

Dundalk Institute of Technology

2022

Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)
Reporting Period 2020-2021

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2020-2021

PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Internal Quality Assurance Enhancement and Impact

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

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
8.0 - <i>Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>				
5.0 - <i>Staff Recruitment, Development and Support</i>	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
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

This is the Annual Quality Report (AQR) for **Dundalk Institute of Technology** for the reporting period **1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021**.

It was submitted to QQI on **Friday, 25 February 2022**.

The AQR has been approved by the **Registrar's Office** and was submitted by **Dr Brendan Ryder, Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Registrar's Office**. It will be presented to the DkIT Academic Council in semester 2 in the academic year 2021/2022.

This section provides an overview of the Institution and the process for the development and approval of the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Institution Overview

Founded in 1971, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is an autonomous Institute, established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has earned its reputation as the leading higher education provider in the North Leinster-South Ulster region (serving Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath, North County Dublin, Armagh, Down and South Antrim) through its first-class teaching and learning, research and engagement. Set in a state-of-the-art 35 hectare campus, DkIT provides quality learning and teaching to circa 5,300 students across four Schools in Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, and Informatics and Creative Arts in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Level 6 to PhD level, in addition to its long history in apprenticeships. The Institute for Connected Health and Wellbeing brings together DkIT's significant track record and capacity in the Research Areas of Regulated Software, Health and Aging. The Institute also focuses on the Research Themes of Energy and the Environment and Creative Arts. DkIT differentiates itself from other Higher Education Institutions as a cross-border Institute with its distinctive mission and commitment to the educational, economic, social and cultural development of the North Leinster-South Ulster region. As an Institute situated on the border with Northern Ireland, DkIT is at the epicentre between the two main metropolitan cities of Belfast and Dublin along the M1 Economic Corridor.

Process for the Development and Approval of the AQR

The Annual Quality Report (formerly the Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR)) is an annual report about internal quality assurance that institutions provide to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and publish every year. It is a key component of the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement system that provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of the Institutes internal quality system. As quality "is everyone's business", the development of the AQR for a particular reporting period is an ongoing iterative and organic process involving all stakeholders in the organisation. The

Registrar's Office has overall responsibility for the production of the AQR and ensures that all inputs to the report are gathered in a systematic manner for incorporation into the report. Outputs from annual quality assurance and enhancement activities are fed in to the AQR as appropriate (e.g. Programme Board reports, External examiners reports, functional service areas (Student Services, International Office etc.) reports, etc.) and relevant data is gathered and analysed where available.

Institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora play an active part in the compilation of the report and provide feedback on the AQR. The final AQR is normally submitted to the Institute's Academic Council (normally at the January/February meeting subject to the schedule of Academic Council meetings for a given academic year) for adoption prior to its submission to QQI which is normally at the end of February.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

This section provides information on the overarching quality assurance system, its governance and management at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), specifically the following:

- Quality Framework;
- Policies and Procedures;
- Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System;
- Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities.

1.1.1 Quality Framework

DkIT operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement which contributes to the achievement of the Institute's Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>). The strategic plan is aligned to the Institute's Mission-Based Performance Compact between Dundalk Institute of Technology and Higher Education Authority (HEA) (<https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/dundalk-institute-of-technology/performance/>).

There are five strategic priorities for the current strategic plan (2020-2022):

1. Changing Landscape in terms of Designations, Mergers and Alliances;
2. Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of Learner Experience;
3. High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation;
4. Enhanced National and International Engagement;
5. Organisational Development and Corporate Excellence.

Figure 1 illustrates the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System, which must be agile, responsive and effective/fit-for-purpose, and its relationship with Institute strategy. The Institute is responsible for the academic standards of awards made in its name, and for ensuring that the quality of learning experiences (both undergraduate and postgraduate), is exemplary, to enable students to achieve these standards. DkIT assures and enhances the quality of its core activities of teaching, learning, research, engagement and service delivery through its regular review and improvement process, its *Quality Framework* (Figure 2).

The mechanisms for assuring and enhancing the quality of provision include (Figure 2):

- Regular review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) processes.
- Robust programme approval and curriculum review processes.
- Robust approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught programmes.
- **Annual Internal Monitoring:**
 - **School Monitoring:** Programme Board Reporting, Student Feedback (programme-level and StudentSurvey.ie), External Examining, programme changes).
 - **Postgraduate Research Monitoring:** (DCU-DkIT Graduate School Annual Reporting to DCU's Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB), postgraduate research student feedback (including PGR StudentSurvey.ie).
 - **Professional Services Area Monitoring** (Student Services, International Office, etc.).
- **Regular Periodic Review(s):**
 - **School Programmatic Reviews** including Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body Reviews (PRSBs) Reviews.
 - **Postgraduate Research Review(s).** This includes DCU-DkIT Graduate School Quality Reviews which are conducted in accordance with the DCU-DkIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement and Research Centre/Group reviews.
 - **Professional Service Area Reviews** (Student Services, International Office, etc.).
- **Annual External Monitoring:**
 - Annual dialogue with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Annual Quality Report (AQR)).
- Cyclical Institutional Review (CINNTE Review).
- Systematic student engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes.

- Established procedures for the appointment of staff and a range of supports for their ongoing professional development (Human Resources and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)).

Dundalk Institute of Technology strives to achieve excellence in all of its activities and a high quality service to all its stakeholders. A commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement is embedded in the Strategic Plan (2020-2022). A core focus of the plan is a commitment to facilitate meaningful learner engagement and work with learners as partners (pg. 17) (promoting student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities): "*Learner-Centredness: DkIT strongly believes in the empowerment of the individual learner and in affording every learner the opportunity to learn, succeed and meet their full potential personally, academically and professionally, in the workplace and in the community*".

Part of the Quality Framework involves reporting annually to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on quality assurance and enhancement activities through the Annual Quality Report (AQR) (previously the AIQR) process. Information on the annual QQI dialogue for the reporting period can be found in Part B.

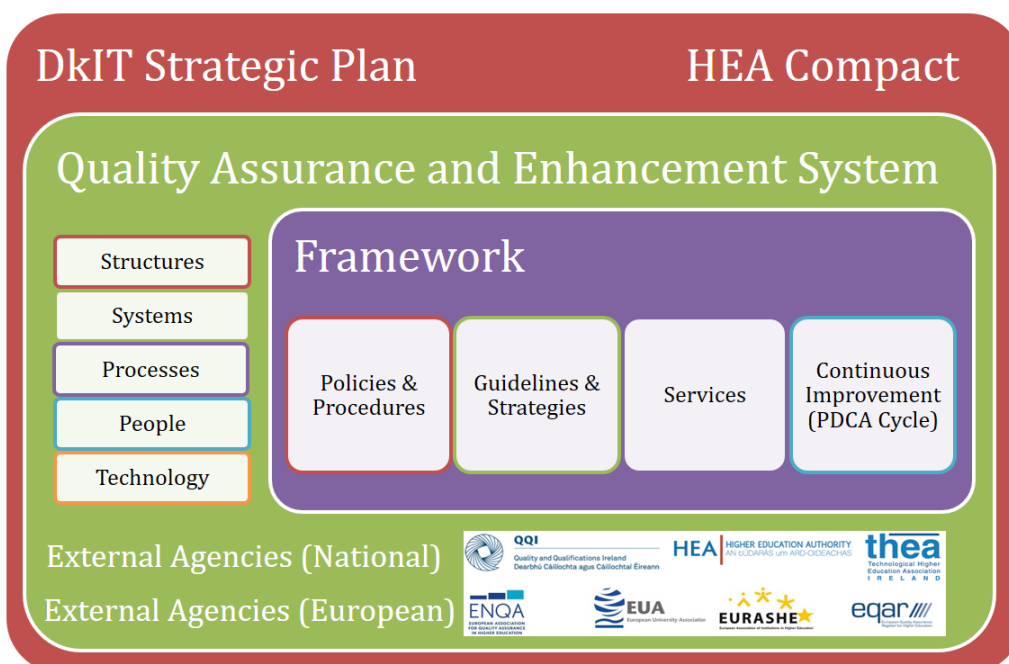
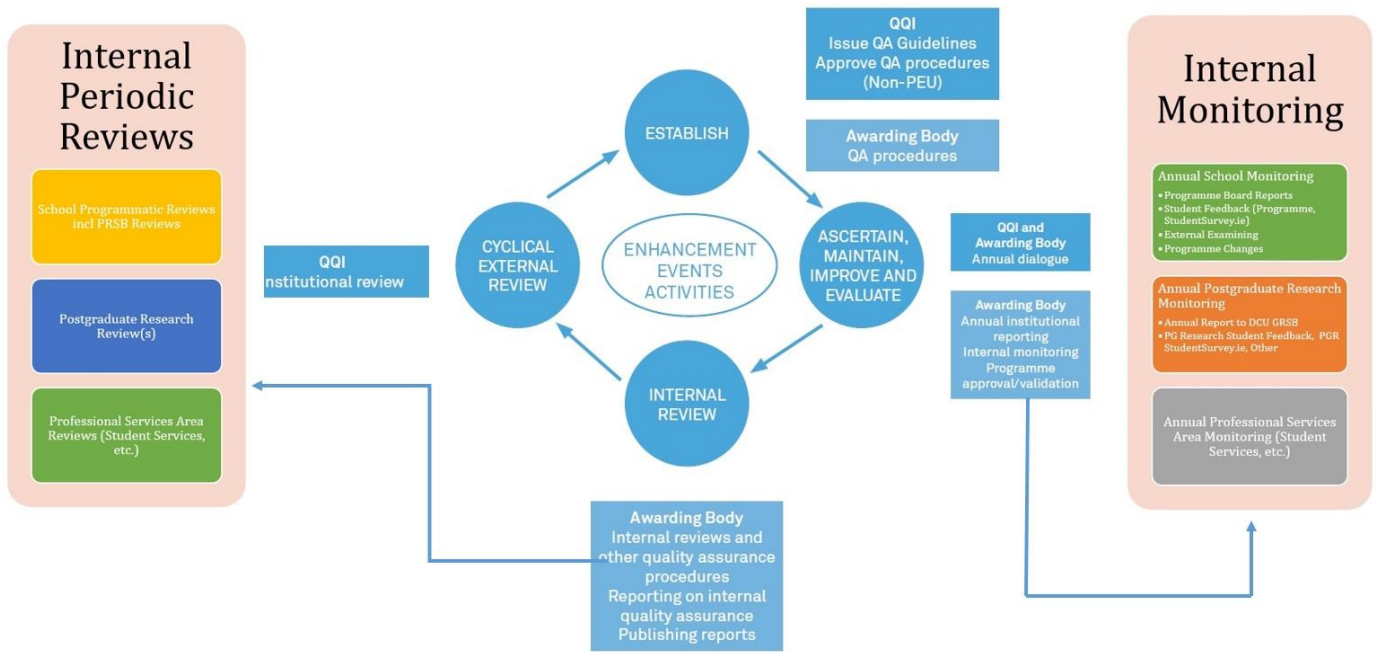


Figure 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

DkIT continues to ensure that Quality Assurance and Enhancement is firmly embedded within the day to day aspects of work at the Institute to ensure that a quality culture underpins all of its activities. All staff within the Institute contribute to the culture of quality and there is acceptance that this is a 'continual process' as new challenges and new ways of educating students and developing faculty and staff continue to be central to the work of the Institute.

The Institute has developed a Student Success Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) in line with the recommendation in the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Higher Education System Performance Framework (2018-2020) (<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/managing-performance/system-performance-framework/>) that HEIs put in place an Institute wide Student Success Strategy which embeds ‘whole of HEI’ approaches to student access and completion. The aim of the strategy is to develop a holistic, student-centred approach across all dimensions of the student experience to foster measurable improvements in: retention, progression and completion rates, student achievements, student engagement and graduate outcomes.



(See enlarged “Internal Monitoring” and “Internal Reviews” below)

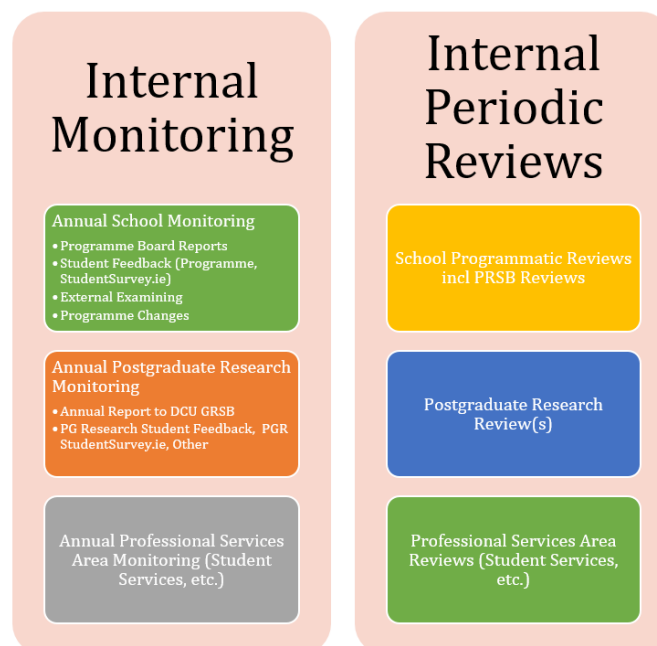


Figure 2: Quality Assurance Framework

1.1.2 Policies and Procedures

Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies and procedures are an integral part of the Institute's Quality Framework. DKIT has developed a framework of policies and procedures in the context of best practice within the higher education sector. The policies and procedures are aligned to QQI's Core and relevant Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (<https://qaguidelines.qqi.ie/core.html>; <https://qaguidelines.qqi.ie/sector-specific.html>), with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG) (https://www.eurashe.eu/library/esg_2015-pdf/) and other national and international best practice policies, procedures, guidelines, frameworks and strategies.

Policies and procedures (and associated documentation) are stored in an Institute centralised repository which is managed by the Registrar's Office (specifically the responsibility of the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance). There is one single centralised repository which is utilised as appropriate across the Institute by academic, professional services areas (Student Services, etc.) and postgraduate research students and staff. The policies and procedures categorisation scheme / taxonomy has been derived from the dimensions of the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 with the addition of a category for Research and Knowledge Exchange (Figure 3).

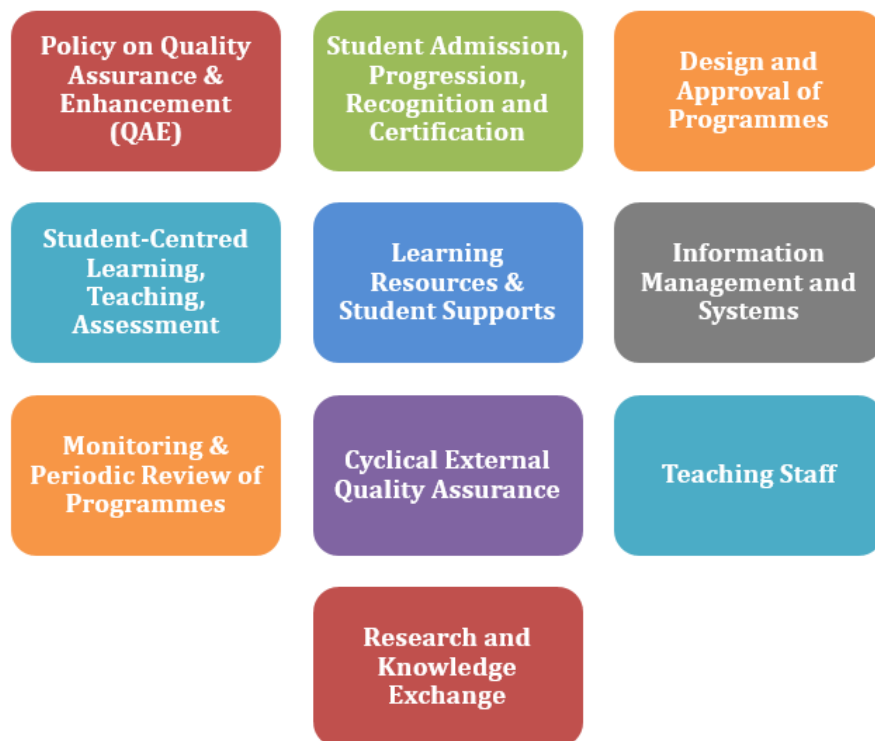


Figure 3: DKIT Policies and Procedures Management (Categorisation Scheme)

A snapshot of Policies and procedures (and associated documentation) for a particular reporting period are made available to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) as part of the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Policies and procedures (including guidelines, frameworks and strategies) are regularly reviewed in accordance with a Policy Review Schedule and a Standard on DkIT Academic Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). Revisions are carried out at least every three years or sooner if deemed necessary and the effectiveness of policies and procedures is regularly monitored through consultation with staff and students. Development and amendment of academic policies and procedures (and related documentation) is primarily the responsibility of the Registrar's Office in collaboration with all Institute stakeholders (academic staff and professional services area staff). All academic policies are subject to Academic Council approval and some are also subject to Governing Body approval. Most are developed and/or reviewed by sub-committees or working groups of the Academic Council, the members of which determine best practice within the higher education sector to ensure that policies and procedures (and related documentation) are relevant, effective and continually being enhanced. Feedback from students, staff members and other stakeholders is also taken into consideration.

Quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures are published on the Institute website and communicated to staff and students (as appropriate) by email (See *Section 7.0: Public Information and Communication*). Training and awareness workshops/events are organised by the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with the aim of communicating and explaining policies and procedures to staff and students and facilitating feedback on their effectiveness. This also serves to encourage Institute members to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to quality assurance and enhancement and embed a culture of quality throughout the organisation.

1.1.3 Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System

Decision Making Fora

The Academic Council at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amended Act(s). The Governing Body appointed the first DkIT Academic Council in 1993. The Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality (assurance and enhancement). The President and Vice-President for Academic

Affairs and Registrar are respectively, Chairperson and Secretary of the Academic Council. Academic Council approves action plans following reviews and these plans are then assigned to relevant academic and administrative/professional service area(s) for operationalisation.

The membership of Academic Council consists of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership currently standing at 54. See the Constitution of the Academic Council at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/governance/academic-council/>. Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings. Where urgent matters arise, these are brought to the attention of the Governing Body by way of a special motion to facilitate Governing Body approval prior to the formal adoption of the minutes.

The Academic Council is supported by the work of the following sub-committees (Terms of Reference of the sub-committees can be found at <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/governance/academic-council/academic-council-subcommittees.html>) :

1. Standing Committee;
2. Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC);
3. Academic Quality Sub-Committee (AQSC);
4. Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (LT);
5. Research Sub-Committee (RSC);
6. DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (DkIT GRSB).

Five meetings of the full Academic Council and five meetings of each of the sub-committees are held each year (See AQR Part B for meetings held during the reporting period). The sub-committees contribute to the development of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures at Institute level. In addition to sub-committees of Academic Council, working groups are regularly established to conduct environmental scanning of best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies and procedures (including guidelines, frameworks and strategies). This practice ensures that quality assurance and enhancement is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute.

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

regulations in line with those at DCU and taking into account external developments in terms of national policy development.

The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of quality policies and procedures rests ultimately with the Leadership Team and falls particularly within the remit of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar's Office). The Leadership Team ensures that activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken. At School and Departmental level, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Heads of Section and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring quality assurance and enhancement (including implementing policies and procedures).

The academic management of programmes is the responsibility of the Programme Boards. Opportunities for enhancement of quality policies and procedures are frequently identified through annual school, research and Professional Services Area monitoring to Academic Council (see activities in the reporting period for further information). Student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Programme Boards ensuring the student voice is heard at this level. Stage Convenors (who provide pastoral care to students) and Programme Directors (who support Heads of Department in the management and operation of programmes) also contribute to Programme Boards, providing a robust front line approach to programme management. Programme Boards provide valuable feedback on all issues including quality assurance and enhancement via their Annual Programme Board Reports at Institute level and also their participation in School/Faculty Boards at School level which contain academic faculty members, School management, School administration and student representatives.

School/Faculty Boards are critical to the operation of quality assurance and enhancement at School level. The School Board works with the Head of School in:

- Developing, implementing and monitoring the School's strategic plans in the context of the overall Institute strategic plan;
- Planning the strategic development of the School's suite of programmes;
- Promoting effective communication and information sharing within the School;
- Fostering participation and a sense of collegiality within the School;
- Promoting the co-ordination of activities relating to teaching and learning and research across departments;
- Promoting and implementing Institute-wide policies and strategies;
- Formulating, implementing and evaluating relevant School-wide policies and strategies.

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

Functional Areas

Notwithstanding that all members of staff across the Institute contribute to quality assurance and enhancement, the following professional services areas have a particular role to play in the provision of an exemplary student experience:

Area of Responsibility	Functional Area	Reporting to
Quality, Admissions, Examinations, Access, Professional Services Areas (Student Services), Careers, Schools Liaison, Awards and Conferring, Programme Validations, Student Feedback.	Academic Affairs	Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC)	Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)	
Academic administration and support of postgraduate research students. Support of researchers.	Research and Graduate Studies Office	
Support of International students	International Office	
Library and information literacy	Library	

Staff recruitment and professional development	Human Resources	Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity
Information Technology infrastructure and services	Computer Services	
Programme promotion	Marketing and Communications Office	
Administration and support of part-time students	Life-Long Learning Centre	Vice-President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development
Innovation, business development, industry liaison	Regional Development Centre (RDC)	
Delivery and management of academic programmes	Academic Schools (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/academic-schools.html) : Business and Humanities; Engineering; Health and Science; Informatics & Creative Arts; Academic Departments	Heads of School Heads of Department, Heads of Section (as appropriate)

Professional Service Areas (Student Services)

Professional Service Areas (Student Services), which is managed by the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (AASAM), operate under the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar's Office) are a team of professional service providers who provide support for students to actively engage in their third level experience. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager meets representatives of the professional service providers on a regular basis to ensure efficient and effective delivery of supports to students. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (AASAM) is also a member of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC). The services are currently provided to full-time undergraduate, postgraduate, Springboard and Apprentice students:

Service Provider	Description
<p>Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Officer (Full-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Access Service works to increase access to third level from under-represented groups identified as key target groups by the National Access Office of the Higher Education Authority (HEA). • The Service supports the increased participation of these students with a view to successful completion of their programme of study.
<p>Disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Officer (Full-Time) • Learning Support Tutors (Full-time equivalent) • Assistive Technology Assistant (Part-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Service (DS) provides support to students with a disability or a significant ongoing illness or mental health condition who disclose to the service and request support. • The DS is funded by the Fund for Students with Disabilities (ESF/HEA) and supports students who meet the criteria for funding. • DkIT also offers a general level of support to any student who presents for support through examination accommodations and the range of services provided by other support services including the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
<p>Health Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse (Full-time) • Nurse (Part-time) • General Practitioner (GP) (7 hours per week) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health Unit (HU) provides a holistic approach to student wellbeing. • The service provides a general medical, psychological and health educational service to all students. • The HU is an integral part of the Student Services, where cooperation between services plays a vital role in assisting each other to enhance the wellbeing of students.
<p>Student Counselling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Service (Full-time) • Student Counsellor (4 days) • Student Counsellor (3 days) • Student Counsellor (1 day) • Trainee (1 day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Counselling Service provides accessible, confidential, non-judgemental support to all registered students. • The Head of Student Counselling is currently the Chairperson of the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI).
<p>Pastoral Care:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Care is collaboratively involved in the provision of holistic care within the Institute community.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract for Service 35 hours 	
<p>Careers and Employability Centre (CEC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers and Employability Co-ordinator • Careers Officer (Full-time) • Placement Co-ordinator (Full-time) • Placement Officer 2 x (Full-time and 2 x Part-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) works to ensure that graduates of DkIT are self-aware, self-resourceful and work ready. • To do this, CEC work with students from first year through to graduation in the area of Career Development support and student Work Placement.
<p>Sports and Societies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports and Societies Officer (Full-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sports and Societies Office supports, funds and resources all sports and societies to encourage students to be active and involved and make their mark on student life.
<p>Student Assistance Fund (SAF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAF Officer (Full-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fund provides limited support for full-time students who are in severe financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances or who are disadvantaged and require additional financial support to enable them in so far as possible to participate fully in their programme of study while at the Institute. • Additional funding is made available for students who are lone parents and part-time students from other target groups in the National Access Plan.

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Services Area (Student Service) activities (including monitoring activities) and developments during the reporting period.

Research and Graduate Studies Office

The Research and Graduate Studies Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/>) is managed by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies and operates under the Registrar's Office. *Section 4.0: QA of Research Activities and Programmes* provides further information on the postgraduate research activities at the Institute. See AQR Part B for information on postgraduate research activities (including monitoring activities) and developments during the reporting period.

International Office

The International Office provides supports to international and Erasmus students registered at the Institute. There are 510 international students enrolled at DkIT from 13 non-EU countries and 120 Erasmus students from across the EU. International students form an important part of the learning environment at DkIT, with teaching and administrative staff attuned to the needs of students of different educational, cultural and language backgrounds.

The International Office comprises of five Staff based at the Institute and two international officers, with responsibility for markets across China, Malaysia, India, Nigeria, North America, Brazil and Mexico. International Office Staff are the first point-of-contact for students, who need academic, or other assistance.

In addition to the day-to-day administrative supports provided, the International Office also provides a number of additional services, unique to international students, including:

- Airport collection on arrival in Dublin;
- **Accommodation Provision:** The International Office has a part-time Accommodations Officer, who assigns and manages student accommodations for international and Erasmus students in secure accommodation off-campus;
- **GNIB support:** The International Office coordinates appointments and brings students to the local Immigration Office for GNIB provision and renewal on arrival.
- **Recording of international student attendance:** The International Office liaises with the four Schools to record international student attendance, for GNIB renewal;
- **International Welcome Days:** The International Office hosts Welcome Days for international students x3 times yearly at enrolment stage (September, January and June);
- **Pastoral Care:** The International Office has a Pastoral Care Officer on its team, tasked with care of ill students, providing home and/or hospital visitations where needed, and liaises with the Institute's Health Unit. The International Office visits at-risk students in accommodations, where required.
- **Academic and Learner Supports:** The International Office interfaces with faculty and student support services for the provision of academic and learner supports including: Careers Information Day for international students (initiated in 2016 in tandem with the Careers Office); Academic Learner Supports (English and IT) provided through the SDLC; Cultural Coffee Hour (hosted fortnightly for international students by the International Office); All Staff Intercultural Training Workshop.
- **Liaison with Stakeholders:** The International Office is responsible for communications on students' academic progress to University Partners, Recruitment Agents and Sponsoring Bodies;
- **Hosting Visits:** The International Office is responsible for hosting visits from partner universities, for the purpose of Teaching and Non-Teaching Mobilities within the Erasmus framework;

- **Erasmus Awareness:** The International Office promotes awareness of the Erasmus programme within Schools and provides learner support to students preparing for Erasmus Study or Placement.
- **Partner Identification:** The International Office works with Schools to identify new Erasmus partner colleges for learners, for the purpose of study and placement opportunities.
- **Requests and Feedback:** The International Office actions requests from stakeholders around enhancement of student experience, and it elicits feedback from departing students of DkIT on their learner experience.

An organisation chart for DkIT can be found in Appendix 1.

1.1.4 Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities

At DkIT, the student voice is valued and the Institute works in partnership with students and is committed to student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement activities. The Institute is also committed to being responsive to student feedback. The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experiences at the Institute.

Students have representation on a range of Institute decision making fora:

Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Union President and Vice President are ex-officio members.
Academic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students Union President and Vice President are ex-officio members. There are student representatives on some sub-committees. 'Student Voice' is a rolling item on the agenda for Academic Council meeting.
Programme Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each programme stage has student representation on these Boards.
Review and Development Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are invited to participate in such activities as they arise, e.g. Programme validations, Programmatic Reviews, Institutional Reviews, Learning and Teaching Scholarship activities.

The following formal mechanisms are employed to obtain student feedback on their student experience in DkIT:

Undergraduate	Postgraduate Research
Programme level feedback (QA3) to Heads of Department on a semester basis	Participation in the annual postgraduate research student feedback survey (including PGR StudentSurvey.ie (https://studentsurvey.ie/)).
Participation in the annual student feedback survey StudentSurvey.ie (https://studentsurvey.ie/).	

Other student feedback surveys are carried out from periodically, including:

- Student surveys that are carried out as part of cyclical five-yearly School Programmatic Reviews;
- First year students are surveyed following their induction;
- Surveys are carried out to ascertain student views on various services and/or academic initiatives;
- Recent graduates are surveyed each year as part of the Graduate Destination Survey by the Careers and Employability Office.

The data collected by these feedback surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and continuously enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. DkIT values the importance of evidence-based decision making and so student intake, progression and graduation data is provided to academic Schools each year for consideration by Programme Boards as part of the programme monitoring process.

See AQR Part B for information on monitoring activities (Academic, Professional Services Areas (Student Services), Postgraduate Research, etc.) completed during the reporting period.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The section provides information on the institution-wide quality assurance and enhancement procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes (i.e. collaborative partnerships or provision with others).

Collaborative Provision

DkIT delivers the following programmes collaboratively with external partners with graduates receiving DkIT awards:

1. *Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food* programmes are delivered collaboratively with Teagasc at Ballyhaise College, Co. Cavan (<https://www.teagasc.ie/education/teagasc-colleges/ballyhaise/>).
2. *Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours)* degree is delivered fully at DkIT and the first 2 years are delivered collaboratively with Monaghan Institute (<https://monaghaninstitute.ie/>). Students from Monaghan join the DkIT cohort in Year 3 of the programme.
3. *Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies* is delivered on a part-time basis in conjunction with Cork College of Commerce (<https://corkcollegeofcommerce.ie/>).

Higher Education provision with others is carried out in accordance with the institute Policy on Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Awards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). DkIT currently has no transnational programmes.

Articulation Agreements

DkIT has articulation arrangements (with MoUs) with a number of international collaborative partners (up to 2020/2021). See Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties for a full listing.

There are currently 77 Erasmus bilateral agreements in place with European Union (EU) partner HEIs.

Collaborative Partnerships

The Institute has a collaborative partnership arrangement with Dublin City University (DCU) for postgraduate research awards (See *Section 4: QA of Research Activities and Programmes*).

The Institute maintains a Register of Collaborative Partnerships and makes the register available as part of its public information policy. See *Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties* for a listing of collaborative partnerships.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

This section provides information on the institution-wide approach to the quality assurance of the design and approval of the range of programmes provided including taught programmes and apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes.

It is the policy of the Institute that all programmes are approved by external peer review to ensure that they are relevant, well designed and conform to the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) ([https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)). Programmes are developed and approved in accordance with the Programme Design and Approval Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). As DkIT has placed strategic importance on the development of part-time programmes, the Registrar's Office developed guidelines on the development of part-time programmes. These guidelines provide extensive support on the generation of new programme offerings through the utilisation of appropriate existing modules. The guidelines can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>.

Programme development is carried out by Academic Schools and, in the case of major awards, is subject to initial approval by the Institute Leadership Team to ensure that the overall objectives are in line with the Institute Strategic Plan. Following this, the approval process is managed by the Registrar's Office. Academic staff members are provided with ongoing training and guidance, provided collaboratively by the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, in aspects of programme development (e.g. use of curriculum management system (Akari curriculum-<https://courses.dkit.ie/curriculum/>), writing learning outcomes, development of programme assessment strategy, etc.). Each programme is designed such that:

- There are explicit intended learning outcomes (linked to DkIT Award Standards) and the programme meets the objectives set for it, including the learning outcomes and graduate attributes.
- The resulting Award is clearly specified, referring to the level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), award class and type and number of ECTS credits.
- The development is inclusive, involving students and other stakeholders, with due cognisance of external expertise and published information.
- Student transfer and progression are facilitated.
- The expected student workload is defined (through the use of ECTS credits).
- Well-structured placement opportunities are provided where appropriate.
- It is subject to a formal approval process by the Institute's Academic Council.

All proposals for new and revised programmes are required to present a Teaching and Learning Strategy and an Assessment Strategy. Programme documentation must demonstrate that assessments are constructively aligned to module and programme learning outcomes.

All new major awards require a full validation process through an external panel of experts appointed by the Registrar's Office. Non-major awards require validation by an external panel using the differential validation process. All programmes require re-validation at five-yearly intervals through the Programmatic Review process.

Changes to programmes between programmatic reviews require approval using one of three processes depending on the magnitude of the changes required:

- **Minor changes** do not affect the programme learning outcomes of a programme. They ensure continued consistency with the recommendations and conditions of the original validation report and do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes. Such changes may include changes to the balance between assessment types in a specific module; changes in module titles; minor changes in contact hours; inclusion or exclusion of, core modules and the rebalancing of credits for particular modules. Minor changes require internal approval only, through the Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee of Academic Council.
- **Structural Changes** to a programme include changes in delivery modes, inclusion of a new elective strand, inclusion or exclusion of work placement or dissertation, significant re-distribution and re-sequencing of content or a change to the programme title. Where such changes do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes, the programme may undergo a differential validation process rather than a full re-validation.
- **Major changes** which change the programme's intended learning outcomes require revalidation by an external panel. All programmes offered through collaborative provision require full validation in line with the Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards.

DkIT has a large number of articulation agreements with European and International Higher Education Institutions in relation to Erasmus exchanges, student transfers and progression opportunities. The Institute also manages a number of collaborative provision arrangements, underpinned by robust quality assurance frameworks, as follows:

1. Provision of a suite of Agriculture programmes collaboratively with Teagasc (Ballyhaise College, Cavan).
2. Provision of the *Bachelor of Business (Honours)* programme with Monaghan Institute.

3. Provision of suite of Nursing and Midwifery programmes in collaboration with clinical partners (e.g. Health Service Executive (HSE)).
4. Provision of a suite of Engineering Apprenticeship programmes with SOLAS (<https://www.solas.ie/>).

The Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards was invoked in the case of 1. and 2. above, which lead to DkIT awards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). See *Section 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision*.

DkIT offers apprenticeships programmes in the areas of Electrical, Motor Mechanics, Plumbing and Carpentry in conjunction with the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). The Department of Engineering Trades works in collaboration with SOLAS (<https://www.solas.ie/>), employers and other agencies to develop and deliver the intermediary and senior phases of a number of apprenticeship programmes. The craft apprenticeships are subject to a national agreement or MOU between SOLAS and the providers.

Apprenticeship is a system of employment-based training and education which enables a person to obtain the skills, knowledge and education required to satisfactorily perform the core skills of their chosen trade. Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which people are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland and typically takes four years to complete. The programmes offered by DkIT comply with QQI's Topic-specific guidance for Apprenticeship programmes (Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes, <https://qaguidelines.qqi.ie/topic-specif-app.html>).

Engagement with stakeholders is a central part of DkIT's strategy and is regarded as being integral to the quality of programme development and delivery. Schools meet regularly with Industry Advisory Boards which feed into the curriculum. Many departments are increasing their level of participation in 'live' student projects, carried out in consultation with industry or community organisations. All schools avail of 'guest lecturers' from external organisations and many engage in 'site visits'. The DkIT Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/>) co-ordinates the work placements of over 900 students each year within academic programmes across all schools. The CEC also organises an annual Industry Day on campus, providing opportunities for industry to meet with students and potential graduate recruits. Interview panels for staff recruitment and programme validation panels are required to have industry representation.

The Institute's strategy in relation to interactions between education and providers is informed by QQI's A Strategic Approach to Employer Engagement (September 2014; <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Pages/Education%20and%20Employers%20-%20A%20Strategic%20Approach%20to%20Employer%20Engagement.aspx>).

Since 1989, the DkIT Regional Development Centre (RDC) has acted as the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industry, commercial and business life of the region (<https://www.dkit.ie/services-to-business/>). The Centre provides incubation facilities for start-up businesses and provides support to entrepreneurs through schemes such as the Enterprise Ireland (EI) New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (NFP).

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

The Institute developed and updated policies relating to blended and online learning in the reporting period 2020/2021 with approval at Academic Council postponed until September 2021 (scheduled for approval on 18th June 2021) in the reporting period 2021/2022), specifically:

- Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (amended).
- Policy on Blended and Online Learning (related policy).

DkIT adopted (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.06, 30th April 2021) the *QQI Principles for Professional Engagements with Education Providers, including Programme Validation, Professional Accreditation and Approval* (<https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Final-Version-of-Principles-for-Professional-Engagements-with-Education-Providers,-including-Programme-Validation,-Professi.aspx>). The endorsement of the principles was formally communicated by DkIT to QQI on 19th May 2021 with acceptance of the endorsement being confirmed by QQI to DkIT on 25th May 2021.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

This section discusses the information the Institution provides to learners in respect of access, transfer, progression (ATP) and certification. It also highlights initiatives that the Institute participates in to enhance ATP opportunities for students.

Policies and procedures have been developed to cover a range of matters relating to the student lifecycle, from admission (access), transfer, progression to conferring of awards and transcripts provision. Mobility both within DkIT and across the Higher Education sector is facilitated through the use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credit system (https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en) and the National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ) ([https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)). In the case of international students, NARIC (<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/NARIC-Ireland.aspx>) and ENIC (<https://www.enic-naric.net/>) are used to facilitate access to programmes. Graduates are provided with

transcripts of assessment results for each stage in addition to an award parchment and access to a European Diploma Supplement (EDS) (https://ec.europa.eu/education/diploma-supplement_en). The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/>) provide advice and information regarding transfer and progression opportunities both within DkIT and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

There are a number of individual policies, the application of which ensures fair recognition of education qualifications and prior learning (both formal and non-formal):

Policy	Web Address
Admissions Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Transfer and Progression Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html Note: There are specific progression policies for the Section of Midwifery.
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Equal Access and Participation Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Assessment and Standards	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Posthumous Award Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Exit Awards Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
President's Prizes for Conferring Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

The implementation of the policies above is the responsibility of the Registrar's Office and is facilitated through various administrative offices, all of which work in close collaboration with the Academic Schools:

Administrative Office	Web Address
Admissions Office	https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration
Access Office	https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/diversity-and-access.html
International Office	https://www.dkit.ie/international-students/
Life-Long Learning Centre	https://www.dkit.ie/parttime-courses/
Disability Office	https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/access-and-disability.html
Examinations Office	https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office
Awards Office	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/awards-office/graduation.html
Careers and Employability Centre	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/

Relevant policies and procedures are communicated to students through the DkIT website, Department handbooks and student induction events. Extensive induction processes for new and advanced entry students are co-ordinated centrally by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with inputs from academic Schools and Student Services.

DkIT participates in collaborative arrangements to facilitate transfer and progression across the higher education system. The Institute is a member of the Dublin Leinster II Cluster (MEND) with DCU, NUIM

and AIT. The cluster aims to share information regarding innovations in learning and teaching and to improve arrangements for access and transfer between institutions. DkIT is a founder member of the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) which is a regional higher and further education initiative comprising DkIT and further education institutions in the North-East and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the alliance is to strengthen progression opportunities for students in the region from further to higher education.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

Progression Policies for undergraduate Nursing/Midwifery students and for students on the *Higher Diploma in Midwifery* in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 171S, Motion 171S.03, 11th December 2020). A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Practice and Garda/Police Vetting Procedures for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 172, Motion 172.06, 19th February 2021). This was part of a number of policy amendments made by the Department of Humanities required by the professional body CORU (<https://www.coru.ie/>), Ireland's multi-profession health regulator who is responsible for the statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

The Institute A-Level entry requirements for NFQ Level 8 awards was amended and included in the Admissions Policy. This followed a recommendation by the Institute's Northern Ireland Working Group that a Double Award A-Level be scored as two distinct A-Level grades. The current position in the sector (as of 2020/2021) is that Double Awards are scored as one A-Level only. The change in scoring was recommended for two reasons: (1) Universities in Northern Ireland score a Double Award A-Level as two distinct A-Level grades and (2) DkIT score a BTEC Double Award Grade Merit as two distinct Merit grades (Academic Council Meeting No. 175, Motion 175.01, 28th May 2021).

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

As mentioned in Section 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery, it is the policy of the Institute that all programmes are well designed and conform to the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) ([https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)). Programmes are developed and approved in accordance with the Programme Design and Approval Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

Programmes are developed in accordance with DkIT Award Standards. The Institute adopted the QQI Award Standards (<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/HET-Awards-Standards.aspx>) as their own standards in the reporting period 2019/2020. Programme Learning Outcomes must be aligned to the

relevant award standard(s). This requirement is contained in the Programme Design and Approval Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

Examinations and Assessment are carried out in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>; See Section 2.4 Teaching Learning and Assessment). Assessment and standards details the Institute's policy on the following:

- General Requirements for Examinations and Awards;
- Approved Programme Schedule (APS);
- Marks Allocation;
- Allocation of Marks to Assessment Elements;
- Pass by Compensation;
- Exemptions;
- Requirements for Progression;
- Internal and External Examiners;
- Return of Examination Marks/Grades by Internal Examiners;
- Meeting of Examination Board;
- The Granting of Awards;
- The Revocation of Awards;
- Award Classifications Systems;
- Post Award Achievements.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

As part of the Institute policy enhancements relating to Designed Awarding Body (DAB) status (which commenced in January 2020) an Awarding Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.03, 30th April 2021).

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This section provides information on how the Institute quality assures teaching, learning and assessment.

Academic programmes are delivered in a student-centred manner that encourages learners to take an active role in their learning process. Learning, teaching and assessment at DkIT:

- Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- Uses a variety of delivery modes and pedagogical methods, which are regularly evaluated and adjusted;

- Encourages autonomy in the learner while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the lecturer and promotes mutual respect within the learner-lecturer relationship.

A number of academic policies ensure that teaching, learning and assessment remain student-centred. Training and support/guidance is provided to academic staff in relation to these policies and procedures.

Examinations and Assessment are carried out in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>), which is aligned to QQI's Assessment and Standards (2013). DkIT operates a system of external moderation of assessed student work and examinations. The external examiners are appointed by Academic Council and serve a term of three years. Examiners report annually to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar and copies of these reports are circulated to relevant academic managers for consideration and response by Programme Boards. Students have the right to appeal examination or assessment results using the appeals process prescribed in Assessment and Standards and this document also outlines the procedures to be used in the case of students with mitigating circumstances.

The DkIT Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) supports and incentivises the development of good practices in student academic writing and referencing.

The DkIT Assessment and Learning Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) provides guidance on the development and maintenance of assessment strategies at the levels of both programme and module. It is based on five core principles (Figure 4)

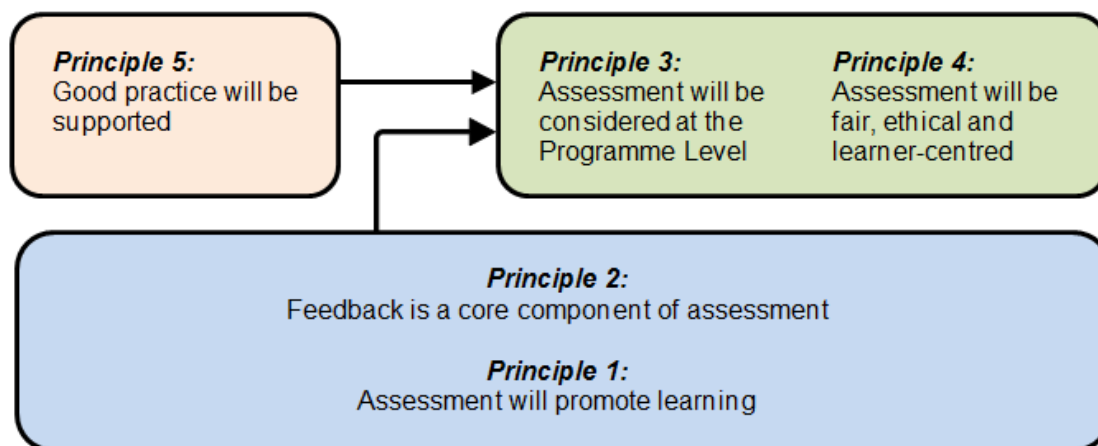


Figure 4: Assessment and Learning Core Principles

DkIT has developed a framework for the management and development of assessed group work (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>), the impact of which is being formally monitored.

The Continuous Assessment Procedures (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) outline the operational parameters associated with assessment of students. This policy, in conjunction with Assessment and Standards, ensures that procedures for assessment are valid, consistent and fair, that criteria are provided to students in advance, records are properly maintained and feedback opportunities are available.

DkIT aims to provide an environment which is collegial and respectful of all members. Students registered at DkIT are required to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) and the Social Networking Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). DkIT values the student voice and welcomes learner input to decision making across the Institute (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). In addition to being invited to participate in feedback surveys, students have representation on Programme and School/Faculty Boards, Academic Council and Governing Body.

The Institute's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/centre-for-excellence-in-learning-and-teaching/>) provides learning, teaching and assessment advice, guidance and support for both staff and students. The Centre also engages in a considerable level of scholarly activities in these areas, both through the delivery of Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching and through a number of enhancement projects funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>). The outcomes of these projects are informing policy and enhancing practice across the Institute.

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Examination and Assessment Policy and Procedure	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Conduct of Examinations Guidelines (In-Class Assessments)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities- Policy, Guidelines and Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Work Placement Common Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Student Complaints Procedure	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Continuous Assessment Procedures updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 170, Motion 170.12, 2nd October 2020).
- Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 170, Motion 170.13, 2nd October 2020).
- Student Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette (Meeting No. 170S, 16th October 2020). This guide aims to clarify expectations and promote courteous and professional behaviour and communication online.
- Student Voice Policy updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 171, Motion 171.01, 27th November 2020).
- Remote Working Policy for Placement (addendum to the DkIT Work Placement - Common Policies and Procedures Document and the Work Placement for Social Care - Common Policies and Procedures Document) (Academic Council Meeting No. 171S, Motion 171S.01, 11th December 2020).
- DkIT Work Placement Common Procedures (updated) (Academic Council Meeting No. 175, Motion 175.07, 28th May 2021).
- Recording of Online Classes: Guidelines and Code of Practice for DkIT Staff and Students, (Standing Committee Meeting No. 67, Motion 67.01, 22nd January 2021).
- Policy on Student Attendance for Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care (updated) (Academic Council Meeting No. 172, Motion 172.05, 19th February 2021).
- Work Placement-Common Policies and Procedures for Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care (updated) (Academic Council Meeting No. 172, Motion 172.05, 19th February 2021).
- Work Placement for Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care-Common Policies and Procedures (Academic Council Meeting No. 176, Motion 176.06, 18th June 2021).
- Student Fitness to Practise Policy (Academic Council Meeting No. 172, Motion 172.07, 19th February 2021).
- Academic Regulations for Masters (Taught and Structured) Research Projects (new) (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.04, 30th April 2021).
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (updated) (Academic Council Meeting No. 175, Motion 175.03, 28th May 2021).
- Assessment and Standards, Pass Independently Special Regulation for programmes in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years (update) (Academic Council Meeting No. 175, Motion 175.06, 28th May 2021).

See Section “Changes to Policies and Procedures”, AQR Part B.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

This section provides information on the resources, infrastructure and supports that are provided to learners.

To the best of its resourcing ability, DkIT seeks to ensure that learning environments and resources are conducive for both individual and group learning and that learners have access to resources for effective study and to resources which increase educational opportunity. Full details of resources and supports

are provided to students at induction when they first arrive to study at DkIT. Institute Open Days also inform prospective students of the supportive learning environment they will experience. Supporting learning is continually reviewed and upgraded despite budgetary constraints because it is seen as the central aspect of the functions of the Institute. Robust feedback channels are in operation to ensure that any deficiencies in service to learners are brought to the attention of the relevant manager in a timely manner and actioned accordingly. Student learning resources at DkIT are outlined below (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/>). An important development in 2020/21 was the launch of an online Student Support Hub on the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The development of the hub was supported by funding from the HEA's 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund. The work involved reimagining the delivery and provision of student support services to include online as well as traditional face-to-face provision. This has made the provision of support more flexible and accessible to all our students, whether on campus or off.

DkIT Library (<https://www.dkit.ie/library/>): The library provides teaching, learning and research supports to a variety of learners as follows:

- Purchasing, collecting and categorisation of resources in various formats, for which a suite of search options is provided; including the development of collections to enable intellectual inquiry;
- Making material available to borrow for varying amounts of time;
- Providing physical learning spaces for study;
- Helping learners find resources through the Library Information Desk or Library Subject Support Team;
- Offering Research and Information Skills and scholarly communication training including one-to-one consultations with students;
- Providing guidance on how to avoid plagiarism by referencing. The library also offer an introduction to the Mendeley Reference Manager (among other guidance and support);
- Developing online library guides;

Most supports, including journal databases, e-books and support guides are available online to ensure learners can avail of what they need 24/7. Provision has shifted more recently to prioritising electronic resources. Print stock is managed through varying loan periods to ensure maximum sharing of resources.

Information on the support services for postgraduate researchers can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/library/library-supports/support-for-research/>

Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/student-learning-and-development-centre/>): The SLDC is part of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and was established in 2010 to offer support to students in basic IT skills, study skills and academic writing. The Centre also co-ordinates the student induction process and the services have expanded to include the provision of English language support to international students and pre-entry support to mature students. The Centre offers a schedule of workshops for students, 1:1 Sessions, and drop-ins - both face-to-face and online. Tutors also collaborate with lecturers deliver tailored support for class groups. The SLDC also develops and curates a wide range of learning development resources for students and these are available on the student support hub.

Mathematics Learning Centre (MLC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/study-experience/maths-learning-centre.html>): The MLC is a free service open to all DkIT students. It aims to provide additional Mathematics support and offers a number of services including 'drop-in' sessions, small group workshops on specific topics and one-on-one support sessions.

IT Learning Centre (ITLC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/study-experience/it-learning-centre.html>): This HEA funded initiative in the Department of Computing Science and Mathematics and the Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing provides specific support to computing students in a range of computing topics including programming languages, mathematics topics, networking, web development, etc.

IT Infrastructure and Services: Computing Services (<https://www.dkit.ie/computer-services>) provide information technology technical support to the Institute community. It provides network and Internet based services including email, web, wireless and printing services. It is also responsible for maintaining the extensive PC laboratories which exist across the campus in academic schools, DkIT library and other central locations. A number of policies exist to guide and direct users (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/it-policies.html>). An online Institute helpdesk is available to respond to technical queries or difficulties. Computer services also provides support with the Institute Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle).

Student Services: Students are provided with practical and pastoral support and guidance through various services including the Health Centre, Counselling Service, International Office, Access Office, Disability Office and Chaplaincy. Advice on accommodation and financial matters is also available. Further information on student services can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/>.

Student supports are an integral part of the Institute's Student Success Strategy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). Support services are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and accessible and that students are aware of them. See Section Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System, Professional Service Areas (Student Services) for a full description of service providers that provide support to students.

International Office: International students are additionally supported by the International Office with all services and supports being provided in accordance with the *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* (<https://tinyurl.com/2578s5ux>). The Code is a comprehensive set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners specifically relating to the pastoral care, including service support and information provision. Requirements are also included for the protection of enrolled learners; marketing, recruitment and admissions practices; and transparency of fees and refund processes which apply before and after enrolment. DkIT is also compliant with the London Statement, which is a code of ethics for the use of international education recruitment agents.

DkIT also implements the EU Erasmus+ Programme in accordance with the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, 2021 - 2027 (<https://eurireland.ie/erasmusplus/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education/>) and with the regulatory requirements prescribed by the National Agency for Erasmus in Ireland (HEA).

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
International Refund Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Erasmus Policy Statement	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Scholarship Programme at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Service Areas (Student Services) activities and developments during the reporting period.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

This section provides information on the quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research activities at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). It includes the Quality Assurance and enhancement framework for the governance, design, approval, delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of research activities across the institution.

The quality assurance and enhancement of research activities of the Institute are informed by the following:

- QQI Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes: <https://qaguidelines.qqi.ie/topic-spec-research.html>.
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019): <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Good-Practice-in-Research-Degree-Programmes-.aspx>.
- HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education: <http://www.thea.ie/national-framework-for-doctoral-education/>.
- The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations: <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/615:salzburg-ii-%E2%80%93-recommendations.html>.
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland: <https://www.iaa.ie/publications/national-policy-statement-on-ensuring-research-integrity-in-ireland/#>.

Research is managed by the Research and Graduate Studies Office (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/>) and together with the Registrar's Office has responsibility for research quality assurance and enhancement. Currently there are six research centres and seven research groups during the reporting period. It is envisaged the number and breadth of the research groups shall expand in the coming years to include staff currently emerging their research careers. At present the six research centres include (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-centres-and-groups/>):

- Smooth Muscle Research Centre (SMRC);
- Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies (CFES);
- Netwell/Casala;
- Regulated Software Research Centre;
- CREDIT (Centre for Renewable Energy at Dundalk IT);
- Creative Arts.

The period from 2017 up to 2019 for the last research strategy saw continued growth of the research agenda in the Institute. During this period the Institute has strengthened its position as one of the leading Institutes of Technology with international reputation in terms of its research performance within its prioritised research domains.

The current five-year Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2024):

- Sets out the recent developments in both National and European policy which has informed the strategic positioning of research and innovation within the Institute:
- Details the Institute's past performance in terms of its research and innovation agenda over the lifespan of the last strategy:
- Details the suite of strategic goals, specific objectives and associated key performance indicators which will enable the institute to deliver upon its research and innovation vision:
- Underpins the Institute's current Strategic Plan and builds upon previous research strategies.

The principle aim of research is both to answer key questions and to generate new knowledge in specific domains. The Institute prides itself on supporting and engaging in a broad range of research enquiry across a range of disciplines which are aligned to the research and innovation core principles. The Institute's approach to research has always been to invest in growth areas of strategic importance, which are aligned with our research strengths and which are informed by the external environment. Our research is founded upon excellence led by global needs with real-world societal and economic impacts.

DkIT's Research Clusters and Teams: The consolidation and concentration of our research into thematic areas of strength which are underpinned by internationally recognised research teams has been at the heart of our strategic development for the past decade. The Institute has always recognised the need to have a diversity of research centres and groups, including academic, industry facing and mission orientated which underpin our thematic areas. In view of the size of the Institute in terms of its research community, collaboration between existing research centres and groups and consolidation of existing groups and centres has been encouraged and achieved over the lifecycle of the preceding research strategy (2017-2019). However, there is further scope to build upon this with further possible consolidation and development of collaborative synergies between existing teams of researchers. This allows a focus on building higher critical mass within our prioritised research themes. Since the previous research strategy (2017-2019) there have been significant developments in terms of the number of research groups and the alignment of all centres and groups within one of the three research themes. At present, the institute has six research centres and seven research groups. Outside of our established research centres and groups there are individual researchers across the four academic schools who are not formally aligned within existing research centres and groups but bring their own research expertise and outputs to the Institute's research vision in their individual fields of enquiry.

Through the National Research Prioritisation Exercise, the recent Horizon Europe programme, Innovation 2020 and a recent Institute self-assessment exercise, DkIT identified its current research strengths and has consolidated them into three defined research clusters of scale and impact. Over the life course of this research strategic plan, a review of the research governance structures of centres and groups operating across the Institute will be undertaken in order to ensure that the Institute continues to be well positioned to take advantage of national and international opportunities in the research and

innovation space. A key action will be to revise and develop new governance structures around the strategic development of each of the research themes involving the research leaders, research office, academic schools and the technology transfer office.

ICT, Health and Ageing Cluster: This theme represents the highest number of associated research centres and groups spanning two academic schools, namely, Health & Science and Informatics & Creative Arts, with a critical mass of researchers comprising 39 academics, 4 Postdoctoral Fellows, 5 Research Fellows, 3 Support Staff and 32 postgraduate research students. There are three research centres, namely, Smooth Muscle, Regulated Software and Netwell/Casala, and three research groups, Interfaces & Electrochemistry (EIRG) and the newly established Nursing, Midwifery & Early Years (NMEY) and Applied Data Analytics groups (ADARG), aligned to this Institute. This theme accounts for over €40M of the institute's research income from sources such as the SFI Centre programme, EU FP7, Horizon 2020, Interreg IVA, Irish Research Council and direct industry funding. Several of the teams are involved in European wide networks of scale and have established strong linkages with university researchers both nationally and internationally

Climate and Natural Resources Cluster: This cluster spans two academic schools, Health & Science and Engineering and is composed of two research centres, Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) and its associated Technology gateway, Centre for Freshwater & Environmental Studies (CFES), and one research group, Electrochemistry and Interfaces (EIRG), with the latter also conducting research underpinning the health domain. It is comprised of 15 academics, 2 Postdoctoral Fellows, 2 Senior Research Fellows, 1 Support Staff and 25 postgraduate researchers.

Creative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Cluster: Comprised of one research centre, Creative Arts (CARC) and five research groups, Humanities, Society, Tourism, Gender & Inclusion Academy (GIA) and Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Marketing and Management (ELMM), this cluster spans two academic schools, Business & Humanities and Informatics & Creative Arts. It is composed of 68 academics and 30 Postgraduate research students.

Research Theme	Academic Members	Postgraduate Researchers	Career Researchers
ICT, Health and Ageing	33	32	12
Climate & Natural Resources	15	25	5
Creative Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	68	30	0

Outside of these priority research themes and their associated centres and groups, the institute aims to establish a teaching and learning research group which will span the four academic schools and

includes members from existing research centres and groups. The Teaching and Learning Research group will be strategically linked to the Institute's Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). It is a growing area of research interest for the Institute and is composed of leading academics from each of the four academic schools.

Society is currently facing real global challenges which affect people's quality of life, including finding renewable forms of alternative energy, finding cures for fatal diseases and addressing the societal issues around ageing populations. Within our cross disciplinary research teams, through both basic and translational research programmes, we are attempting to address these global issues and find solutions for industry and society. Ensuring our research has impact, whether it is contributing to the knowledge gap, aiding economic development, solving societal challenges, informing national and international policy and informing the teaching remit of the institute, has always been at the heart of our research endeavours. It is vitally important that the Institute increases the visibility of its research to external stakeholders, including research funders, private and public bodies, potential collaborators and society at large. This will, in itself, demonstrate the unique contribution the Institute's research outputs are making to the knowledge economy. Greater visibility will not only lead to strengthening the Institute's ability to secure external research income but it will also enable the development of strategic partnerships with public and private bodies. We recognise that it is the quality and expertise of our researchers which underpins our research success to date. The Institute must strive to actively support its research community in their endeavours, both established and early career researchers. It is only through this that the Institute can attain its research vision to be a leader in its research themes. Research, is a critical and integral part of the overall learning environment of the Institute for its staff and student body.

Core Principles: The Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2024) is founded upon five core principles (CPs) from which the stated strategic goals and associated objectives flow. These core principles include:

Institutional Research Culture: Dundalk Institute of Technology was originally established as a Regional Technology College with a primary focus on education at levels 6 and 7. For the past decade the research and innovation agenda has significantly matured allowing the Institute to become an internationally recognised research -intensive institution in its key research areas. However, the careful balancing act required, and tension between the teaching and learning and research worlds to attain this has been beset with significant challenges and obstacles, both internally and externally. With the Institute approaching its 50-year anniversary it seems opportune to ensure that research and innovation is at the core of all its activities. An integral part of this will be to ensure that research and innovation is viewed by all internal stakeholders as of strategic importance and as mainstream activity of the Institute. The latter shall involve ensuring all functional areas and academic schools are equally supportive of

research and innovation and that improved internal communication exists across the Institute so all can better understand research and innovation. To achieve this a detailed review of all governance structures in tandem with the development of policies that are fit for purpose will be required.

Academic Freedom: The cornerstone of any research intensive higher educational body should be the recognition of the principle of academic freedom for research endeavour irrespective of the research discipline. Dundalk Institute of Technology has encouraged this approach through its support of research across a wide spectrum of discipline areas and recognition of how the outputs of scholarly research differ across such disciplines. This approach should continue and be bolstered through greater recognition and reward for different forms of research output.

Culture of Inclusivity and Gender Equality: The Institute will continue to be committed, through the Athena Swan process and recent institutional strategic planning process to align with National and European best practice with respect to the principles enshrining gender equality and inclusivity within the Higher Education Sector. The European funding instrument, Horizon 2020, states three objectives which underpin its strategy on gender equality which the Institute has taken cognisance of and has become the implementation where necessary. These objectives include “fostering gender balance in research teams so as to close the gaps in female participations”, “ensuring gender balance in decision making groups” and integrating a gender dimension in research and innovation content”. Specific measures at an institutional level which can be implemented include ensuring any perceived barriers for participation of females in research are highlighted and removed, a review of all governance structures around research and innovation and encouragement of underrepresented genders in certain research disciplines and research teams to proactively become research active.

Public Outreach: Dundalk Institute of Technology carries out translational research which has had significant societal and economic impact, whether that has been through addressing issues around ageing, the climate or health. This has cemented the institute’s research reputation with external stakeholders from funders to governmental bodies. The awareness however of what we do in research to private enterprise and what problems our research community may be able to solve for such enterprises needs improving. This can be achieved in ensuring the research community within the Institute engages proactively with the Regional Development Centre. In addition, the need to communicate what we do in research and innovation to the general public has never been as important due to the current challenges in the public finances and how research and innovation are funded. Efficient public outreach and awareness will form an important aspect of what we do in research moving forward. Engaging with our region across all sectors can be achieved through ensuring the communications office, the research office and research community work in unison and develop specific measures and policies around public outreach and engagement.

Positioning DKIT as a research leader in its sector: Dundalk Institute of Technology has cemented its position as one of the leading research-intensive Institutes of Technology over the past five years with some notable successes both on the National and European scene. The performance of the Institutes research community is one important facet through which reputational enhancement is achieved, however another is that the Institute's management, through leadership from the Research Office, influences national research and innovation policy so the needs of the research community in the Institute are better served. This takes the form of ensuring the Institute plays key roles in national fora and communicates with external stakeholders of influence. As the national Higher Education Landscape goes through dramatic changes through the creation of the Technology Universities and the short to long terms challenges posed by Covid 19 it is vital the Institute is seen to be at the forefront of those challenges from within its own sector.

Since September 2014, registered DkIT postgraduate research students are studying for Dublin City University (DCU) awards through the DCU/DkIT Graduate School (<https://www.dkit.ie/research/postgraduate-studies/>). The regulations applying to these awards are aligned to DCU regulations for postgraduate research awards. The regulations are regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with DCU regulations (typically in May/June of each academic year). Prior to 2014 postgraduate research students received awards from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and were governed by a separate regulations for QQI awards (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

Admissions applications for postgraduate research are firstly considered by the relevant School Graduate Research Programme Board. There is GRSB in each of the four Schools in the Institute. Once approved by this Board applications are considered by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB). Once approved by the DkIT GRSB applications are submitted to the DCU GRSB for approval. The GRPBs and GRSBs also process transfer application, notification to submit applications and deferrals. Postgraduate Research students must complete an Annual Progress Monitoring Report. Examination Boards take place as required to confirm postgraduate research awards. The Registrar's Office is responsible for making the request for a parchment to DCU and inviting the candidate to attend a conferring ceremony. An annual report is also submitted to DCU as part of the quality assurance processes.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office provide high-quality support for all researchers at Dundalk Institute of Technology. The Research Support Team work collaboratively and in partnership with staff, research centres and groups, the academic schools, Technology Transfer Office (TTO), Finance, Human Resource (HR) and Library to provide research support.

The following range of supports are provided:

- Identifying potential sources of research funding;
- Helping in the preparation and submission of research funding proposals covering all aspects of a typical proposal (e.g. finance);
- Provide training courses and information sessions on research related topics;
- Access and publicise the impact of the Institute’s research activities;
- Work in partnership with the research centres and groups to drive their research performance;
- Provide and review all research agreements;
- Act as the primary point of contact for external funders;
- Provide career development advice for career researchers;
- Develop and implement all research-related policies and procedures;
- Provide institutional research funding support schemes.

DkIT has a very successful track record in relevant metrics and peer review, especially in terms of research funding secured and the number and associated citations of peer reviewed publications. The primary benchmark employed for measuring the impact of the Institute’s research was the Scopus database (<https://www.scopus.com>). The institute is still ranked 4th in the sector in terms of total citations.

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

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Good Research Practice Guidelines	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
DkIT PGR Forms	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Data Management	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Open Access Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Authorship and Publication	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Consultancy Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Conflict of Interest Policies and Procedures	
Research Centre and Group Designation (including Annual Report template)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Ethics Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Postgraduate Teaching Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Postgraduate Research Agreement (Funded and Non-Funded)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

This section provides information on published quality assurance policies and procedures that demonstrate how the institution takes responsibility for the quality of its staff, and how it provides staff with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. This includes recruitment, management and development of staff, as well as the institution's communication with staff.

DkIT is cognisant of the changing role of the lecturer due to the increasing diversity of the learner body and stronger focus on learning outcomes and a learner centred approach to educational provision. This informs the recruitment and training of staff.

Recruitment of staff is managed through the Institute's Human Resources Department (<https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource>) and is in line with relevant legislation, including the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 (and subsequent legislation), The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (OWTA 1997), The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (SHWWA 2005), Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2018, Terms of Employment (Information) Acts, 1994-2014. Scoring of candidates for lecturing positions gives due cognisance to prior teaching qualifications and experience. All staff appointments are subject to a formal probationary period.

The Human Resources Office also arranges staff training and development activities on a variety of pedagogical and academic administrative topics of relevance to higher education (e.g. academic integrity and data protection). New staff members undergo an extensive induction process, both Institute and at Department level. In the case of academic staff, this includes introductory training in learning, teaching and assessment and in academic quality assurance and enhancement.

The Institute, through its Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (<https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching>), offers a Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching (via blended learning). Sub-awards (Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate) are also available, as are individual

modules. CELT also provides regular short programmes and master classes in learning, teaching and assessment topics, including programme development, delivery, assessment and technology-enhanced learning. The use of innovation in learning, teaching and assessment is encouraged and facilitated. Staff members have opportunities to participate in learning and teaching enhancement projects and other scholarly activities.

Academic staff members have opportunities for professional development and scholarly activities in their discipline areas, mainly through linkages within one of the Institute's Research Centres. A number of schemes to facilitate staff engagement with research and supervision of research postgraduate students are administered by the Graduate Studies Office, which also provides training programmes for staff involved in student supervision. Academic staff members also have opportunities to participate in short term industry projects or consultancy through the Regional Development Centre (RDC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/regional-development-centre.html>).

All staff members studying for higher awards are eligible for fees subsidies and at any time and a significant number of academic staff members are working towards doctoral awards. Standing at 40%, DkIT exceeds the sector average for the proportion of fulltime academic staff with level 10 qualifications.

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Dignity at Bullying and Harassment Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Institute Garda / Police Vetting Procedures for Students	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: Yes.

Garda/Police Vetting Procedures for Students were updated in the reporting period (Academic Council Meeting No. 170, Motion 170.02, 2nd October 2020).

6.0 Information and Data Management

This section provides information on information systems and processes and the way data and information is used to inform practice and decision making. Information is also provided on records maintenance and retention, as well as data protection and freedom of information.

The Institute is a client of HEAnet Network Operations and uses the Banner Student Management System (academic records), CORE (Human Resources), Agresso (Finance) and Koha (library) as its core information management tools. Records of student academic history are stored on Banner and

used for the production of results transcripts, parchments and European Diploma Supplements. This information is retained indefinitely and allows DkIT to verify graduate results and awards retrospectively.

Anonymised data relating to students and graduates is analysed with a view to informing decision making. For example, data on student applications, registration, progression and drop out, conferring of awards and graduate destinations is circulated internally and analysed annually and as part of five-yearly Programmatic Reviews.

EvaSys survey software (<https://evasys.de/en/>) is used for quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities to obtain formal student feedback about their programme of study bi-annually. The Institute also participates annually in the HEA StudentSurvey.ie (formerly the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)). The data collected in the surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions.

Statistics on use of learning support and other student services are collated and used to inform decision making in relation to the management and resourcing of these units.

The curriculum management tool Akari Curriculum (<https://courses.dkit.ie/curriculum/>) is used to aid the design of programmes and modules. Proposed programme schedules, learning outcomes and module descriptors from the curriculum management tool are presented to programme validation panels and, following the approval process, this information is published (<http://courses.dkit.ie/>). Changes to modules and programmes as a result of ongoing or five-yearly reviews are updated in Akari Curriculum and re-published.

The research management system Smart Simple (https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp) is used to track research proposals and the progress of postgraduate students.

All personal data is managed with due regard to legislative data protection requirements. The Institute has a designated Data Protection and Freedom of Information Officer to guide on such matters. Information on Data Protection can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/legal/data-protection.html>. Information on Records and Retention can be found at: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/legal/data-protection/records-and-retention.html>.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No

7.0 Public Information and Communication

This section provides information on information provided to the general public (local, national and international levels). The Institute's approach to communicating with the public is also provided.

The DkIT Marketing and Communications office in conjunction with the appropriate Head of School/Department /Functional Area has overall responsibility for how public information is presented to external audiences via published promotional materials and the DkIT website. The Marketing and

Communications office works with internal Functional Areas/Schools to ensure that information is correctly presented via the website to prospective and current students.

A variety of internal methods of communications are also used by individual Functional Areas and Schools to disseminate information to these audiences including email, Moodle VLE, noticeboards etc.

DkIT provides considerable information to current and prospective students, staff, graduates, other stakeholders and the public through its website (<http://www.dkit.ie>). This information includes the following:

- Programmes of study (<https://www.dkit.ie/courses/>) including detailed programme and module descriptors (<http://courses.dkit.ie/>);
- Application processes and entry requirements (<https://www.dkit.ie/admissions-and-fees/how-to-apply.html>);
- Policies and procedures (website currently being upgraded);
- Student support services <https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/>;
- Academic calendar <https://www.dkit.ie/study/current-students/academic-calendar.html>;
- Class timetables <https://timetables.dkit.ie/>;
- Examination timetables <https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/examination-timetables>;
- Student Life (e.g. Sports and Societies, Student Union, etc.) <https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/>;
- Research and Innovation activities and services to Business <https://www.dkit.ie/research-and-innovation/> and <https://www.dkit.ie/services-to-business/>.

Reports from quality assurance events such as programme validations, Institutional and Programmatic reviews and annual reports to QQI (AQRs) are also available on the website (<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement>). Registers of Collaborative Partnerships and Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs) are also made available publicly.

Registered students receive additional information about their programme within their Academic Department, including:

- Department Handbook;
- Continuous Assessment Schedule;
- Individual Assessment Briefs

DkIT is open to the public for various 'Open Day' events, which facilitate the provision of information on academic programmes and application processes to Secondary Schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Providers and the general public. These events include opportunities for School

representatives (e.g. Guidance Counsellors) to provide feedback. The DkIT Schools Liaison Office also participates in Higher Education expos and other national and regional events. Visits to individual schools are carried out as part of the Institute's ongoing promotional activities. Programme information is also published in hard copy prospectus format. These documents are available at promotional events, school visits and at DkIT reception.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

This section provides information on monitoring and periodic review quality assurance and enhancement activities.

Monitoring

Academic programmes are managed and monitored on an ongoing basis by Programme Boards. These Boards consist of all the academic staff members who are involved in the delivery of a programme and student representatives from each stage. They are normally chaired by the Head of Department or Programme Director and meet at least three times during the academic year to discuss all aspects of programme delivery. They operate in accordance with the DkIT Monitoring of Programmes Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) and report annually to Academic Council. Follow up takes place at both Department level and centrally through an Action Plan agreed by Academic Council.

External examiners act as independent and impartial advisors providing the Institute with informed comment on the standards set and learner achievement in relation to those standards. External examining is therefore an integral and very important part of institutional quality assurance and enhancement. DkIT's External Examiner Duties and Procedures (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>) provides information on the following:

- Nomination (including criteria);
- Approval;
- Appointment;
- Number of External Examiners;
- Role of External Examiner;
- Boards of Examiners;
- Reporting Arrangements.

Minor changes to validated programmes, as decided by programme boards, can be approved by the Academic Council Programme Evaluation Subcommittee (PEC), in accordance with the Design and Approval of Programmes Policy (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>). See AQR Part B for activities during the reporting period 2020/2021.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office conducts quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities annually. DkIT submits a postgraduate research Annual Report to DCU's GRSB as part of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal monitoring (see Figure 2). Annual Reporting for the collaborative partnership arrangement is through the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) and DCU Academic Council. DkIT completes the Annual Report template which is submitted for consideration at the October meeting of DCU GRSB. The Annual Report is also considered by the DkIT GRSB and the DkIT Academic Council. The Annual Report contains information on the following relating to postgraduate research activities at DkIT:

Annual Report Section	Description
Recruitment	Recruitment activities. Applications received and admissions approved.
Students and Projects	Information in respect of students registered on research programmes. Project information, including ethics applications. Supervision arrangements established.
Progression, transfers and deferral / withdrawals	Annual progression recommendations. Applications to transfer to the PhD register. Deferrals and withdrawals. The reports are created in an online management system (SmartSimple - https://dkit.smartsimple.ie).
Examinations and Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiners approved. • Examinations held, and Examination Board recommendations. • Awards approved and conferred.
Appeals and Grievances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases of conflict / grievance raised. • Appeals processes invoked
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation and induction activities. • Uptake of graduate training. • Supervisor training activities.
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student scholarships and grants awarded. • Tuition fees received.

Quality Assurance and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance review and recommendations. • Governance activities and representation.
Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to and/or developments in agreed standards and processes. • Development / accreditation of new modules. • Other new developments and activities.

The Annual Report is informed by student feedback (Postgraduate Research Student Feedback and the PGR StudentSurvey.ie (<https://studentsurvey.ie/>)). The PGR StudentSurvey.ie survey was piloted in 2018 and fully implemented across 22 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2019. The feedback survey requests feedback on the following dimensions of the postgraduate research student experience: Research Infrastructure, Funding, Supervision, Research Culture, Progress, Development Opportunities, Research Skills, Personal Outlook, Transferable Skills, Responsibilities, Motivations, Career and Overall Experience.

DkIT employs the *SmartSimple* Management System (<https://dkit.smartsimple.ie>) to monitor the annual progression of each postgraduate research student. In addition this system is employed to quality assure all external research and innovation proposals being submitted to external funding bodies. In summary:

- Oversight and formal sign off by the postgraduate research student, supervisory team and the academic school graduate research programme board concerning the annual progress monitoring of the student is managed through the on line SmartSimple system.
- Oversight and formal institutional sign off, by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies, of all external research and innovation funding applications prior to submission. This ensures that all submitted proposals are aligned with best practice and allows effective management of institutional resources.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office implements the quality assurance policy and procedures related to Research Centre designations. Research Centres and Groups are required to submit an annual report to the Research and Graduate Studies Office.

Professional Service Areas (Student Services, International Office, etc.) complete quality assurance and enhancement monitoring of their services each year and produce an Annual Report(s). See AQR Part B for monitoring activities during the reporting period 2020/2021.

Periodic Review

Policies and criteria for the review of programmes for School programmatic reviews are available at (latest policy and criteria relates to the most recent Programmatic Review cycle in 2018/2019):

<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html>).

All academic programmes are subject to a five-yearly review which is managed by the Registrar's Office. The Programmatic Review is a School-based activity involving two stages:

- School self-study, involving a review and evaluation of all activities within the School (strategy, learning, teaching, assessment, resources, etc.) with reference to an extensive consultation exercise. This includes an external scan of the changing needs of society and industry, relevant internal statistics (e.g. student intake, progression, etc.) and feedback from both internal and external stakeholders (including students and graduates).
- Review and re-validation of all academic programmes.

A number of programmes of study within DkIT are accredited by external Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). The programmes are required to undergo regular reviews to retain accreditation status.

DkIT conducts periodic postgraduate research quality reviews in accordance with the DCU-DkIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal reviews (see Figure 2). The quality review focusses on the effectiveness of the partnership, and is an assurance of the quality of postgraduate research (PGR) provision for DCU accredited research programmes. The quality review is carried out by Dublin City University (DCU) as an internal cyclical review in line with existing procedures established for DCU quality reviews and aligned to the QQI guidelines and policy where appropriate.

Also, designated Research Centres within DkIT undergo an external review every three years to retain their designation status. These reviews are coordinated by Research and Graduate Studies Office.

Cyclical External Quality Assurance

As a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), DkIT is required to undergo a cyclical Institutional Review (CINTE Review, <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Institutional-Reviews07.aspx>). The review evaluates the effectiveness of institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the education, training, research and related services provided by DkIT. The review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the ESG (2015) and consists of the following elements:

- The publication of terms of reference by QQI;
- The preparation of an Institution Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);

- An external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers appointed by QQI;
- The publication of a panel review report including findings and recommendations;
- A follow-up procedure to review the actions taken.

DkIT completed an Institutional Review in the academic year 2018/2019, the previous review having been carried out in 2008/2009.

See AQR Part B for periodic review activities during the reporting period 2019/2020.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in this reporting period: No.

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2020-2021

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **Part B** of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**.

Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR submission were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact² of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to illustrate IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;

² The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QOI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) (see AQR Part A) continues to support the Institute's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan 2020-2022 (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>) (1st Jan 2020 - 31st Dec 2022) was in effect during the reporting period 2020/2021. The current strategic plan was informed by the AMBITION Planning Framework (see AQR 2018/2019). The strategic plan is aligned to the Institute's Mission-Based Performance Compact 2018-2021 between Dundalk Institute of Technology and Higher Education Authority (HEA) (<https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/dundalk-institute-of-technology/performance/>).

1.1.1 QCI Annual Dialogue

There was no QCI Annual Dialogue with Dundalk Institute of Technology during the reporting period 2020-2021.

The following sections provide an update on quality assurance developments that occurred during the reporting period which are aligned with the Institute's strategic objectives. This includes:

- Changes to Academic Quality Governance and Other Governance;
- Changes to Policies and Procedures;
- Programme Development and Approval;
- Programme Changes;
- Professional Service Areas (Student Services) Activities and Developments;
- Library Activities and Developments;
- Research Activities and Developments;
- Athena Swan Activities and Developments;
- Entrepreneurship and External Engagement Activities and Developments;
- Internationalisation Activities and Development.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to cause disruption to the normal operation of the Institute's activities and the quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) system was again robust enough, with minor alterations, to allow the Institute to continue to provide a quality service to all students.

Ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic (taught and research) and professional service areas (student services, etc.) are included as appropriate in the sections below.

1.1.2 Changes to Academic Quality Governance

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

The Academic Contingency Planning (ACP) sub-group (Figure 5), which was established in the reporting period 2019/2020 (Academic Council Meeting 167, 31st March 2020) during the emergency phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued to operate in the reporting period 2020/2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic continued (See Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule). The purpose of the sub-group was to deal with academic operational matters, as tasked by the Academic Council. In particular, the sub-group dealt with time-sensitive or emergency matters that arose during the pandemic period which could not have been dealt with in a timely manner using the normal governance/academic structures. The sub-group was constituted as a sub-committee of the Academic Council on 26th March 2021 and terms of reference were approved (Standing Committee Meeting No. 68, Motion 68.04).

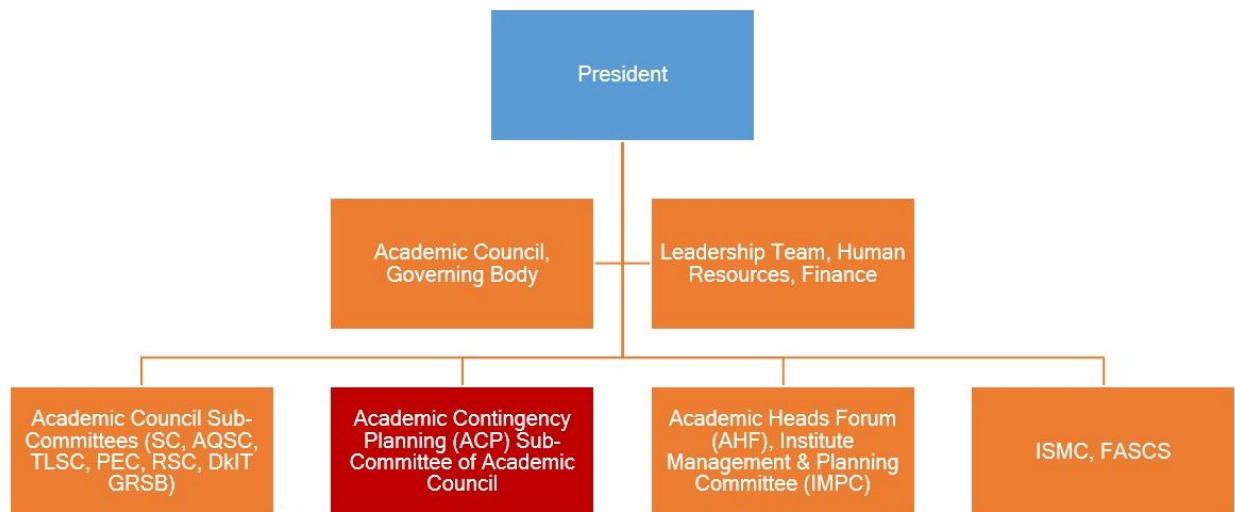


Figure 5: DkIT Governance Structures

1.1.3 Changes to Policies and Procedures

Changes to policies and procedures in the reporting period 2020/2021 were described in AQR Part A. See Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule for items that were addressed by the Academic Council.

1.1.4 Programme Development and Approval

DKIT carried out an exercise in Programmatic Portfolio Planning for the period 2018 to 2028. The programme portfolio planning for the period 2018 to 2028 was reported in the AQR for the reporting period 2018/2019. The Institute continued with its programme portfolio implementation during the reporting period 2020/2021. The ongoing development of the programme portfolio supports the delivery of the DkIT strategic goals of providing a career-oriented education reflective of addressing the current and future needs of society, community and enterprise.

Programme validations/reviews continued remotely, using web conferencing software (Microsoft Teams (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ie/microsoft-teams/log-in>) and/or Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>)) during the reporting period 2020/2021. The adoption of web conferencing software for programme validations continued to operate effectively with programme development teams becoming comfortable with the software platforms. Also, Schools innovated further with technology in support of their proposals. For example video was employed to provide virtual tours of programme resources (campus locations and equipment) in support of a particular programme(s) being considered for validation. The Registrar's Office saw an increase in the availability of Panel members, both academic and industry representatives, particularly international Panel members, when web conferencing platforms were utilised.

The following validations/reviews were completed during 2020/2021:

New Programme Validations

Validation Type	Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Data Analytics for Business</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Culinary Skills</i>	6	Certificate	Special-Purpose	60
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Recording (VALIDATION PROCESS TO BE COMPLETED IN SEMESTER 2 2021-2022)</i>	8	Certificate	Special-Purpose	12.5

New Programme	<i>Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Recording with Osteology (VALIDATION PROCESS TO BE COMPLETED IN SEMESTER 2 2021-2022)</i>	8	Certificate	Special-Purpose	15
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Supply Chain Management</i>	7	Certificate	Minor	30
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Bio-Energy</i>	9	Certificate	Minor	30
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Solar Energy</i>	9	Certificate	Minor	30
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Marine Renewables</i>	9	Certificate	Minor	30
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Wind Energy</i>	9	Certificate	Minor	30
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Bio-Energy</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	90
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Solar Energy</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	90
New Programme	<i>•Master of Science in Marine Renewables</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	90
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Wind Energy</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	90
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Building Surveying</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Building Surveying</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Engineering in Building Surveying (Exit Award)</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
New Programme	<i>Bachelor of Science in Agriculture</i>	7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Major	60

New Programme	<i>Certificate in Animal Production</i>	7	Certificate	Minor	17.5
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Sustainable Land Management</i>	7	Certificate	Minor	15
New Programme	<i>Higher Diploma in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing</i>	8	Higher Diploma	Major	60
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing</i>	8	Certificate	Minor	40
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Leadership, Management and Business for the Early Years Sector</i>	7	Certificate	Special-Purpose	15
New Programme	<i>Master of Science in Professional Practice (Professional Management of Complex Behaviour in Clinical Practice)</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	90
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice (Professional Management of Complex Behaviour in Clinical Practice)</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Professional Practice (Professional Management of Complex Behaviour in Clinical Practice)</i>	9	Certificate	Minor	30
New Programme	<i>Certificate in User Experience (UX) Design</i>	7	Certificate	Minor	40
New Programme	<i>Certificate in Digital Media Design</i>	7	Certificate	Minor	40
New Programme	<i>Master of Arts in Music for Screen</i>	9	Masters Degree	Major	75

New Programme	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing Systems and Operations</i>	8	Honours Bachelor Degree	Major	240
New Programme	<i>Bachelor of Science in Computing Systems and Operations</i>	7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Major	180
New Programme	<i>Higher Certificate in Science in Computing Systems and Operations</i>	6	Higher Certificate	Major	120
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Immersive Technology</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	75
New Programme	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Technical Direction for Computer Animation Production</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	75

Differential Validation(s)

This refers to the DKIT validation of a programme that is based on, or a modification or extension of, an existing DKIT validated programme. The DKIT validation of the original programme can inform the DKIT validation of the derived programme and this can simplify the DKIT validation process for the derived programme.

Validation Type	Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS
Differential	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Bio-Energy</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
Differential	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Solar-Energy</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
Differential	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Wind-Energy</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
Differential	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Marine Renewables</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60

Differential	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Musical Theatre</i>	7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Major	180
Differential	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics</i>	9	Postgraduate Diploma	Major	60
Differential	<i>Higher Diploma in Science in Networking and Systems</i>	8	Higher Diploma	Major	75

Programme Accreditations

Programme(s)	Body	Description
Undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes	NMBI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NMBI carried out its five yearly site inspection of the undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes. This included submission of a report from the School and a two-day virtual inspection which took place on the 6th and 7th May 2021.
Early Childhood Studies programmes	Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A submission was made to Department of Education and Skills in relation to the professional award criteria and guidelines (PACG) for the suite Early Childhood Studies programmes.
Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing	VCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) carried out a virtual panel visit to DkIT in November 2020 as part of the re-accreditation process.

Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery

The Institute continued to approve a number of venues for off-campus programme delivery (in line with Institute strategic objectives):

Off-Site Location	Delivery Of	Date of Site Visit	Approval
Blackfriary, Trim, Co.Meath.	<i>Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Recording</i> <i>Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Recording with Osteology</i>	10th June 2021	To be approved by the DkIT Academic Council. Validation process to be completed in semester 2 2021/2022.
M-TEK 1 Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, H18 KV40.	<i>Certificate in Lean Six Sigma (Green Belt)</i>	1st June 2021	Academic Council (Meeting No. 176), 18th June 2021.

Programme Validation Panel reports with School responses for each validation can be viewed at: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/approval-programmes>.

1.1.5 Programme Changes

There was eight meetings of the Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) of the Academic Council in the reporting period 2020/2021, three more than typically scheduled in the academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic (See Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule for 2020/2021).

The PEC considered normal/routine programme amendment submissions and also submissions specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic from academic Departments (Special Meeting, 30th September 2020) in accordance with DkIT's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes. It should be noted that programme amendments for a particular academic year are normally

approved in May/June of the previous academic year in order to allow Student Management System (Banner) changes to be applied over the summer months. The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays in normal quality assurance and enhancement activities. The Registrar's Office stipulated that where possible validated Approved Programme Schedules (APS's) should be implemented by academic Departments and that where changes to APS's were necessitated due to the COVID-19 pandemic all such changes would be effective for the academic year 2020/2021 only. However due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic academic Departments were afforded the opportunity, with appropriate justification to the PEC to retain programme changes (PEC meeting, 11th June 2021) for the academic year 2021/2022. All COVID-19 changes were documented specifically for quality assurance purposes. The Chair of the PEC and the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance supported the Departments as appropriate.

The following amendments to programmes in accordance with DkIT's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes:

- Minor Changes- Changes to assessment breakdowns.
- Structural Changes-swapping modules between semesters.
- External review of individual modules by External Expert for module substitution due to COVID-19 pandemic (in accordance with Institute's policy on the validation of individual modules).
- Removal of specific programme accreditation due to COVID-19 restrictions (e.g. Sport Ireland and iCoach MOOC).
- Removal of Special Regulation that stated students must attend a residential week due to COVID-19 pandemic.

After analysis by the Registrar's Office it was determined that the majority of the Approved Programme Schedule (APS) changes made during the reporting period 2020/2021 reverted back to the validated APS for the academic year 2021/2022 with a small number retaining the programme change(s) (with appropriate justification).

1.1.6 Professional Service Areas (Student Services) Activities and Developments

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in Student Services for the reporting period 2020-2021.

Access Service

- Academic year 20/21 was the first academic year in which HEAR applicants were assessed and admitted to DkIT.
- The following were provided as part of the once-Off COVID-19 Contingency Fund (<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/a0b65-minister-harris-announces-a-once-off-covid-19-contingency-fund-for-access-services-for-vulnerable-students-from-target-groups/>) :
 - Provision of an online tuition service (Studyclix.ie) to 12 DEIS schools in the region.
 - Upgrade of the screen in the Civic Square on campus and provision of content promoting social connectedness among the campus community as well as providing a means to provide an ‘overspill’ of physical events on campus by incorporating a virtual element.
- Access Service is engaged in discussions with second level DEIS schools in the region to provide learning supports / resources to Traveller students in senior cycle with funding from Dormant Accounts - Travellers in Education. The focus of these access projects would be to encourage Traveller students to progress to senior cycle and to consider further and higher education options.

Disability Service

- During the reporting period 2020-2021 the switch to online remote teaching, learning and assessment created a number of challenges for the DkIT Disability Service and for the students that are supported by it.
- To this end the use of technologies and the creation of tutorial videos for students, and the creation of the Student Support Hub in the Moodle VLE has been very beneficial and continues to be a valuable resource.
- The building of the Fully Accessible Bathroom facility was completed.

Student Counselling Service

- The Counselling Service provided students with safe, accessible and well-resourced mental health support through their contribution to the Student Support Hub as well as our service initiatives.
- There were major expansions of the service as a result of the extra funding by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to address the impact of COVID-19. The appointment of a Head of Counselling allowed for the provision of clear strategic leadership and policy development in the area of mental health and suicide prevention. As the main providers of mental health support to students within institutions, it is essential that there is clear clinical governance and a student focussed approach to the area of mental health.
- **Assistant Psychologist (AP):** An AP was employed for the first time to address the particular issues exacerbated by lockdown, increased levels of isolation, stress, anxiety, access to supports and the creation of online resources. Social media campaigns were developed to help reduce social isolation and promote a culture of belonging. Effort was made to support those groups deemed most at risk, international students and those reluctant to attend counselling through the following initiatives.
 - **Anxiety Workshop Series:** While live attendance for this was low to none, the series has been made available online in the Moodle Student Support Hub and will be a valuable reference for students experiencing anxiety.
 - **Exam Prep Workshop:** Eight students took part in the week before the examination sessions. Counsellors were able to refer clients who had been experiencing issues with procrastination and other study-related problems to the workshop. It is also available online for future referral.
 - **Mentoring:** A pilot peer mentoring programme was designed and established. Ten mentors were recruited for the upcoming semester and trained in a three-hour long interactive workshop designed by the Assistant Psychologist with input from the Head Counsellor and other student services. These newly trained mentors went on to integrate over 150 first year students into campus life. It is hoped that the number of first year mentees will grow year on year as each cohort graduates from mentee toward mentor, thus expanding the capacity of the project.
 - **Student Counselling Drop-in Service:** Uptake for this service was initially slow, with no visitors for the first few sessions. However, once we introduced a timeslot booking

system there was a significant upturn in attendance. Nineteen students in total availed of the service. Some of these came with issues which did not warrant further counselling, but for which I could help them find a more practical solution. The majority, however, used the drop-in as a bridge toward registering for counselling. It seemed that the drop-in allowed them to gain an insight into what counselling entails and how to sign up. This service provided a chance to demystify and destigmatize what it means to attend counselling.

- **International Support Group:** The support group facilitated connection between international students who otherwise were isolated during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Some students even arranged to meet and socialise outside of the group, such was the bond that they formed within it.
- **Social Media:** A social media communication strategy was established, with Facebook and Instagram pages for the Counselling Service being established. As expected, the Instagram page was much more successful, accruing 110 followers. The page can now be used as a platform for advertising Counselling initiatives and engaging with students online.
- **Moodle VLE Information Leaflets:** Leaflets were created and uploaded to the Moodle VLE which provided information on the warning signs of various mental health problem areas (e.g., Depression, eating disorders, self-criticism) as well as resources for helping students to deal with these issues. It was found that these resources were a useful and reliable online point of reference for students looking for guidance with their mental health, but who were not yet ready to reach out for counselling.
- **Educational Psychologist Post:** Many students particularly mature students have undiagnosed learning difficulties which means they struggle to cope with academic work, which leads to increased levels of stress and a risk of dropping out. Psychological assessment is difficult and very expensive to access. Having this service available on campus and with the capacity to provide ongoing support as well as assessment has a major impact on academic outcomes and retention. Using the HEA funding allocation DkIT appointed an Ed Psych one day per week. This was increased to two days from May to July to address the back log of assessments.

Health Unit

- The Health Unit transitioned from an in-person service support walk-in, to a virtual hub of information and guidance during the COVID-19 lockdown periods. In cases of emergency,

students were able to present in person where a scheduled appointment had been confirmed by a member of the Health Unit team.

- The Health unit liaised with Public Health and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) Ireland on appropriate health and safety protocols to use in a third level educational setting.
- Appropriate Hand Hygiene stations were put in place to accommodate facilitators and learners to adhere to Hand Hygiene practices. Floor markings as a constant reminder to maintain 2m physical distance were put in place. A code of practice in relation to appropriate handwashing and mask wearing etiquette was introduced and communicated throughout the college.
- In addition to this a temporary, well ventilated isolation room was made available as directed by the HSE to protect any person that appeared to be symptomatic.
- A communications protocol was developed, and messages delivered via email, phone, and the Helix Practice Manager (HPM) system. The HPM system is safer than holding manual records and is GDPR compliant. This enhanced efficiency in relation to connectivity with the GP service and outside psychological services: hospitals, medical laboratories, etc. For example, the Health Unit had the ability to issue virtual prescriptions on a national basis to registered students.
- The Health Unit nurse manager took on the dual role of “COVID 19 Consultant” for the period of the pandemic. This additional responsibility ensured that there was a person as the main point of contact for any concerns, acting as liaison to public health in situations where COVID-19 cases were identified. Fortunately, due to the protections put in place, DkIT had no outbreaks of the virus on campus.
- **Sexual Health:** As the service provision in the public STI clinics temporarily ceased and operated at more limited capacity due to COVID-19, the Health Unit established an “asymptomatic” screening clinic to bridge this gap. In addition to this the Health Unit linked with the National Condom Distribution Service (NCDS) and commenced the process to install four dispensing units on site to promote safe sexual health.
- **Health Promotion:** A proposal was submitted to encourage the replacement of all paper-based posters and leaflets with onscreen information points and virtual content such as the screen in the health unit waiting room and on the Moodle Student Support hub. An events calendar was agreed aligned to that of the National Health Service Executive campaign programme (e.g. October World Mental Health Day).

Sports and Societies

- In the early part of the semester in 2020/2021 the service was able to host some in person sports training sessions but throughout October and November more and more restrictions were implemented. Once Level 5 restrictions were brought in DkIT moved all activities online. All of DkIT's clubs and societies maintained a high level of contact with their students in the first semester but this proved more difficult in the second semester. DkIT introduced online yoga and pilates classes and also organised HIIT online classes for both students and staff to attend.
- A Rugby Development Officer was appointed in partnership with Leinster Rugby, which has seen DkIT named as a regional centre for their underage squads.
- Fundraising continued in 2020/2021. Dundalk 10K run was hosted virtually with over 1100 registrations. DkIT donated €4,000 to the Rape Crisis North East, €4,000 to Cara Cancer Support and €1,000 towards the SaveOurSonia campaign.
- Sports Scholarships continued with an online application process and numbers were very similar to the previous academic year. Despite activities moving online Sports and Societies engaged extensively with the sports scholarship students with regular web conferencing calls (using Zoom).
- Louth LGFA Scholarship Partnership was launched with Louth LGFA offering scholarships (8 in total) to members of the Louth Ladies squads. These were co funded by Dundalk Credit Union.
- Sports and Societies hosted a Sports Scholarship Webinar in partnership with the Marketing and Communications Office.

1.1.7 Library Activities and Developments

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in Library for the reporting period 2020-2021.

- Provision of space, the Táin Room to Disability Services for reconfiguration as a low sensory input space for use by students on the autism spectrum.

- Worked with INTERLEAF Technology to investigate the suitability and technical functionality of the Solus Library application which students can download to their phone for self-service borrowing and return. Purchased the app to be implemented during 2021/2022.
- Promoted use of Self-Service Kiosk for borrowing and returning.
- Continued to work within the national framework for the supply of all books/journals and e-books.
- Administered Elsevier Read and Publish Agreement Article Processing Charges to enable researchers to use Open Access Publishing routes for Elsevier journals.
- Updated and enhanced LibGuides (<https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/homepage>) as needed to reflect COVID-19 restrictions (see Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic).
- Reviewed and updated Library policies and procedures:
 - Loan policies based on feedback/statistics.
 - Collection categories based on statistics.
 - Research and Information Skills/Information Literacy.
- Investigated swipe card access system submitted funding application.
- Continued annual introductory meeting with Student Union (SU) leadership and followed up with regular meetings.

The library continued to provide teaching, learning and research supports to a diverse learner community during the reporting period 2020/2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Library COVID-19 working group ensured that processes and procedures were aligned with government and Institute recommendations.
- Physical setup of Library re-evaluated and reconfigured based on public health advice, social distancing measures implemented and reduced capacity maintained as needed.
- Installation of protective screens at the main Enquiry Desk.
- Communication enhanced through the installation of two new digital display screens on Floor 1 of the Library.
- Printers and change machine moved in order to reduce congestion in the Library space.

- Continued to work online including weekly meetings, all orders, services, functions etc.
- Booking system introduced for Library spaces to ensure safe use and provide contact tracing details.
- Automatic renewal of loans introduced and late return fines abolished to reduce anxiety and stress to readers.
- Returns Box available at main Whitaker Building entrance when campus was open.
- Free Postal loans/returns introduced.
- Scan and Send service (within copyright restrictions) introduced for periods when campus closed.
- Implemented and developed a chat service - "Ask A Librarian".
- Extended the range of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) available online (using Springshare LibAnswers software) as a support service in conjunction with the chat service.
- Continued to use Moodle VLE Library Hub for Library news and delivery of support, including self-paced lessons on Academic Integrity, Referencing and Mendeley.
- Daily monitoring of all e-resources to ensure all working as expected to ensure continuity of access / service.
- Daily monitoring of turn-aways from all e-resources to identify any supply issues.
- Increased funding allowed for new e-resource subscriptions to maintain access to information sources after June 2021 when many publishers ceased free provision.
- Continued to create videos on 'How to ...' to assist readers working remotely and made these available via LibGuides and Moodle VLE sites.
- Hosting online drop-ins for staff and students on topics/supports/issues.
- Hosting of cultural events virtually, including book club, "Poetry Ireland Day" and "Seachtain na Gaeilge".
- Wellness zone available to students during examination sessions.

1.1.8 Research Activities and Developments

The year 2020/2021 has witnessed a further enhancement of the Institute's reputation as one of the leading research-intensive institutes of technology. During this academic year:

- To be completed.

1.1.9 Athena Swan Activities and Developments

DkIT signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter in May 2018 and was awarded an Institutional Bronze award in March 2021 (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/athena-swan-charter.html>). The Athena SWAN Charter (<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/>) recognises commitment to eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff. The assessment process included:

- An assessment of gender equality in the Institute including quantitative and qualitative evidence - identifying both challenges and good practice;
- Preparation of a four year gender action plan and development of an organisational structure to carry proposed actions forward.

See Section 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR and Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period for actions related to Athena Swan.

1.1.10 Entrepreneurship and External Engagement Activities and Developments

Regional Development Centre (RDC)

The Institute plays a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of the region. DkIT is part of a wider business and local community and the multi award winning Regional Development Centre and Lifelong Learning Centre continue to provide support to the business and general community. The Regional Development Centre (RDC) plays a pivotal role in supporting enterprise development including engagement with regional and national stakeholders

and agencies such as the Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland, Chambers of Commerce and the IDA.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a challenging environment for enterprise clients of DkIT. In the reporting period 2020/21, we did however commence amid a slightly more positive outlook as the economy was starting to open up following a long period of lockdown due to the pandemic. A number of companies who had intended entering the Centre but had been impeded doing so were now able to. Others decided to delay entry further until they were able to have a better perspective on how the situation with the pandemic would progress. A small number of clients continued to work in the Centre a few days a week while the majority remained working remotely. However, events over the holiday period in December and January would lead to further lockdowns and restrictions. During this period the Centre remained open for clients and reception and Incubation Centre manager support was provided along with housekeeping provision to meet the requirements of our COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Most clients were able to continue doing business although recruitment and expansion plans were scaled back. Companies reported having difficulties training and mentoring junior staff (often recent graduates) due to remote work. Incubation rates fell bottoming out at 75% average for the year as a result of companies in incubation leaving/closing and pipeline leads not converting. Through DkIT internal resources and externally won funding DkIT were able to provide additional supports to our client base with expectations to get back to 90%+ occupancy rates in the short term. The RDC's was successful in securing funding of €146,170 (80% of €182,713 total project costs) for a number of recovery actions during the reporting period such as:

- Updating the Centre Wifi.
- Updating the Access Control system .
- Fitting out a Co-Working Room.
- Purchasing equipment for a mobile Zoom Room.
- Purchasing 2 Meeting Pods.
- Providing an Entrepreneur Resilience Programme to Centre clients.
- Providing a Business Resilience Programme for centre clients.
- ICM Salary Support.

- Marketing of the Regional Development Centre (RDC) and its activities.

By the end of the 2020/2021 academic year the following aspects of the work programme were completed:

- Updating the Centre Wi-fi.
- Fitting out a Co-Working Room.
- Purchasing equipment for a mobile Zoom Room.
- Purchasing 2 Meeting Pods.
- The ICM completed training to enable the provision of the Entrepreneur Resilience Programme to Centre clients. The rollout of the Entrepreneur Resilience and Business Resilience support programmes will accelerate once all clients return to the Centre and their needs become clearer.
- The Business Resilience Programme for Centre clients was commenced with one client availing of support.
- ICM Salary Support (approximately half of grant amount claimed during this period).
- Marketing of the RDC and its activities - planning completed for campaign rollout in new academic year.

Overall the RDC client engagement/entrepreneurs supported was significantly higher than expectations. However, Innovation Voucher engagement dropped predominantly due to the amount of supports available in the system from both the state supports made available to address the pandemic and Brexit. The Corporate Partnership Programme (CPP) engagement too slowed in terms of activities associated with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in existence and the pipeline of new CPP members, here also the organisations were focused predominantly on survival. However DkIT stepped up our engagement with seventy seven entrepreneurs/enterprises supported through our various programmes and activities. Additionally the RDC managed a total of fourteen applied research projects and fourteen innovation vouchers with industry.

The New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (<https://www.newfrontiers.ie/>) is a national programme funded by Enterprise Ireland and has been delivered by DkIT in collaboration

with DCU since 2012. Consisting of three phases participants determine whether there is commercial opportunity in their idea during Phase 1, develop a business plan and business structures during Phase 2 and prepare for scaling sales during Phase 3. The funding cycle for the programme was drawing to a close in Semester 2 of the reporting period and DkIT had to submit a new application to run the programme with its partner institution Dublin City University (DCU). The process was longer than usual this year due to remote working delays but DkIT's application was successful receiving the contract and letter of offer on June 9th 2021 with total project funding of €2,339,100 for five years.

A new Programme Manager was recruited following the issue of the contract from Enterprise Ireland (commencing employment on 1st September 2021). As a result of the delays no Phase 1 programmes ran during the reporting period 2020/21. Recruitment commenced on the new funding cycle from 1st September 2021. During this reporting period 2020/21 the final Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the NFP 2016-2020 funding cycle were completed. All training and reviews were delivered online and while this worked well there participants lost out in terms of the overall experience, networking and teambuilding opportunities on the programme. The start date of Phase 2 was delayed due to the pandemic and for the first time for DkIT, Phase 2 straddled Christmas. A total of fourteen participants were recruited onto the Phase 2 programme with three receiving further support and stipend on Phase 3 (€7,500 each for the three months). Of the fourteen participants recruited onto Phase 2, one dropped out as no stipend was offered (participant had CSF). Another participant dropped out after review two due to personal reasons.

The 2020/21 reporting period saw the commencement of two grant proposals to the Enterprise Ireland managed industry collaboration focused Regional Technology Cluster Fund, one in collaboration with Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo) and Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LIT) the Border Manufacturing Cluster, and one led by DkIT, the Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster.

The reporting period also saw the commencement of the REDF grant award (<https://redf.org/what-we-do/grants/>) of the €3.77m grant for programme and infrastructure (extension to the RDC building) in the Connected Health and Wellbeing sector supporting DkIT's overarching objective of engagement with industry and reinforces its strong track record of industry engagement with other stakeholders, partners and clients in the region. The project branded as "dConnect" facilitated eleven workshops during the year 2021 with one hundred and ninety three people engaging. Also, the €320K "Athena STEM" project (rebranded to THRIVE for Women Project-<http://thrive4women.ie/>) partners with Louth, Cavan and Monaghan LEOs and AIB.

The DkIT CREDIT Technology Gateway was established in April 2021 as the newest member of the sixteen strong Enterprise Ireland Technology Gateway Network to provide a range of applied research and innovation support. The Tech Gateway manager was recruited and started in June 2021. The CREDIT Tech Gateway is building on and growing the significant track record in delivering innovative project solutions to industry under the following themes: Energy Optimisation and modelling, Wind, Energy Storage, Bioenergy, Marine, Tidal and Ocean.

The newly formed Technology Gateway has been awarded a total of €832,189 grant funding to include successful applications for two projects that will significantly enhance its ability to serve industry requirements with total equipment value awarded of just under €500,000 for the acquisition of a HASS/HALT Environmental Chamber and a Hemisphere Scanning LiDAR. Gateway Capital Call 2021 the CREDIT Tech Gateway (<https://www.dkit.ie/news/credit-technology-gateway-at-dundalk-institute-of-technology-secures-two-vital-pieces-of-capital-equipment-for-industry-collaboration-and-research.html>).

Within the Technology Gateway Network, the CREDIT Technology Gateway has been co-opted in the industry focused research and development Tech Gateway Network cluster specialising in engineering, materials and design (EMD) accessible through a single point of contact, the cluster includes PEM in IT Sligo and MET in GMIT creating a significant critical mass of research and engineering professionals for CREDIT to expand the reach of engagement with industry in the region.

To further bolster its industry engagement agenda DkIT continues to drive its Corporate Partnership Programme which is a key strategic initiative designed to build on its track record offering an organised framework for DkIT and high profile organisations across industry, community and professions to develop sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships within the region with the capacity to evolve and grow in a planned manner. To date DkIT have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with ten organizations including STATSports and ABP Food Group, Creative Spark Community Enterprise Centre, Cargotech Ireland, CIRCOM, Walls Construction, The Fittech Corridor, Constructive Intervention and has other high profile organisations in development with areas for exploration around workforce training, education and bespoke programme development, initiatives to better access DkIT Students and Graduates, access Research and Innovation collaboration and corporate sponsorship opportunities.

In the current employment climate DkIT continues to see challenges with recruiting graduates to the IntertradeIreland Cross Border Fusion programme (rebranded as Innovation Boost

programme) that would typically see on average of six Applied Research projects with Northern Ireland based industry. The applied research opportunities with the new Intertrade Ireland Co-Innovate Programme have seen some project opportunities progress on both Strand 4 and Strand 5 engagements. During the reporting period DkIT completed an Enterprise Ireland funded Innovation Partnership project with company CLIMOTE and an Innovation Partnership Feasibility fund with Galetch.

DKIT continues to engage with external fora such as membership of the steering committee of the Regional Skills Forum (<https://www.regionalskills.ie/regions/northeast/>) and the Dundalk Skillnet and on the North East Engineering Network, the Evaluation Committees of Louth, Meath and Monaghan LEOs and various director roles across North-East based Enterprise Centres. DkIT also took the opportunity to partner with Skillnet Ireland (<https://www.skillnetireland.ie>) where a collaboration with the Dundalk Chamber Skillnet and DkIT developed a suite of course offerings branded as the “Business ReVive” programme to support businesses recovery post lockdown. This offering saw thirty two employees across eighteen companies supported. The programme provided seventy percent funding to local enterprise to support conversion training on key skills identified as critical to long-term business recovery. The initiative of the DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme (CPP) continues to create rich opportunities such as corporate sponsorship of research resources, bespoke industry training development, co-located outreach training in the region and joint industry/DkIT marketing which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community that may not have existed otherwise and the high calibre organisations involved reinforce with other organisations and stakeholders the positive contribution DkIT can make to research, innovation and the learning environment in the region.

DkIT focus on industry engagement in the development of Springboard+ applications and strategic partnering on Regional Enterprise Development Fund projects and Institute of Technology Clustering Fund projects and regional based Skillnet directly addresses enterprise development, skills gaps and enhances the regional learning environment for industry participants.

Engagement – External and Community Outreach

DkIT continued to enhance its engagement activities locally, nationally and internationally. Collaborations were enhanced with industry, the community and with professional organisations. External and community outreach activities for the reporting period 2020/21 include:

- The challenge of supporting students in the development of their professional practice skills and assist in the integration of theoretical knowledge to their practice is achieved through the novel and creative development of a Parent and Toddler group in Stage 4, Semester 1 of the Early Childhood Studies programme each academic year. Providing a unique learning opportunity, this approach requires the student group to set up and run their own service in the form of a parent and toddler group, within the supportive confines of the college campus, where the lecturing staff are always present to guide (and assess) the students in the integration of theory into their practice. It provides an opportunity for students to link learning and plan, carry out, monitor and evaluate a programme of activities for young children while working in collaboration with their parents /carers. Participating families (up to 20 each year, consisting of local parents /carers and their young children) gain insight into the value of working with early years professionals. For parents / carers, the resulting impact on their relationship with their children, their understanding of the value of play and their confidence in engaging in play with their young children is generally very positive. This took place in Semester 1 2020/2021 but this year took place in a virtual manner.
- Cell EXPLORERS is a successful science education and public engagement (E&PE) programme delivering STEM activities regionally and nationally (www.cellexplorers.com). Dr Suzanne Linnane and Dr Caroline Gilleran Stephens are the regional coordinators of the SFI funded Cell Explorers: Fantastic DNA programme (SFI Discover Programme 2020 - €267,636 over two years). In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic outreach activities were adapted to run online, packed up boxes and successfully delivered “Fantastic DNA in a Box” workshops to thirteen schools and over six hundred children in the North-East region. In 2020 the School of Health and Science delivered ten “Fantastic DNA in a Box” science kits to six schools, engaging two hundred and ninety four children.
- Dr Suzanne Linnane and Dr Caroline Gilleran Stephens co-ordinate an Environmental Education (EE) programme called ‘H2O Heroes’, which uses a catchment-based framework to explore collaborative approaches to water management. The H2O Heroes programme adapted to a changing world in 2020 and delivered ‘The Magic of Water’ educational videos in partnership with The Water Forum (An Forum Uisce). These videos were also used by RTE as part of their home-schooling programme on the RTE School Hub. In 2021, the H2O Heroes programme received funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as an educational partner for the delivery of a Water Resource Management Programme for the Ring of Gullion AONB Rivers in the Carlingford and Newry Local Management Area. H2O Heroes adapted to an online platform, delivered kick samples directly to ten schools to facilitate live workshops via Zoom and reached three hundred children.

- The School of Health and Science hosted a virtual Scifest competition in May 2021. This involved a review of a number of Science projects from Schools in the region that were judged under a number of criteria by a panel of judges within the School.
- The Genesis Programme is a consortium of over fifty Partner Organisations that is delivering the Incredible Years® suite of programmes and other evidence-informed interventions to children, families and communities in Dundalk and Drogheda in County Louth as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme. The ABC Programme is a cross-departmental initiative co-funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies. It is jointly managed by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) and Pobal. The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It aims to break *“the cycle of child poverty within areas where it is most deeply entrenched and where children are most disadvantaged, through integrated and effective services and interventions”* in the following areas: child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage. The Partner Organisations of The Genesis Programme are made up of Early Years Settings, Schools, Community Groups, Louth Children’s and Young People’s Services Committee, Louth County Childcare Committee, Dundalk Institute of Technology, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Educational Disadvantage Centre at St. Patrick’s College, Irish Primary Principals’ Network (IPPN) as well as a range of departments within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Tusla - the Child and Family Agency. Louth Leader Partnership is the lead agency. The Head of School of Health and Science is the vice-chair of the Management Committee of this project and Mary McSkeane the Programme Director in Early Childhood Studies is a member of the Management Committee.
- The Changing Lives Initiative (<https://www.archways.ie/our-projects/the-changing-lives-initiative/>) is a cross border project to support families with children at risk of ADHD. The initiative is being supported by an award of €2.7m by the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) that focusses on County Louth, West Belfast and the Argyll and Bute region in Scotland. The programme is set to benefit over 2,000 families in these regions. As many as 5 to 6% of school aged children are affected by ADHD. The Changing Lives Initiative is a community-based programme. It aims to create a better understanding about ADHD and provide an intervention programme for families with children (3-7) experiencing behaviours consistent with ADHD. As well as working with families the programme will provide training for those working with young children, in particular teachers and Early Years professionals. The programme will provide internationally recognised good practice models of intervention for children with ADHD. The

new Initiative will be delivered across County Louth, Colin/West Belfast, and the Argyll and Bute region of Scotland. There are five partner organisations involved: Archways (lead partner), Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, Dundalk Institute of Technology, The Genesis Programme (Louth Leader Partnership) and NHS Highland. The project will be delivered locally by The Genesis Programme. The NetwellCASALA Centre in the School of Health and Science is a partner and the Head of School is the chair of the Project Expert Advisory Group. A graduate of the Early Childhood studies programme in the School completed a PhD programme of research in this area in NetwellCASALA.

- A number of students in the School of Health and Science received awards under the Elevate scheme for their contribution to engagement activities both within DkIT and the wider community.
- Twelve academic staff were awarded Teaching Heroes awards by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>).
- The School of Health and Science organised a staff wellbeing seminar called ‘Your precious life how to live it well’ in in June 2021.
- The School of Health and Science hosted a seminar series in Semester 2 (March -June 2021) under the One Health theme where a number of seminars were delivered in a virtual manner and were attended by participants from both within and outside of DkIT.
- Students from the *Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture* programme competed in the ‘Great Agri-Food Debate’ against teams from other Agricultural colleges in Ireland.
- The School of Health and Science is a partner in an innovative project (<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/mu/chemistry/virtual-labs-hci-p3-initiative>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hj9SJh5q9Rw>) that will use virtual laboratories as a teaching tool for the experimental sciences, one that has been awarded almost €3 million funding by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under their Human Capital Initiative programme. The School will work alongside academics in the chemical sciences sphere at Maynooth University (project lead), Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin City University and University College Cork (UCC). This ambitious and timely project will develop innovative approaches to teaching students aspects of experimental sciences using virtual laboratories. The five partnering Institutions are working with education technology providers to develop courses in which a real laboratory experience is complemented with a virtual laboratory experience, through a blended approach. The project also will give students the opportunity to experience a real-work environment through virtual training and engagement with

enterprise partners, and to help reinforce practical techniques and concepts, as well as management and project work.

- A number of staff members represent DkIT on a number of national committees. The following is a selection of such external committees:
 - Member of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education Íontas Alliance.
 - Committee member of the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE)
 - Member of the Palliative Care Needs Assessment Facilitators Group Dublin NE (new Group set up to deliver the National Palliative Care Needs Assessment workshop.
 - Member of the steering group of FACiLiTATE the national problem and enquiry based learning network in Ireland.
 - Member of Midwifery Leadership Group.
 - Member of Midwifery National Competency Development Group.
 - Member of SJOG Human Rights Committee.
 - Member of National Critical Care Forum Committee.
 - Member of Louth Children and Young Persons Service Committee.
 - Vice-chair and Member of Genesis Programme Management Committee.
 - Chair of the Changing Lives Initiative Expert Working Group.
 - Member of National Steering committee for AMAU & ED programmes.
 - Member of Academic Writing/Technology group (with AIT, other college members & CELT).
 - Member of Louth Healthy Ireland Consultation Group.
 - Chair of IOT Heads of Department working group to develop new clinical assessment tools for undergraduate nursing programmes (NMBI).
 - Member of National forum for students with an intellectual disability in third level education.
 - Member of Plé (Pedagogy, learning & Education).

- Member of National Water Forum.
- Member of Public Water Forum.
- Member of Ardee Food Hub Steering Committee.
- Committee member of All Ireland Society of Higher Education.
- HSE expert midwife for the development of Home birth services.
- Member of St John of God North East Human Rights Committee member 2017-presently.
- Member of VCI veterinary nursing educators group.
- Board member of the National Childhood Network.
- Students in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts are actively involved with outreach activities, particularly the members of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) Chapter.
 - DkIT is one of only 3 chapters in Ireland). The ACM's Professional and Student chapters worldwide serve as hubs of activity for ACM members and the computing community at large. They provide seminars, lectures, learning forums and networking opportunities with peers and experts across the computing spectrum.
 - The ACM were instrumental in organising the Hour of Code online event in December 2020. This is a one-hour event, which was part of Computer Science Education Week, where Computing students teach others how to code in a fun, interactive environment.
- There were a number of public showcases of students' work. A range of these usually take place at the end of the academic year. But not all of the showcases could proceed in May 2021 due to the severe COVID-19 restrictions. However:
 - Fís 21 took place virtually in June 2021 with students exhibiting their final year projects from Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Film Practice, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Drama and Performance, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Production of Music and Audio, Bachelor of Arts in Media Arts and Technologies, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communications in Creative Media.
 - Similarly, Computing students exhibited their work in a public virtual showcase attended by representatives from industry.

- It was a considerable challenge for all to organise these virtually but they turned out to be very successful events that were very well attended.
- The Department of Visual and Human Centred Computing (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) in conjunction with An Táin Arts Centre in Dundalk held a series of workshops focusing on Art in Video Games. These workshops were aimed at people nearing school age who may have an interest in computer gaming but did not see how this could relate to a college programme.
- The Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) partnered with Louth International Film Festival held at An Táin Arts, Centre, Dundalk which featured a number of the DkIT student short films.
- Students and staff sought creative ways to continue to deliver performances and events during the pandemic. There was a successful performance by Year 3 students on Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Film Practice students which was broadcast on a YouTube channel and Theatre and Film Practice students also produced the Institute's First Radio Play "19".
- The Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) partnered with Droichead Arts Centre for events during the Creative Ireland Cruinniú na nÓg event on 12th June 2021. This included the hosting of 'Music Matter's featuring staff and students. The Department contributed a song writing workshop for 7-10 year olds as part of that event.
- Film and Television Production students had a 50-minute broadcast on Dundalk FM as part of a radio show called 'COVID and me'.
- **Virtual DojoMór:**
 - Dundalk Institute of Technology co-hosted DojoMór virtually in October 2021. This was a national Coding event which brought together almost 10,000 young people (between the ages of 7 and 17) at nine third level institutions across Ireland for a day of free workshops and exhibitions. This was the largest ever for a youth coding event in Europe. There were over 900 participants registered through DkIT.
- Computing organised a number of outreach and support activities:
 - Digital Pizza Parlour Summer Camp series as well as working with a number of local schools on virtual workshops.

- DkIT Digital Pizza Parlour - run by the IT Learning Centre Schools Outreach programme proved to be a great success. This was a set of Virtual Schools workshops covering a variety of Computing topics and reaching eight partner schools and nearly 600 students.
- DkIT is the North-eastern Hub of the international Robotics programme, Vex Robotics. This year we supported the Vex Art Challenge with two of our region's schools winning new robot kits in the event. The challenge was for school students to create a piece of art utilising a virtual reality platform; this required students to program a virtual robot to pick up coloured pens and navigate their way around a canvas producing their artwork.
- Staff from the Maths Learning Centre and the IT Learning Centre were involved in the launch of the Gateway student support hub. This is a one-stop shop for students with both technical and non-academic queries.
- The Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) has continued to work on two Erasmus Strategic Partnerships in the areas of Arts and Mindfulness in Education and STEAM education with educational and industry partners in Portugal, Norway, Belgium.
- A group of second year students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development took part in an Erasmus+ virtual intensive game development project. Along with DkIT, the project involved academics and students from four other EU colleges (Belgium, Poland, Portugal, and Germany). The students were formed into international teams in such a way as to ensure that each team contained students from each college. See Section 1.1.11 Internationalisation Activities and Development.
- In 2020/2021 an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between DkIT and Lycée des Arts et Métiers (LAM) college in Luxembourg. Due to similarities between our Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development and the Games programme within LAM, exciting opportunities in terms of collaborative projects and students progressing from LAM to DkIT to obtain an honours degree have been created.
 - In February 2021 students from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts had an opportunity to participate in a unique format game jam to celebrate this new collaborative relationship. The game jam hosted by LAM was aimed toward encapsulating the feel and excitement of a game while working remotely. Organized by the students from the BTS in Games Design and Programming program, the

students and staff reached out to staff and students in DkIT to participate in a weekend of collaboration and game making between colleges.

- In 2020/2021, all thirty-three of DkIT's Software Development and Games students had a full semester of work placement. Three students undertook international placements, with two Games students working remotely, one each with games development companies Carbon Fire Studio in France and Envision Entertainment in Germany. One software development student worked remotely for a software development company, Carlsson, based in Kentucky, USA.
- Futurum established an animation hub in the Regional Development Centre in DkIT. Futurum was established by Denise and Francis Fitzpatrick who have had past success in winning an Emmy for Jakers, a CGI children's series. DkIT faced strong competition in securing the Futurum hub from animation centres in London and Singapore. DkIT ultimately won out due to the availability of high quality graduates and the recognition of the institute's ability to recognise industry trends and create programmes and graduates to meet the industry demands.
- The Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) continue to develop their links with industry and have now become a Blackmagic Design Training Partner and an official Wwise licensed School.
- The Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) is now a member of Design Educators Ireland.
- A number of masterclasses with top industry professionals continue to be delivered as part of the Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music Visiting Guest Series which has offered us the opportunity to further develop our links and collaborations with industry.
- Creativity and the Creative Industries Seminar Series was organised by the Creative Arts Research Centre with a number of leaders in the Creative Industries.
- The School of Engineering is involved in delivering short part-time industry relevant skills such as the Renewable Heat Green Tech Skills to local industry via our 10 ECTS credit Renewable Heat Installer Programme.
- Members of the Department of Hospitality Studies (School of Business and Humanities) have been nominated onto the management committee of the newly formed Event Management Educators Ireland (<https://eiai.ie/event-management-educators-ireland-emei/>) .

- The Erasmus+ Project Skills4CMT was launched with partner colleges in Finland , Estonia , The Netherlands and Latvia in the Department of Hospitality Studies (School of Business and Humanities).
- A member academic staff in the Department of Hospitality Studies (School of Business and Humanities) is the World Skills Ireland Cooking Skill National Expert and Chief Examiner. Another staff member is the Chef Network Advisory Council Member.
- A staff member in the Department of Hospitality Studies (School of Business and Humanities) is involved in a Research project for Food Safety Ireland with University of Ulster.
- The students of the Business Ethics and Corporate Citizenship (BECC) module in the Department of Management and Financial Studies (School of Business and Humanities) undertook a service learning project in the first semester of their final year in 2020/2021. The students were asked to choose a charitable organisation to support and were required to plan and run an event to build awareness of the work of the charity and fund raise. The class of 2021, who were studying online and were restricted in what they could do, decided to take on this challenge and support the work of Pieta and SOSAD Ireland. The virtual event took place on 27 November 2020.
- The Department of Humanities (School of Business and Humanities) worked in collaboration with Blackfriary Archaeology Field School (<http://bafs.ie/>) and Meath County Council to develop two new certificate programmes, a *Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Recording* and a *Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Recording with Osteology*.

1.1.11 Internationalisation Activities and Development

Internationalisation activities and developments for the academic year 2020/2021 were uniquely shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. For reporting purposes, the 2020/2021 academic year was unique, as teaching, learning and student support activities were framed by the demands of a continually-evolving COVID-19 landscape.

DkIT's International Office was a member of the DkIT COVID-Taskforce, which convened regular planning meetings throughout the academic year. Working arrangements for the International Office had to be reconfigured to support remote and hybrid working. This entailed convening of weekly web conferencing meetings (using Microsoft Teams), carrying out of an Operational Plan

for the Office, along with a Risk Assessment, a rota for remote-working and the installation of protective equipment for International Office staff and student health and safety.

The International Office's priority in September 2020 was to support international learners with safe travel to Ireland and with preparing the students for study at DkIT. Planning for the academic year 2020/2021 commenced in Summer 2020 with the creation of an Operating Plan for 2020/2021, completion of an International Office Risk Assessment in relation to COVID-19, along with attendance at weekly meetings with the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) International Group to plan for September 2020. As part of its commitment to agreed sectoral protocols for the safe arrival of international students to Ireland and Return to Work Safely Protocols, the International Office prepared regular communication updates to Agents and to incoming students on COVID-19 travel and quarantine requirements.

As part of its commitment to a Reporting and Compliance Framework sectoral agreement, the International Office was required to report weekly in writing to Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) (September 2020 - February 2021) on the status of international student arrivals. This task required reporting on confirmed numbers of arrivals, numbers of students who undertook symptoms-checking at pre-departure stage, numbers of students who completed online-training and briefing on public health measures, numbers of students who undertook post-arrival symptom-checking for 14 days, contingency quarantine accommodation provided by the Institute and the Institute's support of students around restricted movement. Additionally, the International Office liaised on airport arrivals with an events company selected to arrange the safe transfer of students to HEIs on behalf of the sector. The International Office also was required to arrange private airport collection for students arriving outside of the sectoral meet-and-greet service contract.

International Student Supports

The continuity of supports to International and Erasmus students was particularly important during lockdown, as students faced challenges of social isolation, especially during the prolonged period of Level 5 lockdown. The International Office facilitated on-campus, in-person "Welcome Days" for International and International Students in September 2020. For students who were unable to attend the on-campus "Welcome Day" meetings, a series of six online welcome meetings using web conferencing (using Zoom) were conducted by the International Office at regular intervals (up

to November 2020). The later commencement of the Academic Year in 2020/2021 and the decision to allow students awaiting delayed study-visas to register from home-country for their programme, meant that international students were arriving from the middle of August up until the end of October 2020.

Learner supports provided by the International Office upon student arrivals included guidance on range of key items including: online-registration, immigration appointments, bank-account-opening appointments, settling-in support and accommodation support queries. These range of supports form part of the Institute's commitment to an exemplary international student experience in accordance with QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners.

Additional supports provided to International students in the reporting period 2020/2021 included:

- Fortnightly TEAMS check-in meetings from November 2020 with international and Erasmus students to mitigate against social isolation and to identify early any students at-risk (Each member of the International Office Team was assigned a list of students);
- Loan of laptop (with the assistance of DkIT Library) to students in extreme need;
- Two guided excursions to Carlingford in December 2020 (for Foundation students and for Erasmus students);
- Socially-distanced Christmas gathering for Foundation students (small group);
- Christmas Treasure-Hunt (organised by Pastoral Care for International Students);
- Virtual Meet-ups for International and Erasmus Students (Counselling and Pastoral Care Service);
- Sectoral Christmas Engagement Project (International Virtual Christmas Carol) and Christmas Photography Competition (initiative coordinated by Letterkenny IT on behalf of the sector);
- Online Welcome Meetings hosted for Semester 2 arrivals;
- Chinese New Year event (online) coordinated by Malaysia society - February 2021;
- End-of-year picnic (Foundation Class) - May 2021.

Recruitment and Collaborations

- DkIT recruited 103 new International Students in September 2020 and 9 new International students in January 2021 (Foundation Programme). An additional 4 EU students were recruited in September 2020. The total number of registrations achieved was strong, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were registered on a range of full-time programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- Recruitment activities and developments in the reporting period 2020/2021 included:
 - Agent collaborations in new markets (Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan);
 - Further development and growth of Indian, Africa and US markets;
 - Development of first joint programme in Civil Engineering with Hebei University of Engineering, China;
 - Scoping of academic programme collaboration with 3 new Chinese universities;
 - Approval of a 3+1 pathway in Hospitality Management and signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Yarmouk University, Jordan;
 - Approval of a pathway with an Institute in India from a Postgraduate Diploma in Business into the Institute's Master of Business Studies programme;
 - Partnership with Executive College in Malaysia for progression of their Foundation students to DkIT;
 - Signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with Yanching Institute of Technology, China for a 3+1 pathway into the DkIT Mechanical Engineering Degree;
 - Recruitment in EU Markets;
 - Awarding of six Government of Ireland Scholarships to new DkIT Students in 2020/2021 at Masters level (Master of Science in Renewable Energy and Master of Science in Agricultural Biotechnology).
 - Two Basketball Scholarships awarded to new DkIT Master of Business Studies students in 2020/2021.
 - **Introduction of an International CRM Portal:** The International Office worked with one of its key Agents in 2019/2020 to create a bespoke applications portal for international recruitment. The applications portal was completed at the end of 2020 and went live in

January 2021. The purpose of the portal was to streamline and enhance the international applications system and processing. Feedback on the system from stakeholders in 2020/2021 was very positive.

Following on from the inception of the International Office's bespoke International CRM, the International Office was requested to participate in initial scoping meetings convened in Summer 2021 for the purpose of developing an Institute-led CRM. The International Office assisted at several initial scoping meetings and the project is in development.

- **Student Video Interviews:** The International Office identified representative International students to volunteer for a series of video interviews, conducted by the Marketing and Communications Office, for the purpose of supporting Recruitment in key markets.
- **DkIT Webinars:** The International Office collaborated with the Marketing and Communications Office on Institute webinars in April/May 2021 with a particular focus on Postgraduate recruitment.
- **Annual Business Report (ABR) - Enterprise Ireland:** The International Office returned an annual report on Recruitment Income for academic year 2019/2020 (February 2020).
- **Teaching Collaboration with the University of Zhengzhou Shengda, China:** The Institute's Department of Business Studies formed a collaboration with a new partner in China, the University of Zhengzhou Shengda (ZSDU) in the reporting period 2020/2021. DkIT assigned two lecturers to teach a series of Business modules online to ZSDU over the course of a semester. It is planned to deliver this initiative annually, and post-pandemic, it is hoped that participating staff will be able to travel to ZSDU to deliver lectures.

ERASMUS+

- **Erasmus Registrations:** The Institute received 57 Incoming Erasmus Students in the academic year 2020/2021. In the context of the Pandemic, this represented a high number of Incoming Erasmus students. Outbound ERASMUS was largely curtailed in 2020/2021 for staff and students on the grounds of health and safety.
- **Awarding of the New Erasmus Charter (2021 - 2027):** The Institute was successful in its application to be eligible to participate in the new iteration of the Erasmus+ Programme 2021 - 2027. The Signed Charter was awarded to DkIT In April 2021. A briefing on the new Charter was conducted for Staff in April 2021.

- **Erasmus Class Visits:** The International Office conducted class-visits in Semester 2 of 2020/2021 for students, where study, or Placement was validated as part of a programme Approved Programme Schedule (APS). There was notable interest among students to consider Erasmus Study/Placement in September 2021. Students who were nominated by the Head of Department to go on Erasmus in September 2021 met at intervals with the International Office Manager from April 2021 to plan supporting documentation and to prepare for study abroad.
- **Erasmus Final Report:** The International Office completed the Erasmus Final Report for the National Agency for Erasmus (in November 2020) reporting on 19/20 mobilities.
- **Erasmus Deskcheck Audit:** The International Office was required to feedback on queries from the National Agency for Erasmus in November 2020, as part of its Deskcheck mobilities audit.
- **Application for Erasmus Mobilities (May 2021):** The International Office applied on behalf of the Institute for Erasmus Mobilities for staff and students for the Academic Year 2021/2022. One notable innovation in the application was for funding-support application for a week-long Blended Intensive Mobility programme for students and staff from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts to IUT Lens, France.
- **Erasmus Strategic Partnerships and Intensive Projects:** DkIT was engaged in the following Erasmus projects in the reporting period 2020/2021:

eGGULIVRR Project	DkIT Students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Software Development (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) programme took part in an European online project called eGGULIVRR (from 05th October to the 16th October 2020). The DkIT students worked in teams with participating students from Poland, Finland, France, Ukraine, Slovenia, Belgium, and Portugal on the design of a prototype app that tackled an environmental issue.
Computing Erasmus Strategic Partnership (e-JEU)	Year 2 students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development (School of Informatics and Creative Arts) took part in an Erasmus+ virtual intensive game development project from the 15th to 20th March 2021. The project comprised of academics and students from DkIT, Belgium, Poland, Portugal, and Germany. The project also involved three international non-

	<p>governmental organisations (NGOs) from France and The Netherlands.</p> <p>The students were formed into international teams and tasked with building a prototype of a game in one three areas: cyber-bullying, plastic waste, and citizens' rights. A goal of the intensive project was to provide the students with valuable interpersonal and communications skills. This was achieved by getting the students working in multidisciplinary and multinational teams and by requiring each team to make four different presentations during the duration of the intensive project. The project also provided students with an opportunity to improve their technical skills. In particular, the DkIT students honed game-design and development skills.</p>
<p>Creative Arts Collaboration with Avans UAS, Netherlands</p>	<p>The Institute's partner university, Avans Hogeschool University of Applied Sciences, met virtually in 2020/2021 with the Institute's Creative Arts Department for the purpose of developing an English Minor in Architecture, Design and Creative Technology at Avans UAS, which it is hoped will lead to exchange of staff and students for a short intensive programme, or for a semester-long mobility.</p>
<p>Early Childhood Studies and Creative Arts EU Collaboration</p>	<p>The Institute was approved for funding for a 3-year Erasmus Strategic Partnership in Arts and Mindfulness in Education in October 2020.</p> <p>The project is a consortium of higher education institutions located in Norway, Belgium, Portugal and The Netherlands (and DkIT). This joint project involves students and staff from DkIT's Early Childhood Studies and the Creative Arts and will facilitate student and staff mobility. The consortium conducted several online scoping meetings in 2020/2021, for the purpose of developing student and staff exchange.</p>

Other International Activities and Developments

Other international activities and developments in the reporting period 2020/2021 included the following:

- **Review and update of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Agency Agreements:** An update of all Agency Agreement and MOUs was prepared for the Human Resources Office in November 2020.
- **Internationalisation Register (ILEP):** The Institute made two submissions to INIS regarding updated accredited programmes for inclusion in the Internationalisation Register (October 2020, April 2021).
- **Financial Reviews:** DkIT participated in the following financial reviews in the reporting period 2020/2021:
 - **International Student Fees:** The International Office reviewed and submitted proposed changes to the Procedures for Collection of Student Fees (May 2021).
 - **Refunds to International Students:** The Institute experienced a high numbers of applications for refund of fees for academic year 2020/2021. A significant amount of International Office time was spent in Semester 1 in reviewing and refining processes around return-of-fees, in collaboration with the Registrar and Vice President for Finances, Resources and Diversity. The International Refund Policy, template of Agency Agreements and the International Application Form were subsequently updated, to reflect revisions to terms and conditions on refunds.
- **Audits:** The International Office was required to close the loop on internal audit queries and on queries from Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) Audit in 2020/2021.
- **Recording of International Student Attendance:** The International Office, in collaboration with the four academic Schools, collated International Student Class-Attendance records in January 2021 and May 2021, for the purpose of visa-renewal applications in September 2021.
- **Review of Health Insurance for International Students:** Health insurance provision for international students became a live issue in 2020/2021, due to changes in provision for international student health-insurance due to a legal ruling. The International Office participated in a series of information briefings on international student health-insurance providers coordinated by Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). Students and Agents were advised of changes to provision in health-insurance arrangements.
- **Promotional Materials and Engagement:** The International Handbook was reviewed and updated in September in collaboration with the Institute's Marketing and Communications Office in September 2020.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This section provides an update on objectives/planned actions for the reporting period 2020/2021 as outlined in the previous AQR (for the reporting period 2019/2020).

No.	<p style="text-align: center;">Planned Objectives (Previous AQR)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update on Status</p> <p>Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.</p>
1	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Institute policy management system, policies and procedures and quality framework to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose. This is related to Institutional Review actions. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 120.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
2	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 120.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p> <p>DkIT secured funding in 2019/2020 for the National RPL Project in Higher Education project under the Higher Education Authority (HEA)</p>

		<p>Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) initiative https://www.dkit.ie/news/dkit-partners-with-19-higher-education-institutes-to-develop-a-national-recognised-prior-learning-framework.html). There are 19 collaborative partners involved with the project (lead by IT Carlow). The DkIT Institutional Lead who will drive the project within each HEI and across the HE sector with a national Project Manager was appointed in 2020/2021.</p>
3	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop quality assurance policies and procedure relating to collaborative partnerships (specifically articulation agreements). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Not completed due to other priorities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
4	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Equal Access and Participation Policy. 	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Not</p>

	<p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<p>completed due to other priorities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
5	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop quality assurance Guidelines for the Preparation, Drafting and Transmission of Examination Papers and Solutions. (recommendation from an external investigator following an examination paper breach). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Not completed due to other priorities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
6	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attain QQI International Educational Mark (IEM). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<p>This work relating to IEM is delayed nationally.</p>
7	<p>Teaching and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, revise and implement the Learning and Teaching Strategy. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Strategy was approved at the Academic Council (Meeting No. 175) on 28th May 2021.</p> <p>See AQR Part A also.</p>
8	<p>Teaching and Learning:</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The Student Support Hub (within the Moodle VLE) was</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop more flexible and accessible learner support for all students. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 122.</p>	<p>launched on 25th January 2021 (https://tinyurl.com/58d8k52b).</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
9	<p>Teaching and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Digital Learning Policy and continue to develop digital capacity among students and staff. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 122.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Policy, retitled as “Policy on Blended and Online Learning” was approved at the Academic Council (Meeting No. 176S) on 10th September 2021 (postponed from 18th June 2021).</p> <p>Capacity building work is ongoing through the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).</p> <p>See AQR Part A also.</p>
10	<p>Teaching and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop quality assurance policy and procedures for blended learning (to augment current programme approval policies and procedures; incorporate QQI’s Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 122.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>An amendment to the “<i>Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes</i>”, was approved at the Academic Council (Meeting No. 176S) on 10th September 2021 (postponed from 18th June 2021).</p> <p>See AQR Part A also.</p> <p>This work is ongoing with further incremental changes planned. See Section 3.0 QA</p>

		Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).
11	<p>Teaching and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Student Voice Policy. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Policy was approved at the Academic Council (Meeting No. 171) on 27th November 2020). See AQR Part A also.</p>
12	<p>Teaching and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop capacity to use data to inform decision-making. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<p>Data-Enabled Student Success Project (https://www.dkit.ie/data-enabled-student-success), funded under the National Forum's SATLE 2020 Fund, began in June 2021 and will run until May 2022. The project will develop a framework to guide the use of existing data to promote student success.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
13	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop quality assurance policies and procedures relating to the provision of Structured Masters programmes. 	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Academic Regulations for Masters (Taught and Structured) Research Projects were approved at the Academic</p>

	<p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<p>Council (Meeting No. 174, 30th April 2021). See AQR Part A also.</p>
14	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Research Integrity Policy. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Not completed due to other priorities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
15	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Research Ethics Policy and Procedures. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Not completed due to other priorities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
16	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policy with respect to access to research infrastructure. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<p>Completed.</p>

17	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Research Centre and Group Designation Policy. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	Completed.
18	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build research capacity with a view to achieving the metrics required for Technological University (TU) status. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
19	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the National Researcher Career Framework (continued action) (https://www.iaa.ie/for-researchers/). Implement the full researcher career framework across all research centres and groups. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
20	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance research supervisory development and professional training programme together with other supports for staff and students. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
21	<p>Research:</p>	<p>A DCU-DKIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement governing the DCU-DKIT Graduate School was signed by</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review collaborative partnership arrangements with Dublin City University (DCU) (DCU-DkIT Graduate School). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<p>both Presidents on 1st February 2021.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
22	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Athena Swan Bronze application. Implement the action plan detailed in the Institute's recent Athena Swan Bronze award application. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<p>DkIT received the Athena Swan Bronze award in March 2021.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
23	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Awarding Policy. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.</p>	<p>Policy was approved at the Academic Council (Meeting No. 174, 30th April 2021).</p> <p>See AQR Part A also.</p>
24	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current policy and procedure on collaborative provision in light of DABS and permission for linked provider status. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement</p>

		Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).
25	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current Quality Manual to remove reference to QQI with the exception of external cyclical review and Level 10 provision. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
26	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Educational/Awareness programme for various stakeholders on what a DAB means (Governing Body, Academic Council, Academic Staff, Students). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
27	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current award standards and determine if new award standards are required (sectoral approach). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
28	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of QA processes to ensure that they are sufficiently comprehensive and robust in the context of being a DAB. Review current programme validation processes in the context of DAB. 	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. A number of actions items relating to DAB have been combined.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review QA processes relating to postgraduate research provision. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).
29	<p>Academic Integrity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to plan and implement Academic Integrity initiatives at Institute level for students and staff. Subscribe to Epigeum Academic Integrity modules (https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/) as part of Institute wide Academic Integrity supports for students and staff. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	<p>DkIT subscribed to the Epigeum Academic Integrity modules for students and staff in May 2021 and work commenced on the development of an Institute action plan for Academic Integrity (collaboratively with the Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the Library.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
30	<p>Academic Integrity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures to cater for Contract Cheating. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>

31	<p>Institutional Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Institutional Review Action plan and identify priorities as appropriate (https://www.qqi.ie/Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx, under heading “Follow-up Actions”). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 127.</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
32	<p>Professional Services Areas (Student Services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further enhance initiatives/activities in support of increasing access rates from under-represented groups, particularly with North-East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) and with the MEND Cluster (PATH 2 and PATH 3). Enhance webinar support for mature applicants and Further Education and Training (FET) applicants. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 127</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed. Community Connector appointed as part of PATH 3. The Access Officer is engaged in discussions with second level DEIS schools in the region to provide learning supports / resources to Traveller students in senior cycle The DkIT Sanctuary Scheme commenced with priority given to those who hold Refugee status COVID-19 funding used to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of an online tuition service (Studyclix.ie) to 12 DEIS schools in the region.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upgrade of the screen in the Civic Square on campus and provision of content promoting social connectedness among the campus community as well as providing a means to provide an 'overspill' of physical events on campus by incorporating a virtual element.
33	<p>Professional Services Areas (Student Services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the Disability Service by providing an assistive technology training room. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 127</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
34	<p>Professional Services Areas (Student Services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a peer-mentoring programme for first year students which will co-ordinated by the Counselling Service. 	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>Mentoring. A pilot peer mentoring programme was established and designed.</p> <p>Ten mentors were recruited and trained in a three-hour long interactive workshop designed by</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance the Counselling Service and make it more flexible and accessible (beyond the COVID-19 pandemic), including training. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 127</p>	<p>the Assistant Psychologist with input from the Head Counsellor and other student services. These newly trained mentors will go on to integrate over 150 first year students to campus life. It is hoped that the number of first year mentees will grow exponentially year on year as each cohort graduates from mentee toward mentor, thus expanding the capacity of the project.</p> <p>There were major expansions of the service as a result of the extra funding by the HEA to address the impact of COVID-19. The appointment of a Head of Counselling allowed for the provision of clear strategic leadership and policy development in the area of mental health and suicide prevention.</p> <p>See Section Professional Service Areas (Student Services) Activities and Developments for information on initiatives implemented.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement</p>
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		Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).
35	<p>Professional Services Areas (Student Services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a structured mentoring system for Sports Scholarship students and provide specialised training for committee members for societies and clubs. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 128</p>	<p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
36	<p>Professional Services Areas (Student Services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide 24/7 access to information on all students, full-time and part-time, on all student service supports using the Student Hub. <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 128</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>See item 8. Above under the heading of Teaching and Learning.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
37	<p>Professional Services Areas (Student Services):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and approve DkIT Graduate Attributes for adoption into programme development (part of the DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative). Approve Institute Employability Statement for adoption in programme development (DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative). <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 128</p>	<p>Completed. An update on the DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/dkit-embedding-employability.html) (founded by the National Forum), including millstone outputs was presented to the Academic Council DkIT on 18th June 2021. <i>The Employability Statement and PCs Graduate Attribute Framework</i> were approved by the Academic</p>

		<p>Council (Meeting No. 177, 8th October 2021) in the reporting period 2021/2022.</p> <p>This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.</p> <p>See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).</p>
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1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

The section provides the meeting schedules for all significant academic governance bodies for the reporting period. See Academic Quality Governance in AQR Part A for DkIT governance structures. A number of additional QA governance meetings (special meetings) took place in the reporting period 2020/2021 due to the ongoing and constantly evolving environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Institute governance meetings were conducted remotely using web conferencing software (Microsoft Teams) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A summary of items/issues discussed at the meetings is provided after the meeting schedule listings.

Body	Meeting Dates
Academic Council (AC)	2 nd October 2020 (Meeting No. 170)
Academic Council (AC)	16 th October 2020 (Meeting No. 170S)
Academic Council (AC)	3 rd November 2020 (Meeting No. 170S (C))
Academic Council (AC)	27 th November 2020 (Meeting No. 171)
Academic Council (AC)	11 th December 2020 (Meeting No. 171S)
Academic Council (AC)	19 th February 2021 (Meeting No. 172)
Academic Council (AC)	5 th March 2021 (Meeting No. 172S)
Academic Council (AC)	12 th March 2021 (Meeting No. 173) New Academic Council constituted.
Academic Council (AC)	30 th April 2021 (Meeting No. 174)
Academic Council (AC)	28 th May 2021 (Meeting No. 175)
Academic Council (AC)	18 th June (Meeting No. 176)

Standing Committee (SC)	28 th September 2020 (Meeting No. 65S)
Standing Committee (SC)	23 rd October 2020 (Meeting No. 66)
Standing Committee (SC)	28 th October 2020 (Meeting No. 66S)
Standing Committee (SC)	8 th December 2020 (Meeting No. 66S (B))
Standing Committee (SC)	22 nd January 2021 (Meeting No.67) Update to Schedule of Meetings approved by Standing Committee (No. 67).
Standing Committee (SC)	26 th March 2021 (Meeting No.68)
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	9 th October 2020
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	4 th December 2020
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	12 th February 2021
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	16 th April 2021
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	21 st May 2021
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	16 th October 2020
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	15 th January 2021
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	5 th March 2021
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	7 th May 2021
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	18 th September 2020
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	30 th September 2020 (Special Meeting)
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	19 th October 2020 (Special Meeting)
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	16 th December 2020

Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	22 nd January 2021 (Special Meeting)
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	26 th February 2021
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	23 rd April 2021
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	11 th June 2020
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	25 th September 2020
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	20 th November 2020
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	5 th February 2021
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	19 th March 2021
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	14 th May 2021
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	11 th September 2020
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	6 th November 2020
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	29 th January 2021
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	19 th March 2021
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	4 th June 2021
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group (ACP)	8 th September 2020
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group (ACP)	21 st September 2020
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group (ACP)	8 th October 2020
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group (ACP)	21 st October 2020
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group (ACP)	4 th March 2021
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group (ACP)	18 th March 2021
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-committee (ACP)	15 th April 2021
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-committee (ACP)	13 th May 2021
Academic Contingency Planning Sub-committee (ACP)	10 th June 2021
Leadership Team	2 nd Sept 2020

Leadership Team	16 th Sept 2020
Leadership Team	23 rd Sept 2020 (Special Meeting)
Leadership Team	30 th Sept 2020
Leadership Team	14 th Oct 2020
Leadership Team	3 rd Nov 2020
Leadership Team	9 th Nov 2020
Leadership Team	11 th Nov 2020
Leadership Team	18 th Nov 2020
Leadership Team	25 th Nov 2020
Leadership Team	9 th Dec 2020
Leadership Team	16 th Dec 2020
Leadership Team	6 th Jan 2021
Leadership Team	20 th Jan 2021
Leadership Team	3 rd Feb 2021
Leadership Team	17 th Feb 2021
Leadership Team	3 rd Mar 2021
Leadership Team	16 th Mar 2021
Leadership Team	29 th Mar 2021 (Special Meeting)
Leadership Team	12 th Apr 2021 (Special Meeting)
Leadership Team	14 th Apr 2021
Leadership Team	21 st Apr 2021
Leadership Team	22 nd Apr 2021 (reconvened from the 21 st Apr 2021)
Leadership Team	28 th Apr 2021
Leadership Team	5 th May 2021
Leadership Team	19 th May 2021
Leadership Team	1 st June 2021
Leadership Team	2 nd June 2021

Leadership Team	16 th June 2021
Leadership Team	30 th June 2021
Leadership Team	14 th July 2021
Leadership Team	28 th July 2021
Governing Body	1 st Sept 2020 (Special Meeting)
Governing Body	29 th Sept 2020
Governing Body	27 th Oct 2020
Governing Body	11 th Nov 2020
Governing Body	24 th Nov 2020
Governing Body	11 th Dec 2020
Governing Body	22 nd Dec 2020
Governing Body	26 th Jan 2021
Governing Body	15 th Feb 2021(Special Meeting)
Governing Body	18 th Feb 2021
Governing Body	23 rd Feb 2021
Governing Body	30 th Mar 2021
Governing Body	27 th Apr 2021
Governing Body	20 th May 2021(Special Meeting)
Governing Body	25 th May 2021
Governing Body	29 th Jun 2021
Governing Body	27 th Jul 2021
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	10 th Nov 2020
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	16 th Feb 2021
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	20 th Apr 2021
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	15 th Jun 2021

Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	22 nd Sept 2020 (Special Meeting)
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	6 th Oct 2020
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	1 st Dec 2020 (Special Meeting)
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	8 th Dec 2020
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	9 th Feb 2021
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	2 nd Mar 2021 (Special Meeting)
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	25 th Mar 2021
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	28 th Apr 2021
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	20 th May 2021

"S" denotes a Special Meeting.

Academic Council

There were 11 meetings of Academic Council and six meetings of the Standing Committee held during the reporting period 2020/2021. Of the Academic Council meetings seven were regular scheduled meetings and four were special meetings. A new Academic Council, and associated sub-committees, were constituted on 12th March 2021 during the reporting period.

Regular items for Academic Council meetings include: Policy approvals (new and amended; see AQR Part A), consideration of reports and approval of minutes from sub-committees; Ratification of programme validation reports; Approval of off-site venues for delivery of specific programmes; Approval of External Examiners; Ratification of student assessment results; Approval of conferring prizes.

Registrar Reports for the QQI Annual Quality Report (AQR) for the Reporting Period (2019/2020, Meeting No. 174, 30th April 2021), External Examiners Reports Summary (2018/2019, Meeting No. 170, 2nd October 2020), Programme Board Report Summary, Student Feedback Summary and Action Plans (Meeting No 171S, 11th December 2020, Meeting No 172, 19th February 2021, Meeting No 176, 18th June 2021) and the postgraduate research Annual Report to DCU's GRBSB (including postgraduate research student feedback) are standing items on the Academic Council agenda. Also, sub-strategies of the Institute Strategic Plan are also considered as appropriate (Learning and Teaching, Learner Engagement Sub-Strategy, Research and Innovation and

National and International Engagement sub-strategies were presented during the reporting period 2020/2021). Updates are provided on Institute projects as appropriate (Athena Swan, Meeting No 171, 27th November 2020, DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative, Meeting No 176, 18th June 2021). The Student Voice is also a standing item on the agenda for Council.

There were some minor changes to the membership of the Academic Council due to changes of staff in the academic Schools during the reporting period.

Academic planning and contingency in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic continued into 2020/2021 and included the following:

- Ongoing Contingency regarding Assessment approved (Meeting No. 170S, Motion 170S.01, 16th October 2020; amended from Meeting No. 170, 2nd October 2020, Motion 170.14):

Given the ongoing disruption with the COVID-19 pandemic, that Academic Council accepts the following contingencies regarding assessment for semester 1 and 2 of the academic year 2020/2021:

- There will be no Institute face-to-face terminal examinations.
- Alternative assessments will be developed to replace terminal examinations. These assessments must meet the programme learning outcomes and the module assessment breakdown should remain as validated.
- An alternative assessment refers to any assessment that the Programme Board has determined will replace an existing assessment (as validated and documented in the relevant module descriptor). This can be an alternative assessment for final examination and/or any other assessment component which may be completed remotely (in line with guidelines on remote assessments).
- Each School will document the alternative assessments to the Registrar's Office in order to satisfy quality assurance requirements.
- The changes to assessment strategy will be communicated to students through the assessment schedule.
- All alternative assessment(s) that replace a terminal examination must be reviewed by the appropriate External Examiners(s).

- Alternative assessments for 2020/2021 (as documented by each School as agreed by Motion 170S.01, 16th October 2020) were presented to Council (Meeting No 176, 18th June 2021).
- Conferring of Awards Contingency 2019/2020 approved Meeting No. 170S, Motion 170S.02, 16th October 2020). Council confirmed that graduates for the academic year 2019/2020 would be conferred in absentia. The conferring ceremonies took place virtually on the 14th and 15th December 2020 (<https://www.dkit.ie/study/awards-office/graduation/graduation-ceremonies-archive/2020/>).
- Approval of students for Exceptional Progression in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (Standing Committee Meeting No. 65S, Motion 65S.01, 65S.02 and 65S.03, 28th September 2020, Meeting No. 170S, Motion 170S.03 and Motion 170S.04, 16th October 2020, Meeting No 176, Motion 176.01, 18th June 2021).
- A Special Academic Council (Meeting No 170S (C), 3rd November 2020) considered the following in relation to the quality of programme delivery:
 - Impact of COVID-19 on: Module and Programme Learning Outcomes, Practical skills, Programmes that are accredited with Professional Bodies;
 - External Examiners requirements for assessments in 2020/2021;
 - Quality Assurance of Examinations in a remote environment;
 - Academic Integrity;
 - Placement provision in 2020/2021.
- Guidelines for Academic Planning were considered by Council for semester 2 2020/2021 (Meeting No 171S, 11th December 2020) and semester 1 2021/2022 (Meeting No 175, 28th May 2021).

Overarching Principles to Support Teaching, Learning and Assessment during COVID-19 (Meeting No. 171S, Motion 171S.02, 11th December 2020).

Academic planning and contingency was informed by the following (not exhaustive):

- 'Principles and Guidelines for the delivery of Higher Education Programmes in the 2020/21 Academic Year in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic ; THEA'. <http://www.thea.ie/contentFiles/THEA-COVID-principles.pdf>.
 - Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 September 2020: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e5175-resilience-and-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/>.
 - Statement from Department of Further and Higher Education relating to Level 5 restrictions October 2020: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/f3bbe-what-level-5-means-for-further-and-higher-education-minister-harris/>.
 - DkIT Return to Work Protocol: <https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/coronavirus/staff-return-to-work.html#section-breakdown>.
 - THEA statement on academic provision for semester 2 and to the close of the academic year 2020/21: <http://www.thea.ie/press-releases/continuity-statement-dec/>.
- Update on Staff Wellbeing group provided to Academic Council (Meeting No 175, 28th May 2021).
 - Establishment of Academic Council sub-committee, Academic Contingency Planning (ACP), Standing Committee Meeting No 68, 26th March 2021. Results of sub-committee election presented to Council (Meeting No 174, 30th April 2021). See Section 1.1.2 Changes to Academic Quality Governance.

There were nine meetings of the Academic Contingency Planning (ACP) sub-group (which evolved into an Academic Council sub-committee), whose primary responsibility was addressing academic planning and contingency in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, were held in 2020/2021.

Academic Council Sub-committees

Four to five meetings of each of the five Academic Council Sub-Committees (Learning and Teaching sub-committee (LTSC), Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC), Research Sub-committee (RSC) and DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) were held during the reporting period 2020/2021. The Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) met on eight occasions with special meetings being required to deal with COVID-19 related programme issues.

The Academic Contingency Planning Sub-group/sub-committee met 9 times (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule). A total of 42 sub-committee meetings took place during the reporting period 2020/2021, double the normal number of meetings held during the academic year (see dates of meetings in table above).

Leadership Team

Meetings of the Leadership Team were held approximately once every two weeks. Twenty-nine scheduled meetings of the Leadership Team and three special meetings were held during the reporting period 2020/2021 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: Student Recruitment; Timetabling; Budgets; Strategic Plan; Technology Gateway; Devolved Grant; Technological University (TU) Designation; Industrial Action; Updates on COVID-19; CRM Portal; Athena SWAN Senior Academic Leadership Initiative; Technical University Transformation Fund (TUTF); Review of National Development Plan; HEA Compact Self Evaluation Report 2019-20; Impact Case Study; Dublin City University Collaborative Partnership Agreement: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Leadership Team.

Governing Body

Fifteen scheduled meetings of the Institute Governing Body and two special meetings were held during the reporting period of 2020/2021 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: Personnel; Technological University (TU) Process; Technology University Transformation Fund (TUTF); Sub-Committee Membership; Use of Institute Seal; Finance Audit and Risk Committee (FARC); Strategic Plan Committee; Land and Buildings Committee; Governing Body Strategy; Technological University (TU) Project Plan; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI); Academic Council Minutes; Leases; Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence in the Institute; Regional Development Centre (RDC); STEM Extension; Student Academic Supports; THEA Code of Governance; Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)

Four meetings of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC) were held during 2020/2021 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: Graduation 2020; Mapping Programmes; Suspected Breach of Placement Procedures; Processing of student applications for Human Capital Initiative (HCI) and Springboard, Postgraduate and Part-Time Programmes; Retention, Academic Calendar.

Academic Heads Forum (AHF)

Five scheduled meetings of the Institute Academic Heads Forum (AHF) and four special meetings were held during 2020/2021 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: COVID-19; Academic Integrity; Processing of Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Applications; Student Engagement; Student access to Buildings Outside of Class Time and Access to Labs; Student Feedback; Fitness to Practice Policy; Gateway to Success Project; DkIT Student Remote Working Protocol; Examinations; Teaching during the Pandemic; Studentsurvey.ie 2021; Budgets and Staffing; Technological University (TU) Update; Embedding Employability; Student Learning Agreements and Recording Guidelines; Staff Wellbeing Group. Strategic Update; Digital Learning Policy; Mature Student Application Processing; Academic Staff Support for Students on Clinical/Work Placements during Summer Months.

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

This section details changes to units of governance, and to leadership/management that occurred, including new roles established during the reporting period 2019/2020.

The Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity was appointed during the reporting period 2020/2021. This was an existing position on the senior management team with the role being expanded to include Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

This section discusses internal monitoring activities and periodic reviews including reviews that have been completed or are in progress during the reporting period 2020/2021.

1.4.1 Monitoring

Internal monitoring is a core part of the Institute's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (see AQR Part A). The following internal monitoring activities are completed on an annual basis (with other monitoring for particular purposes being completed as relevant):

- Annual Programme Monitoring (Programme Board Reporting, External Examining, Student Feedback).
- Annual Postgraduate Research Monitoring.
- Annual Professional Services Area Monitoring (Student Services).

1.4.1.1 Annual Programme Monitoring

Programme Board reports are the primary output of the academic programme monitoring activities that take place annually across all Schools and are integral part of the Institute's academic quality assurance and enhancement system. All DkIT taught programmes were reviewed by the Programme Boards in each School and reported in the Annual Programme Board reports for 2020/21. Schools were required to submit reports to the Registrar's Office in January 2021 (normally December in a particular year but deadline was extended due to additional workload caused by the COVID-19 pandemic). Reports are submitted using a standardised template which has been adopted by Academic Council. The Registrar's Office provides sources of evidence for consideration by Programme Boards and inclusion as appropriate in the reports (admissions data, student feedback data, progression data, external examiner reports, Graduate Outcome Survey data (if available) and other relevant information). A summary of the reports for 2020/2021 is reviewed by the Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC) before the end of the 2021/2022 academic year and from there is presented (with recommendations and an action plan) to the May/June meeting of the Academic Council.

A total of eighty-four Programme Board Reports from across the four Schools (Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts) for the academic year 2020/2021 were reviewed and actions formulated.

One of the sources of evidence used to compile Programme Board Reports are the annual reports submitted by External Examiners. An External Examiner Summary Report (Registrar's Report) for a particular academic year is presented to the Academic Council in the subsequent academic year (for

example the summary for 2020/2021 will be presented in 2021/2022). The report, which is an indicator of how the External Examining system is operating generally, provides a qualitative analysis of External Examiner reports submitted to the Registrar's Office for a particular academic year. The purpose of the analysis is to determine if the External Examining system as a whole is enabling the Institute to assure the standard of assessments and thus contribute to the maintenance of the integrity of DkIT's awards. This analysis compliments the External Examiner Report analysis conducted by Heads of Department and Programme Boards at Department level (within Schools).

The External Examiner Report summary for 2020/2021 is as follows:

- A total of ninety five External Examiner reports from across the four Schools (Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts) for the academic year 2020/2021 were reviewed.
- Feedback received by External Examiners under all categories was satisfactory as evidenced by the number of positive comments in each category. This is particularly notable given the challenging COVID-19 environment that students, staff and external examiners were operating in.
- Qualitative comments provided as feedback in External Examiner reports were categorised manually in accordance with a coding scheme derived from the sections contained in the External Examiner Report template for 2020/2021. The table below provides the qualitative analysis summary for all reports across the Institute (not at individual School/Department level).
- Examination Boards took place remotely/online during the reporting period 2020/2021. Attendance virtually at Examination Boards was significantly improved when compared with campus attendance.

Student Feedback

Students participated in the StudentSurvey.ie (<https://studentsurvey.ie/>) student feedback survey and a COVID-19 student feedback survey during the reporting period 2020/2021.

StudentSurvey.ie Feedback Survey

StudentSurvey.ie 2021 ran from 8th February to the 1st March 2021 (three weeks). This was the first time that the survey was run and promoted entirely online. Significant efforts on the part of the Registrar's Office, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), academic Departments and the Students' Union (SU) allowed DkIT to achieve a response rate of 30%, comparable to previous years. thus capturing student feedback prior to emergency remote learning and teaching. The results indicated that 70% rated their experience as 'good' or 'excellent' and 5% as 'poor'. This is in line with

the technological sector average (72% 'good' or 'excellent'). However it is lower than the 2020 rate of 79%, likely reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considerable work has been undertaken to enhance the assessment and feedback over several years and the responses to these questions compare favourably (see Responses to Questions on Feedback table below). The scores are lower than for previous years, although in line with sector averages. It is likely again that the shift to emergency online learning and teaching had an impact on the student assessment experience.

<i>Received prompt and detailed feedback on tests and assignments</i>				
	DkIT 2021	DkIT 2019	THEIs 2021*	StudentSurvey.ie 2021
<i>Quite a bit/ Very much</i>	40%	53%	44%	47%
<i>Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress</i>				
<i>Quite a bit/ Very much</i>	44%	56%	42%	34%

*THEI - Technological Higher Education Institutes

Responses to Questions on Feedback

In order to focus on 'closing the gap' with respect to the feedback from StudentSurvey.ie, the Learning and Teaching Sub-committee of the Academic Council set up a working group (StudentSurvey.ie Working Group) to examine the 2021 survey findings. This working group identified potential priorities for action/enhancement that were then discussed with class representatives and priorities for action are agreed. This action plan is approved by Academic Council. On the basis of the 2021 findings the priorities were:

(i) Development of a strategy and structured process to support students who are considering withdrawing, the '*Talk Before You Walk*' initiative. This includes a student facing campaign (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/talk-before-you-walk/>) and a structured process for staff to identify incoming students who may be in need of support during the first semester.

(ii) Enhancement of assessment feedback. The Focus on Feedback project (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/focus-on-feedback/>), supported by National Forum Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) 2020 Funding (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/funding/strategic-alignment-of-teaching-and-learning-enhancement-funding-in-higher-education-2020/>), works with students and staff to enhance feedback. This included the development of resources by students for students to support engagement with feedback. The resources are available on the DkIT Student Support Hub. The priorities from the 2021 results were:

- To continue enhancing feedback - the Focus on Feedback project will run to end of 2021.
- Enhance the experience of group work for all. A review of the *DkIT Framework and Guidelines for Assessed Group-Work* is under way and resources are being developed to support staff and students in this area.

The 2021 survey included specific questions about students' experiences of emergency remote learning and teaching. As can be seen below, students were generally positive about the DkIT response. While this is encouraging it remains the case that a minority of students had a much more negative experience and it is striking that first years were more positive than final years. Given this, it was particularly important to ensure a physical graduation ceremony for these students. While perhaps unsurprising, it was still concerning to see that only about half of respondents felt connected to the Institute. Although induction 2020 was largely online, students did have the opportunity to come on to campus for a morning or afternoon and meet lecturers and some classmates. Nevertheless for some, this was one of the few opportunities to be on campus and interact with peers. Promoting connectedness and belonging was a priority for the academic year 2021/22. SATLE funding was ring-fenced for academic School for activities to promote belonging.

	DKIT (%)	DKIT 1st Year (%)	DKIT Final Year (%)	THEI* (%)	StudentSurvey.ie (%)
<i>My HEI provides me with timely and effective communications</i>	81	89	72	83	81
<i>My HEI provides me with adequate online learning opportunities</i>	85	90	78	86	85
<i>I am able to access online sufficiently to engage</i>	86	90	81	87	86
<i>I have a suitable study environment at home</i>	76	79	71	73	73
<i>I feel connected to my HEI despite...</i>	51	55	44	53	48

*THEI - Technological Higher Education Institutes

Responses to COVID questions ('agree strongly' or 'agree somewhat' %)

COVID-19 Feedback Survey

A COVID-19 specific student feedback survey was made available to all students in semester one (27th October to the 9th November 2020; 571 responses) and semester two (29th April to the 7th May 2021; 233 responses) in the reporting period 2020/2021. As with the reporting period 2019/2020, this feedback survey replaced the programme-level (QA3) survey normally distributed once a semester in the academic year. Given the ongoing challenges in the student learning environment caused by the

COVID-19 pandemic it was again determined that a specific survey that took account of remote/online learning would be more appropriate and would allow the Institute to respond more effectively to any feedback received. It should be noted that some on-campus activity did take place in 2020/2021 but it was predominantly remote/online.

The feedback survey included the following questions:

1. In what Department are you currently studying?
2. What course / programme are you studying (e.g. Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Computing)?
3. Please provide feedback on your student experience (14 questions on a Likert Scale; see tables below for student experience questions).
4. Is there one thing that we can do to better improve your student experience? (qualitative question)

Analysis of the responses to Question 3 (student experience) indicated that experiences were mixed for students (see summary in tables below) across all the questions posed.

Analysis of the qualitative results for Question 4 (improving the student experience) found that a substantial amount of feedback was received in the categories of “Teaching and Learning”, “Assessment”, “Student Supports” and On-Campus Delivery” in semester 1. A number of comments were received in the categories of “Teaching and Learning”, “Assessment” and On-Campus Delivery” in semester 2 but the number reduced between the two semesters. There was also a reduction in feedback received in the category of “Student Supports” and “Technology Issues”. A custom coding scheme was defined and applied to the response data. Also, some qualitative comments contain multiple elements of feedback and were classified under one category (Teaching and Learning) for simplicity.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident I can succeed in this course/programme	27.7%	11.4%	52%	7.4%	1.6%
I feel connected with other students on the course/programme.	14.4%	17.5%	30.8%	26.4%	10.9%
I feel connected with teaching staff on the course/programme.	11.6%	19.4%	40.3%	21.2%	7.5%
I believe I am contributing to and engaging effectively on my modules (for instance, participating in discussions and other learning activities)	18.4%	16.8%	46.8%	13.8%	4.2%
I understand how my learning will be assessed.	12.4%	13.7%	50.3%	19.6%	4%

I know how to access online or remote support for my health at DkIT	21.4%	10.7%	48.5%	15.9%	3.5%
I know how to access online or remote support for my safety at DkIT	19.4%	11.6%	45.2%	20.3%	3.5%
I know how to access online or remote support for my well-being at DkIT	20.1%	11%	48%	17.9%	3%
I know how to access online or remote support from my lecturers	25.4%	6.7%	59%	6.8%	2.1%
My well-being is good-physically	20.1%	14.5%	51.3%	9.3%	4.7%
My well-being is good-mentally	14%	19.8%	37.1%	19.4%	9.6%
My well-being is good-financially.	11.4%	19.6%	40.1%	19.3%	9.6%
I feel that DkIT is doing the best it can to support me in my studies right now.	18.6%	19.3%	41.5%	15.8%	4.9%
My remote study environment (study space, technology access, quality of broadband) allows me to participate adequately with my learning	16.5%	14%	41.5%	19.1%	8.9%

Semester 1 Responses to Question 3 (Student Experience)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident I can succeed in this course/programme	39.1%	12.4%	41.6%	5.6%	1.3%
I feel connected with other students on the course/programme.	11.6%	13.7%	32.6%	25.8%	16.3%
I feel connected with teaching staff on the course/programme.	12.9%	21.5%	36.9%	18.5%	10.3%
I believe I am contributing to and engaging effectively on my modules (for instance, participating in discussions and other learning activities)	22.7%	15.0%	42.1%	15.5%	4.7%
I understand how my learning will be assessed.	22.3%	10.3%	50.6%	14.6%	2.1%
I know how to access online or remote support for my health at DkIT	30.5%	10.3%	42.9%	12.9%	3.4%
I know how to access online or remote support for my safety at DkIT	24.9%	14.2%	36.9%	20.2%	3.9%
I know how to access online or remote support for my well-being at DkIT	25.3%	12%	46.4%	14.2%	2.1%
I know how to access online or remote support from my lecturers	29.2%	8.2%	54.5%	6.4%	1.7%
My well-being is good-physically	21.5%	16.7%	44.6%	13.3%	3.9%
My well-being is good-mentally	12%	13.7%	36.9%	24.5%	12.9%
My well-being is good-financially.	12.4%	22.3%	37.3%	18.5%	9.4%
I feel that DkIT is doing the best it can to support me in my studies right now.	17.6%	21.9%	34.8%	15.9%	9.9%

My remote study environment (study space, technology access, quality of broadband) allows me to participate adequately with my learning	19.7%	13.7%	39.9%	17.6%	9%
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Semester 2 Responses to Question 3 (Student Experience)

Category	Category Count
<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	34
<i>Assessment</i>	17
<i>On-Campus Delivery</i>	15
<i>Finance</i>	9
<i>Communications</i>	7
<i>Accommodation</i>	4
<i>Student Supports</i>	2
<i>Well-being</i>	2
<i>Technology Issues</i>	1
<i>Timetable</i>	1
Grand Total	92

Category	Category Count
<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	72
<i>Assessment</i>	29
<i>Student Supports</i>	25
<i>On-Campus Delivery</i>	23
<i>Communications</i>	9
<i>Technology Issues</i>	9
<i>Finance</i>	6
<i>Placement</i>	4
<i>Timetable</i>	3
<i>Well-being</i>	1
Grand Total	181

Semester 1 and 2 Responses to Question 4 (Improving the Student Experience) using Coding Scheme

The student feedback was circulated to each School by the Registrar's Office and each Department was requested to provide a summary to the Registrar's Office on how the feedback was actioned as appropriate within the School, having been considered by the relevant Programme Boards (normal quality assurance and enhancement activity). The student feedback was also used to inform academic planning for semester 2 2020/2021 and semester 1 2021/2022.

1.4.1.2 Annual Postgraduate Research Monitoring

The Research and Graduate Studies Office conducts quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities annually. DkIT submits an Annual Postgraduate Research Report to Dublin City University's (DCU's) Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) as part of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal monitoring. Annual Reporting for the collaborative partnership arrangement is through the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) and DCU Academic Council. DkIT submitted the Annual Postgraduate Research Report to DCU on <date>.

The Annual Report is informed by student feedback (Postgraduate Research Student Feedback and the PGR StudentSurvey.ie (<https://studentsurvey.ie/>)) which are core quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms for postgraduate research provision. See AQR Part A, Section 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review. The PGR feedback survey was administered in the reporting 2020/2021 and it requests feedback on the following dimensions of the postgraduate research student experience: Research Infrastructure, Funding, Supervision, Research Culture, Progress, Development

Opportunities, Research Skills, Personal Outlook, Transferable Skills, Responsibilities, Motivations, Career and Overall Experience.

A review of student feedback gathered as part of the annual monitoring activities, indicated that DkIT provided a quality postgraduate research student experience during the reporting period 2020/2021. In the 2021 PGR StudentSurvey.ie survey postgraduate research students at DkIT evaluated their entire research experience at DkIT as being “Excellent” (18%) or “Good” (57%), a combined total of 75%. 18% indicated that it was “Fair” and 7% stated that it was “Poor”. This is broadly in line with the national rates where students rated their overall experience as “Excellent” (26%), “Good” (49%), “Fair” (20%) and “Poor” (5%). There was broadly an increase in overall student experience satisfaction when compared with 2019 where students evaluated their experience as “Excellent” (8%), “Good” (50%), “Fair” (33%) and “Poor” (8%).

DkIT results under each of the dimensions of PGR StudentSurvey.ie can be seen in the tables below.

Overall Experience	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National	
How would you evaluate your entire research experience at this institution?	75.0%	79.2%	74.9%	
I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institutions expected timescale:	59.3%	70.5%	69.8%	
Research Infrastructure and Facilities		DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
I have a suitable working space		60.7%	66.5%	68.2%
There is adequate provision of computing resources / facilities		64.3%	65.2%	64.4%
There is adequate provision of library facilities (including physical / online resources)		66.7%	71.8%	68.2%
I have access to the specialist resources and facilities necessary for my research		64.3%	59.4%	61.9%

Research Culture	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
My department provides access to a relevant seminar programme	53.6%	55.8%	68.1%
The research ambience in my department stimulates my work	65.4%	54.6%	57.4%
I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students	53.6%	46.3%	46.9%
I have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department	44.4%	40.9%	44.9%

Progress and Assessment	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
I received an appropriate induction / orientation to my research degree programme	51.9%	67.8%	66.2%
I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress	82.1%	76.7%	79.0%
I understand the required standard for my thesis	78.6%	77.3%	75.2%
The final assessment procedures for my research degree are clear to me	57.1%	66.4%	68.1%

Development Opportunities	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
Agreeing a personal training or development plan	55.6%	46.0%	44.3%
Receiving training to develop my research skills	67.9%	71.1%	76.5%
Receiving training to develop my other transferable skills	53.6%	48.5%	60.0%
Receiving advice on career options	35.7%	29.8%	33.9%
Taking part in a placement or internship	14.3%	10.0%	13.5%
Attending an academic research conference	75.0%	56.5%	69.4%
Presenting a paper or poster at an academic research conference	67.9%	50.3%	59.1%
Submitting a paper for publication in an academic journal or book	67.9%	38.1%	48.8%
Communicating your research to a non-academic audience	35.7%	42.1%	41.4%
Receiving training in entrepreneurship and innovation	29.6%	15.1%	15.7%
Putting training in entrepreneurship and innovation into practice e.g. submitting an invention disclosure or filing a patent	17.9%	7.9%	8.0%
Working as part of a team	70.4%	59.8%	63.9%
Working collaboratively with industry	29.6%	32.1%	24.9%
Working collaboratively with a civil society organisation or public organisation	25.9%	21.7%	21.4%
Spending time abroad as part of your research degree	22.2%	12.3%	17.2%
Please indicate whether you have taught (or demonstrated) at your institution during your research degree programme:	44.4%	56.0%	63.1%
Do you agree or disagree that the teaching / demonstration you delivered enhanced your overall research experience?	56.3%	72.2%	67.3%
Do you agree or disagree that you have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching / demonstration?	46.7%	59.1%	55.4%

Research Skills	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques have developed during my programme	89.3%	85.8%	87.4%
My skills in critically analysing and evaluating findings and results have developed during my programme	85.7%	86.2%	86.8%
My confidence to be creative or innovative has developed during my programme	71.4%	74.8%	72.6%

My understanding of research integrity (e.g. rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has	92.9%	90.0%	88.1%
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Personal Outlook	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
I am satisfied with my life nowadays	46.4%	63.2%	56.6%
I am satisfied with my life within my institution nowadays	50.0%	60.9%	54.4%
I am satisfied with my work-life balance	46.4%	51.0%	46.0%
There is someone in my institution I can talk to about my day-to-day problems	50.0%	47.9%	45.0%
I feel that my research degree programme is worthwhile	92.9%	86.4%	80.4%

Other Transferable Skills	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
My ability to manage projects has developed during my programme	70.8%	74.8%	74.5%
My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my programme	68.0%	69.5%	71.5%
I have developed contacts or professional networks during my programme	64.0%	61.6%	63.3%
I have increasingly managed my own professional development during my programme	70.4%	76.9%	76.3%

Responsibilities and Supports	DkIT	THEA HEI total	National
I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student	89.3%	87.7%	89.7%
I am aware of my supervisor(s)' responsibilities towards me as a research degree student	89.3%	83.9%	84.7%
Other than my supervisor(s), I know who to approach if I am concerned about any academic aspect of my research degree programme	89.3%	72.6%	69.1%
How aware are you of the various student supports available? (Recreation, healthcare, counselling, etc.)	46.4%	35.6%	36.6%
My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students	50.0%	53.3%	45.2%

1.4.1.3 Annual Professional Services Area Monitoring (Student Services)

All services request feedback from service users. Feedback is reviewed on an ongoing basis with service providers and annually as part of the Service Annual Report (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/student-services-annual-reports/student-services-annual-reports.html>). Service Providers participate on national committees and review their service in line with national figures and trends. Work Plans and resources are reviewed in line with feedback, trends and the Institutes Strategic Plan.

The following is a summary of the feedback received from service users:

Access

- As part of the MEND Cluster, a review of the 1916 bursary application process is due to take place and student feedback will form part of this review. Feedback was positive to online delivery of talks to FET centres. Once in-person visits resume, feedback forms will be distributed (subject to the centre's Covid-19 protocols).

Disability Service

- A student survey was circulated to all students registered with the Service (274). There were 83 students who completed surveys, 48 students described the service as "Very Good" with 2 saying "Not Good". The numbers of students availing of the Service continued to rise in line with previous years.

Student Counselling Service

- There was a significant drop from numbers accessing the Service from the previous year, which can be explained by the fact that the majority of sessions were online and this was not the preferred medium for the majority of students. Indeed a number of prospective clients said they were waiting until DkIT were back doing face-to-face sessions before commencing therapy. Taking into account the numbers accessing support from the AP or ED Psych the figures are likely to be up on last year:
 - 75% said that counselling helped them stay in college.
 - For 52% it was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in college.
 - 88% said it helped them do better in their academic work.
 - For 54% it was an important or most significant factor in doing better at their academic work.
 - 91% said it had improved their overall experience of college/university.
 - For 65% it was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in improving their college experience.
 - 92% said counselling has helped them develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment.
 - For 72% it was an important or most significant factor.
 - 90% said that counselling has improved their self-esteem.
 - For 60% it was an important or most significant factor in improving their self esteem.
 - 97% said that counselling had helped them feel more positive about the future.

- For 75% this was an important or most significant factor in feeling more positive about the future
- These figures again demonstrate the impact of counselling not just on well-being and self-esteem but on retention and their performance in the Institute.

Health Unit

- The Health Unit invited students to complete an online anonymous survey to evaluate their experience of the service provided. The majority of responders indicated that they were highly satisfied or satisfied with the level of service received with an overall satisfaction rating of 4.8 out of 5.
- A number of students expressed dissatisfaction that the service provided was not as comprehensive as what they would expect from a general practice. The lowest response rate received was 4.27 out of 5 in relation to the location of the Health Unit. The usage statistics from the online Student Support Hub in the Moodle VLE gave a useful insight into the types of areas of medical support accessed. There were over 2,000 views on the health unit hub.

Sports and Societies

- Some key findings from the Student Activity and Sports Study Ireland Institutional Report Self-Assessment Review (SAR) 2020 include:
- DkIT is ranked 3rd of seven ITs and Other Colleges for part-time staff and volunteers.
- DkIT is ranked highest among all TLIs for (i) overall indoor facilities, (ii) owned facilities, (iii) fitness suite area, (iv) free weights area, and (iv) studio rooms/other courts. However, no indoor track and field facilities were reported. DkIT is ranked 5th of seven ITs and Other Colleges (8th of 17 TLIs) for the area of sports hall(s). Other facilities reported for DkIT included ten indoor astro-turf pitches.
- For the overall area of outdoor facilities, DkIT is ranked 5th of seven ITs and Other Colleges. However, no synthetic pitches, outdoor track and field, rowing or sailing facilities are available. Other outdoor facilities reported for DkIT include walking/cycling trails.
- DkIT is ranked 6th of the seven ITs and Other Colleges for both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- It is evident from the Student Sport Ireland report that DkIT have excellent facilities in DKIT Sport but DkIT's capital investment has been weak in recent years compared to other third level institutes.
- DkIT continue to maintain an active presence on social media. Facebook and twitter pages have slowed down in growth but this is a reflection of general usage among DkIT's target audience. The

DkIT Instagram page continues to grow at a very fast rate and would be one of the best-followed pages among third level colleges.

Staff Feedback on Emergency Remote Teaching

A number of additional staff feedback surveys were administered during the reporting period to specifically gather staff experiences with online/remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. One feedback survey was concerned with the specific challenges lecturers faced while teaching online and the other survey (“COVID-19 and DkIT: Don’t Waste A Crisis”) related more generally to online-remote learning. The results from both feedback surveys, which were presented to the Teaching and Learning Sub-committee (TLSC) of the Academic Council in February 2021, were used to inform supports that were provided to academic staff over the 2020/2021 academic year and beyond.

In the reporting period 2020/2021, specifically in January 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Learning and Teaching subcommittee (LTSC) of Academic Council, in conjunction with the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), carried out a survey to get feedback on staff experiences of teaching live online classes. The survey received 147 responses from staff and was used to inform training and support during the semester. One issue to emerge from the survey, and which was experienced as a major challenge by educators in all sectors in the switch to remote teaching, was that of encouraging interaction in live online classes. In response to this, CELT invited Dr Julie Byrne (<https://www.tcd.ie/research/profiles/?profile=byrnej18>), Assistant Professor in Online Education and Development at Trinity College Dublin, to facilitate a workshop for staff in which she shared findings from her research on good practice in this area.

Given the unheralded changes in education since the emergence and proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic, a study (“COVID-19 and DkIT: Don’t Waste A Crisis”) was carried out on the experiences of DkIT lecturers with the move to emergency remote teaching (ERT). The study, which included a 19-question survey completed by 72 DkIT lecturers, examined a wide-ranging series of topics in the ERT space including: (i) planning class, (ii) classroom techniques, (iii) the learner, (iv) the supports and (v) the teaching space.

In the initial analysis, the early findings related to the increased levels of planning, workload, research, and technology required to successfully deliver class, while simultaneously highlighting the decreased levels of student engagement, spontaneity, and well-being among all. The recommendations from this early study outlined the acknowledgement for continuous, contingency planning, the employment of flipped classroom techniques, the establishment of a blended learning hub, and the appointment of a full-time educational technologist.

More recently, the analysis of the data collected on ‘the teaching space’ / ‘working from home’, garnered findings that pertained to the lack of a commute time; an improved health and well-being lifestyle; the negative effects on the work-life balance; the overwhelmingly isolating experience that led to a poorer teaching and learning experience; and the struggle to differentiate between personal and professional

lives. Recommendations on the future direction of teaching and learning, in relation to same, were presented. These recommendations centred on (i) the transition back to campus and giving greater control over the lecturing staff; (ii) the support of online and blended learning - giving due deliberation to moving all lectures online, ensuring adequate support, creating a baseline of online working practices, and the appointment of online technical support; (iii) the redesign of the work environ, such that there was greater emphasis on the health and wellbeing within the teaching and learning community, both online and face-to-face; and (iv) the redesign of work hours, where a standardised working hour was defined and adhered to in the online setting, recognising the increased workload for online and blended learning module design and delivery. These recommendations were presented to DkIT's Academic Heads Forum (AHF), consisting of Heads of School and Heads of Department, and to the Staff Wellbeing Committee.

1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews

This section includes reviews completed or in progress during the reporting period 2020/2021. As indicated in the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement framework (see AQR Part A), internal periodic reviews can be School Programmatic Reviews (including PRSB accreditation reviews), Postgraduate Research Reviews and Professional Service Area Reviews (Student Services, International Office, etc.). The Institute's current internal review schedule (or cycle) is also provided. The cycle typically runs over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

1.4.2.1 Internal Periodic Review Schedule

Note: Planned schedule that does not take account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Year	2017/18 and 2018/19
Areas/Units	Institutional Review
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	Final Report and Implementation Plan https://www.qqi.ie//Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Programmatic Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Health and Science; • School of Engineering; • School of Informatics and Creative Arts; • School of Business and Humanities; • Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
Number	5

Link(s) to Publications:	
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Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	Professional Service Areas (Registrars): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	Graduate Studies Office: Research Centre Designation of Research Institutes.
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	Graduate Studies Office: HR Excellence in Research Award to be externally reviewed.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2020/2021
Areas/Units	Professional Service Areas (Registrars): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examinations Office.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2021/2022
Areas/Units	Research and Graduate Studies (DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Review) Professional Service Areas (Registrars): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions.• Access Office.• Schools Liaison.
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2022/2023
Areas/Units	Professional Service Areas (Registrars): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Careers and Employability;• Disability Service;• Health Unit;• Counselling Service;• Pastoral Care;• Sports and Societies;
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2023/2024
Areas/Units	Programmatic Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School of Health and Science;• School of Engineering;• School of Informatics and Creative Arts;• School of Business and Humanities;• Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

	Professional Service Areas (Registrars): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Services.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2024/2025
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined.
Number	
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2025/2026
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined.
Number	
Link(s) to Publications:	

1.4.2.2 Internal Periodic Reviews for Reporting Period

Note: see Section 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods for updated review schedule.

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Professional Service Areas (Registrars): Examinations Office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status: Not completed. • Reason for Non-Completion: Not completed due to other priorities relating to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable.

1.4.3 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

The table below provides information of review/evaluation processes that were concluded during the reporting period 2020/2021:

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/evaluation processes	43	0	0	0 (DkIT is a collaborative partner of Dublin City University (DCU) with the DCU-DkIT Graduate School; previously a linked provider arrangement)	40	0	3
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	8	0	0	0	8	0	0
Desk reviews	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Virtual processes	32	0	0	0	32	0	0

³ QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

External Industry /Third Mission	13	9	3	0	0	12	1	0	0	0	13
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Note(s):

- Figures above are based on counting a panel member only once even if they reviewed more than one programme or chaired more than one panel.
- The Registrar or Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance act as Secretary for all programme validation panels.
- In accordance with the Institute's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (See AQR Part 1) the composition of programme validation panels is as follows:

Major Awards	Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Chair; • At least two external academics who are acknowledged nationally and/or internationally as academic experts in the field of study; • One practitioner or industry representative; • Representative from the Registrar's Office. • For NFQ level 9 programmes, there must be one academic from outside the State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Chair; • Two external discipline experts; • Representative from the Registrar's Office.

- When programme validation panels are being constituted the Registrar's Office ensure that panel member(s) have Teaching and Learning and Quality Assurance expertise as appropriate (as per "Type of Expert" in the Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA above).

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

This section provides an overview of developments and enhancements during the reporting period 2020/2021. It also provides an update on the main enhancements arising from the CINNTE review process and institutional review report.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) (<https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/student-learning-and-development-centre/>) provides scheduled tutorials and 1:1 support on academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism. Tutors also work with lecturers to deliver bespoke classes for specific student groups on many aspects of academic writing, study skills and academic integrity. The library runs class, drop-ins and provides 1:1 referencing and information literacy support for students. The SDLC provides a range of resources to support academic integrity and these resources are available to students in the Moodle VLE. The Registrar’s Office also provides support sessions on Academic Integrity policy and procedures.

The Institute continued its work enhancing supports for Academic Integrity in the reporting period 2020/2021. The Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the library work collaboratively on Academic Integrity initiatives and activities. The Institute actively participated in *National Academic Integrity Week* which took place from 19th October to 23rd October 2020. The week is curated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) with national events being offered by HEI’s as well as webinars offered by ENAI (<https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/>) and ICAI (<https://www.academicintegrity.org/>). DkIT provided a range of activities to prompt consideration of Academic Integrity, and good practice in scholarly communication:

Webinar(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explorations in Academic Integrity. This webinar was a conversation exploring Academic Integrity from a wide variety of perspectives: academics, students and representatives from the Institute’s Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
Library Drop-ins:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Has a Value, Harvard Referencing, Practicing Academic Integrity
CELT Drop-ins:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) held a drop-in for students entitled 'Everything you every wanted to know about avoiding plagiarism- all your questions answered'.

Libguides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvard Referencing, Plagiarism - how to avoid it.
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Academic Integrity Digital Badge

In 2020/2021, the Library continued its development of an *Academic Integrity Digital Badge for Students*. The digital badge will enable students to: learn what academic integrity is and why it is important, understand how academic integrity relates to their work in DkIT, recognise when credit needs to be given to others and be familiar with citing and referencing using Harvard.

Epiguem Academic Integrity Support Modules

DkIT subscribed to the Epiguem Academic Integrity modules (<https://www.epiguem.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/>) for students and staff in May 2021. The Academic Integrity modules from Epiguem support institutions in implementing a consistent and unified approach to academic integrity training. The online programme ensures that every member of the HEI community understands what constitutes best academic practice in their role, substantially reducing the risk of misconduct. A number of HEIs across Ireland have adopted the support modules and through Epiguem a community of practice where collaborating partners can share their experiences with the Epiguem modules. Planning took place in the reporting period 2020/2021 for a pilot of the Epiguem Academic Integrity modules for students and staff in the academic year 2021/2022.

Finally, preliminary work commenced on the development of an Institute action plan for Academic Integrity collaboratively with the Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the Library. See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022) for actions related to Academic Integrity.

National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

The Institute is an active participant (Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Registrar's Office) in the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) which commenced its work during the reporting period 2019/2020. The NAIN will assist QQI to establish the nature of academic misconduct practised in Irish higher education institutions; to identify appropriate measures to both prevent and address such misconduct; and to inform dedicated communications strategies and/or enhancement initiatives developed in this area by QQI. The purpose of the network is to advise and offer guidance to QQI on the identification of:

- common definitions;
- the current landscape of academic integrity in Ireland;

- current approaches to the prevention, detection and penalising of academic misconduct;
- good practice with regard to prevention of, and addressing suspected and confirmed instances of, academic misconduct;
- a working methodology/procedures for the reporting and prosecution of instances of cheating within HEIs that are offences under the recently amended legislation;
- key elements of a dedicated communication strategy for stakeholders;
- areas for dedicated enhancement activity to support a culture of academic integrity in Irish HEIs.

The network has established two working groups for the purpose of meeting the stated objectives and DkIT continued to proactively engage with the working groups in the reporting period 2020/2021. Through the working groups DkIT contributed to the “*Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms*” and “*Academic Integrity Guidelines*” (<https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/engagement-insights-and-knowledge-sharing/national-academic-integrity-network>) which were published following extensive consultation. The output of the NAIN continues to inform Academic Integrity policy and procedures, activities and initiatives within the Institute.

See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2020/2021) for actions related to Academic Integrity.

2.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This section discusses enhancement in the area of teaching, learning and assessment in the reporting period 2019/2020.

2.2.1 Staff Training and Professional Development

Accredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

The Certificate/Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching continued to be successful in the reporting period 2020/2021 attracting learners from among DkIT staff and colleagues from Further Education and Training (FET), post-primary, and private companies across the region. A total of 69 DkIT staff members have now completed the Masters programme and 18 have completed the Certificate in Learning and Teaching.

Unaccredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

A programme of seminars and workshops was offered in 2020/2021 with particular emphasis on online learning teaching and assessment and student engagement in the context of COVID-19. Provision was informed by a staff survey in late 2020 that identified needs. The full schedule of provision was as follows

Event Title	Date	No. Registered
Planning for blended learning, teaching and assessment	Thursday, 18 June 2020	62
Student engagement and wellbeing online	Thursday, 18 June 2020	75
Planning for blended learning, teaching and assessment: Module and Programme	Monday, 14 September 2020	49
Establishing social presence online.	Tuesday, 15 September 2020	60
Using Big Blue Button to deliver online classes	Friday, 18 September 2020	60
Getting started with BigBlueButton (BBB)	Friday, 18 September 2020	29
Getting started with BigBlueButton (BBB)	Tuesday, 22 September 2020	60
Getting started with BigBlueButton (BBB)	Tuesday, 22 September 2020	60
Building relationships with students online	Monday, 5 October 2020	18
Using Moodle reports to promote engagement	Wednesday, 14 October 2020	35
Designing Assessments to Promote Academic Integrity	Thursday, 5 November 2020	20
Assessment and Feedback using Moodle quizzes	Tuesday, 17 November 2020	33
Using Turnitin in Moodle assignments	Thursday, 19 November 2020	22
Writing open-book exam questions	Thursday, 26 November 2020	16
National Forum Seminar Series (leader Dr Karen Dunne, School of Health & Science) Resilience building for students and educators	Thursday, 14 January 2021	74
Programme-Focused Assessment Approach (PFA) to planning your assessments	Tuesday, 19 January 2021	15
Teaching with Zoom	Wednesday, 3 February 2021	67
Student Support Hub Launch Event	Tuesday, 9 February 2021	56
Teaching live online classes using Microsoft Teams	Wednesday, 17 February 2021	69
H5P is a free open-source tool currently available on DkIT Moodle	Thursday, 25 February 2021	68
Masterclass: Dr Julie Byrne, TCD Encouraging interaction in live online classes	Wednesday, 10 March 2021	86
DkIT Sharing practice in Learning and Teaching. Keynote: Professor Liz Thomas, Edge Hill University: Promoting Belonging	Tuesday, 15 th June 2021	67

Library Staff Learning to Support Learners

DkIT participated in the L2L project (<http://l2l.ie/>), Library Staff Learning to Support Learners. L2L is a two year project being funded by the National Forum through its Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>) looking at the Professional Development Framework for all staff who teach in Higher Education through the lens of Library staff to see if it meets professional

development needs. L2L is a collaboration of three Libraries: Dundalk Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology, Carlow and Dublin Institute of Technology. These Libraries formed L2L and succeeded in gaining support from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>).

2.3 Supports and Resources for Learners

Significant work to develop a Student Support Hub in the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was undertaken through the reporting periods 2019/2020 and 2020/21. This work is part of the 'Gateway to Success' project, funded under the Higher Education Authority (HEA)'s 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund (<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/innovation-call/>). The project began in January 2019. A needs analysis generated principles (promoting relationships, engagement and accessibility that informed the project design and development. This phase was complete by October 2019 and work began on the IT and Student Support work-packages. This included VLE development work, mapping support provision to the hub principles and resource development. This work continued throughout 2019/20. The impact of COVID-19 was two-fold: some aspects of training, resource development and consultation were delayed while the shift online also developed capacity and confidence, particularly in terms of 1:1 support. The Hub was scheduled to launch in September 2020, however given the delays, the launch was put back to 25th January 2021. The Hub has successfully launched and it is particularly useful for students in the online environment. An evaluation will take place in the reporting period 2021/2022. Preliminary findings indicate that the Hub is very extensively used and used both in and out of hours, suggesting that it is meeting the objective of making student support more flexible and accessible.

2.4 Embedding Employability Project

The DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/dkit-embedding-employability.html>) is funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning as part of their Strategic Alignment for Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund in 2019 and enhances the Institute's commitment to graduate employability. The project was led by the DkIT Careers and Employability Centre and is supported by a Project Steering Group comprised of representatives from the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), academic Schools, Students Union and the North East Regional Skills Forum. During the reporting period 2020/2021 an extensive research and phased consultation process including workshops, focus groups, online surveys with all key DkIT stakeholders (students, graduates, all staff and employers) was completed.

Key project outputs completed in the reporting period 2020/2021 (Phase 1 of this project ran from February 2021 - June 2021) included:

- DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework - the PCs Framework (approved by Academic Council (Meeting No. 177, 8th October 2022; to be included in the next reporting period).
- DkIT Employability Statement and Framework including a bespoke DkIT Model of Graduate Employability (approved by Academic Council (Meeting No. 177, 8th October 2022; to be included in the next reporting period).
- Development of a DkIT Embedding Employability Website, which hosts information, reports and documentation relating to the DkIT Embedding Employability initiatives (<https://www.dkit.ie/embeddingemployability>).

Resources of note include: Graduate Attribute Research Report, Focus Group Consultation Report, Embedding Employability Survey Report, Video- Overview of DkIT Embedding Employability Project, Workshop Presentations.

Phase 2 of the project continues into the reporting period 2021/2022 (from August 2021- May 2022) and is focussing on the development of an:

- Online Toolkit to support embedding Employability/ Graduate Attributes in the curriculum.
- Graduate Attribute Tracker - to support programme development and review.
- Student Online Toolkit and Resources.

See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022) for actions.

2.5 National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Project in Higher Education

This is a national collaborative initiative (<https://www.priorlearning.ie/>) between the Institutes of Technology, the Universities and Technological University (TU) Dublin which seeks to build a consistent and coherent approach to RPL within and across the 19 publicly funded higher education institutions. Funded under the Irish Government's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/4b006-minister-harris-announces-22-innovative-projects-to-be-funded-under-human-capital-initiative/>), the project will see HEIs engineer a significant shift in RPL policy, procedure and practice, that has transformative potential for Ireland's education system to become an international leader in the field. The project will play a crucial role in delivering on a range of national and European policy objectives in lifelong learning and meeting skills needs. The vision is that RPL will be an integral part of the higher education system, widely understood, celebrated and utilised as a flexible pathway to further learning, certification and professional development.

The DkIT project lead was appointed in 2021. See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022) for actions.

2.6 Enhancements arising from Institutional Review (CINNTE Review)

Due to other priorities that arose during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic no significant progress was made on implementing the action plan that resulted from the Institutional Review that took place at DkIT in 2018 (<https://www.qqi.ie/Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx>). This work is ongoing and will continue into the next reporting period. See Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2021/2022).

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

This section describes quality assurance and enhancement activities for the upcoming reporting period 2021/2022 which are aligned to the institute's strategic objectives (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>). The section should be read in conjunction with 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR above. Actions/activities not completed in reporting period 2020/2021 are carried over to the next reporting period 2021/2022.

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 120.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Institute policy management system, policies and procedures and quality framework to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose. This is related to Institutional Review actions. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.
2	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 120.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.
3	Policies and Procedures Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop quality assurance policies and procedure relating to collaborative partnerships (specifically articulation agreements). • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.

4	<p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Equal Access and Participation Policy. • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Student Services (Access Office).
5	<p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop quality assurance Guidelines for the Preparation, Drafting and Transmission of Examination Papers and Solutions. (recommendation from an external investigator following an examination paper breach). • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office.
6	<p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 121.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attain QQI International Educational Mark (IEM). • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office.
7	<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 122.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop quality assurance policy and procedures for blended learning (to augment current programme approval policies and procedures; incorporate QQI’s Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes). • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

8	<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop capacity to use data to inform decision-making. • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
9	<p>Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Assessed Group-work: A Framework and Guidelines. • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
10	<p>Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to prioritise work to enhance good practice in assessment and feedback and promote assessment literacy among students. • Responsibility: Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
11	<p>Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance digital accessibility and raise awareness of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. • Responsibility: Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
12	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Research Integrity Policy. • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Graduate Studies Office.
13	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 123.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Research Ethics Policy and Procedures. • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Research and Graduate Studies Office.

14	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build research capacity with a view to achieving the metrics required for Technological University (TU) status. Responsibility: Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
15	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the National Researcher Career Framework (continued action) (https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/). Implement the full researcher career framework across all research centres and groups. Responsibility: Research and Graduate Studies Office.
16	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance research supervisory development and professional training programme together with other supports for staff and students. Responsibility: Research and Graduate Studies Office.
17	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review collaborative partnership arrangements with Dublin City University (DCU) (DCU-DKIT Graduate School). Responsibility: Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
18	<p>Research</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 124.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the action plan detailed in the Institute's recent Athena Swan Bronze award application. Responsibility: Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office, Office of the Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity.
19	<p>Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify and increase research and innovation funding. Responsibility: Research and Graduate Studies Office, Research and Group Directors.

20	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Intellectual Property Portfolio across research community () • Responsibility: Research and Graduate Studies Office, Regional Development Centre (RDC)
21	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase TUTF funding to approach TU 4 % Target. • Responsibility: TUTF Steering Committee.
22	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out on line Professional Training Platform for researchers. • Responsibility: Research and Graduate Studies Office.
23	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current policy and procedure on collaborative provision in light of DABS and permission for linked provider status. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.
24	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current Quality Manual to remove reference to QQI with the exception of external cyclical review and Level 10 provision. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.
25	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Educational/Awareness programme for various stakeholders on what a DAB means (Governing Body, Academic Council, Academic Staff, Students). • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.
26	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) Previous AQR Reference: pg. 125.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current award standards and determine if new award standards are required (sectoral approach).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility: Registrar's Office.
27	<p>Designated Awarding Body (DAB)</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of QA processes to ensure that they are sufficiently comprehensive and robust in the context of being a DAB. • Review current programme validation processes in the context of DAB. • Review QA processes relating to postgraduate research provision. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office Research and Graduate Studies Office.
28	<p>Academic Integrity</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to plan, implement and enhance Academic Integrity initiatives at Institute level for students and staff, specifically to develop an Academic Integrity Action Plan. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.
29	<p>Academic Integrity</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a pilot of the Epigeum Academic Integrity modules with students and staff (https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/).
30	<p>Academic Integrity</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 126.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures to cater for Contract Cheating. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.

31	Academic Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Academic Integrity supports, specifically Plagiarism Advisor Training for academic Schools (focus on building Academic Integrity Culture). • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.
32	Academic Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the Academic Integrity Digital Badge for Students. • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.
33	Academic Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Institute Register for Academic Misconduct (mixed model between Schools and Registrar’s Office currently in operation). • Review and ensure that new forms of academic misconduct (e.g. contract cheating) are recorded as appropriate.
34	<p>Institutional Review</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 127.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Institutional Review Action plan and identify priorities as appropriate (https://www.qqi.ie/Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx, under heading “Follow-up Actions”). • Responsibility: Registrar’s Office with other functional areas as appropriate.
36	Professional Service Areas (Student Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the Disability Service by providing an assistive technology training room.

	<p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 127.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services; Disability Service).
37	<p>Professional Service Areas (Student Services)</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 128.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a structured mentoring system for Sports Scholarship students and provide specialised training for committee members for societies and clubs. • Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services; Sports and Societies).
38	<p>Professional Service Areas (Student Services)</p> <p>Previous AQR Reference: pg. 128.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of a peer-mentoring programme for first year student which will co-ordinated by the Counselling Service. • Identify and provide targeted supports for 'at risk' groups particularly through completion of CAMS training which addresses the needs of the most at risk group on campus • Build campus knowledge and skills on mental health and suicide prevention. • Develop additional supports for students considering withdrawing from their programme. • Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services).
39	<p>Professional Service Areas (Student Services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create meaningful access partnerships with local partners (schools and FET colleges). • Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services).
40	<p>Professional Service Areas (Student Services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the Autism&Uni (https://www.autism-uni.org/) website, progress the 'pilot' of the autism friendly department.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services).
41	Professional Service Areas (Student Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging a pro-active approach to Health with emphasis on Health Awareness and promotion. • Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services), Health Unit
42	Professional Service Areas (Student Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve DkIT Employability Statement and PCs Graduate Attribute Framework for adoption into programme development (outputs of Phase 1 of the Embedding Employability Project). • Enhance curriculum development supports to academic Schools, specifically to assist with the embedding of the DkIT Employability Statement and PCs Graduate Attribute Framework (outputs of the DkIT Embedding Employability Project). • Development of the following as part of Phase 2 of the Embedding Employability Project : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online Toolkit to support embedding Employability/ Graduate Attributes in the curriculum. ○ Graduate Attribute Tracker - to support programme development and review. ○ Student Online Toolkit and Resources. • Responsibility: Registrar's Office, Careers and Employability, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
43	Professional Service Areas (Student Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the Student Support Hub in the Moodle VLE.

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibility: Professional Service Areas (Student Services), Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). |
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3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

This section provides a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from reviews for the next reporting period (2021/2022). The unit of review may be a Department/School, professional support unit, school, or faculty. See Section 1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews. It should be noted that reviews have been re-scheduled due to other priorities rising from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period 2020/2021.

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
DCU-DKIT Graduate School Quality Review The review is carried out in accordance with Collaborative Partnership Agreement between DkIT and DCU as an internal cyclical review in line with existing procedures established for DCU quality reviews, and aligned to the QQI Guidelines and policy.	February 2022	This is the first review of the Graduate School.
No other reviews are planned for the reporting period 2021/2022 due to other priorities rising from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period 2020/2021.		

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The review schedule for reviews beyond the upcoming reporting period (2021/2022) is as follows (the schedule has been adjusted to take account of the COVID-19 pandemic):

Year	2017/18 and 2018/19
Areas/Units	Institutional Review
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	Final Report and Implementation Plan https://www.qqi.ie//Reviews/Pages/Dundalk-Institute-of-Technology-%E2%80%93-CINNTE-Institutional-Review-2018-.aspx

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Programmatic Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Health and Science; • School of Engineering; • School of Informatics and Creative Arts; • School of Business and Humanities; • Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications:	N/A

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	N/A

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	Graduate Studies Office: Research Centre Designation of Research Institutes.
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications:	N/A

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	N/A

Year	2020/2021
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.
Number	N/A
Link(s) to Publications:	N/A

Year	2021/2022
Areas/Units	Research and Graduate Studies (DCU-DkIT Graduate School Quality Review)
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	N/A

Year	2022/2023
Areas/Units	<p>Professional Service Areas (Registrars):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library. • International Office. • Admissions. • Access Office. • Schools Liaison. • Examinations Office. • Careers and Employability; • Disability Service; • Health Unit; • Counselling Service; • Pastoral Care; • Sports and Societies; <p>Graduate Studies Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Excellence in Research Award to be externally reviewed.
Number	12
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2023/2024
Areas/Units	<p>Programmatic Reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Health and Science; • School of Engineering; • School of Informatics and Creative Arts; • School of Business and Humanities; • Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). <p>Professional Service Areas (Registrars):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Services.
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2024/2025
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be determined.
Number	
Link(s) to Publications:	

Year	2025/2026
Areas/Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be determined.
Number	
Link(s) to Publications:	

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

DKIT is not in a position to submit a case study under the theme “Ensuring Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement in Digital Environments” for the reporting period 2020/2021.

Appendix 1: DkIT Organisation Chart

