system, and to implement institution-wide procedural change.

The objectives for the CINNTE Review are framed within this context. Whilst the review process will be forward-looking, it must also ensure trust through transparency and commitment to a culture of quality assurance.

#### Objective 1

**To review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the new technological university through consideration of the procedures set out in the Annual Institutional Quality Report submitted by the university.**

The scope of information in respect of quality assurance contained in the Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR), or otherwise reported, includes reporting procedures, governance and publication. It is recognised that the procedures that governed quality assurance within the dissolved institutions may not be unified in one single document at the time of submission of the AIQR and/or review process. There may therefore be a number of individual procedures set out in the AIQR that reflect former institutional approaches, and supplementary information may be requested by the review team in the form of documentation or interviews in advance of, or during, the review process.

The relevant outcomes of the last review of the former institutions should be addressed and resolved, and the development of the new unified quality assurance system in place since the establishment of the new institution, evaluated. The review team will also consider the effectiveness of the AIQR and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) processes implemented across the new technological university.

The scope of this objective also extends to the technological university's overarching approach to assuring itself of the quality of its research degree programmes and research activities within the context of its establishment as a new institution, and to the effectiveness of the procedures for the quality assurance of its collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision.

## Objective 2

**To review the enhancement of quality by the technological university through governance, policy and procedures.**

Within the new technological university, institution-wide governance, policy, procedures, mission, goals and targets for quality may not be fully established at the time of the review. In this context, the process – and progress – towards developing these elements will be evaluated, and the methodology and design of quality assurance, as well as transitional governance approaches, will be considered.

## Objective 3

**To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.**

There is no addendum to this objective.

## Objective 4

**Following the introduction of a statutory international education quality assurance scheme, to determine compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.**

There is no addendum to this objective.

## 2.2 Review Criteria

The addenda to the review criteria are outlined below.

### Criteria for Objective 1

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the new institution and/or the extent of their development and/or implementation. The report will also include a specific statement on the extent to which the quality assurance procedures can be considered as compliant with the European Standards & Guidelines (ESG) and as having regard to QQI's statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG).

The criteria to be used by the review team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines<sup>2</sup>;
- QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Universities and Other Designated Awarding Bodies<sup>3</sup>;
- European Standards and Guidelines<sup>4</sup>;
- Section 28 of the 2012 Act<sup>5</sup>; and
- The technological university's own objectives and goals for quality assurance, where these have been determined.

Where appropriate and actioned by the institution, additional QQI guidelines may be incorporated:

- Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Apprenticeship Programmes<sup>6</sup>
- Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes<sup>7</sup>
- National Framework for Doctoral Education<sup>8</sup>
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Sector-Specific%20QAG%20DAB-V2.1.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG\\_2015.pdf](https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/28/enacted/en/html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Apprenticeship%20Programmes%20QAG%20Topic-Specific.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Research%20Degree%20Programmes%20QA%20Guidelines.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national\\_framework\\_for\\_doctoral\\_education\\_0.pdf](http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Ireland%E2%80%99s%20Framework%20of%20Good%20Practice%20Research%20Degree%20Programmes.pdf#search=framework%20for%20good%20practice%2A>

### Criteria for Objective 2

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures. This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations in reference to this objective in the context of the newly formed institution. If identified, innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement will be highlighted in the report.

The criteria to be used by the team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- The new institution's distinct mission and vision, or the plans and process in place for its development.
- The goals or targets for quality identified by the institution and/or the plans or process in place for their development.
- Additional sources of reference identified by the institution.

### Criteria for Objective 3

The report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the current procedures being implemented within the new institution are in keeping with QQI Policy for Access, Transfer and Progression.

There are no further addenda to these criteria.

### Criteria for Objective 4

The report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures within the new institution are informed by and have regard to the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

There are no further addenda to these criteria.

### The key questions to be addressed by the review for each objective within the context of the new institution are:

- How is a new unified quality assurance system being planned for and developed?
- How are quality assurance procedures and reviews being implemented within the new institution?
- What transitional quality assurance arrangements have been put in place? What reflections would the institution make on these?
- Who takes responsibility for quality and governance of quality assurance within the newly established, multi-campus, geographically spread institution?
- How effective are the current internal quality assurance procedures of the institution?
- How transparent, accessible and comprehensive is reporting on quality assurance and quality across the institution? What documentation and supporting information is available?
- How is quality promoted and enhanced?
- Are there effective innovations in quality enhancement and assurance?
- How is the new university developing a common mission, strategy and goals for quality?
- How has information on transitional arrangements been communicated?

## Section 3 The Review Process

### 3.1 Review Team

QQI will appoint an external Review Team to conduct the institutional review of each new technological university. The size and criteria for appointing the team remains consistent with the core Terms of Reference. The following outlines a number of addenda to the review team profile.

The review team for the institution-wide review of newly-formed technological universities will be appointed in keeping with the following profile:<sup>10</sup>

#### 1. A Review Chairperson

The role of the Chairperson is to act as leader of the Review Team. This is an international reviewer who is a (serving or recently former) senior third-level institution leader – usually a head of Institution or deputy head of Institution or a senior policy advisor who:

- Possesses a wide range of higher education experience, with specific experience of creating a new university and/or of merging higher education institutional contexts.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of the complexities of the higher education system and of establishing a new higher education institution.
- Understands often unique QA governance arrangements; and
- Has proven experience in the management of innovation and change.

#### 2. A Coordinating Reviewer

The role of the Coordinating Reviewer is to act as secretary to the Team as well as to be a full Review Team member. This is usually a person with expertise in the Higher Education system and prior experience in participating in external reviews. As the coordinating reviewer is responsible for drafting the report, he or she will possess proven excellent writing abilities.

#### 3. A Student Reviewer

The role of the Student Reviewer is to represent the student voice in the Review Team. The Student Reviewer will be typically an Irish or international student with significant experience of higher education or an undergraduate student who has completed a quality assurance training programme and/or has had a role in institutional self-evaluation and/or review.

#### 4. An External Representative

The role of the External Representative is to bring the “third mission” perspective to the Review Team, specifically in the context of the establishment of a new technological university. By way of example, they may have specialist knowledge in some or all of the following areas:

- External expectations of graduate skills and competencies;
- Issues and trends in industry and/or the wider community;
- The external perception of the new institution and its activities;
- Quality assurance practices in other sectors;
- Knowledge of an area identified in the specific review team profile

In addition to the specific roles above, the full review team complement will include a range of experts with the following knowledge and experience:

- Experience of higher education quality assurance processes within a newly established institution and/or merging institutional context;
- Experience of postgraduate research programmes;
- Experience and proven ability in the advancement of teaching and learning;
- Experience of a higher education institution with similar profile and/or mission.

All elements of the CINNTE Cyclical Review Process, and guidance on conducting the Institutional Self-Evaluation Process (ISER) are detailed in the CINNTE Cyclical Review Handbook. This addendum provides context-specific information that should be used as supplementary material to the main handbook and terms of reference.

<sup>10</sup> Note: QQI seeks guidance from the Institution on the profile of a specific review team. The Institution is consulted in advance, prior to confirming the team.

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