

## AIQR - PARTS 2-6

<b>Submission Date</b>	12-07-2016 17:01:45
<b>Organisation</b>	Dundalk Institute of Technology
<b>Reporting Year</b>	2014-2015
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<b>Which Part do you wish to complete?</b>	PART 2: Institution-led QA - Annual
<b>PART 2 - Section 1: Institution-led QA - Annual</b>	Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

## A piece in relation to the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems to support strategic objectives in the reporting period.

During the academic period 2014/15, the evolution of quality assurance at DkIT was evidenced by its support for the development of the key strategic initiative of the formation of the DCU/DkIT Graduate School. Postgraduate regulations were updated and aligned with those of DCU to underpin linked provided status. The formal launch of the Graduate

School by the Minister of Education, Jan O'Sullivan, took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014. This embodied the next stage in goal 9.1 of the Institute Strategic Plan (2013-2016) – '*Progress a Major Strategic Alliance with Dublin City University*'.

As a first step in Phase 1 of this process, a 'Linked Provider' schedule was agreed between the two institutions. During this phase, DCU is a Linked Provider of research Master's and Doctoral programmes at DkIT. All research postgraduate students who registered with DkIT from September 2014 and successfully complete their studies will receive a DCU research award. More information can be found at:

<https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/research/dcu-dkit-graduate>

### Change to Academic Council Sub-Committee Structure:

The DkIT Academic Council was established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amendments. The Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality. The President and Registrar are respectively, Chairman and Secretary of the Council.

The membership consists of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership currently standing at 52. See the Constitution of the Academic Council at

<https://www.dkit.ie/registrar-office/quality-assurance/academic-council>

Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings.

The Academic Council had the following sub-committee structure up to 2014/15:

- Standing Committee
- Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee
- Academic Quality Sub-Committee
- Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee
- Research Sub-Committee

All of the above committees contribute to the development and implementation of quality assurance policy and procedures at Institute level.

During the academic period 2014/15, the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) was established in accordance with quality assurance provisions in relation to the establishment of DCU/DkIT Graduate School, where DCU is the linked provider. The GRSB has Institutional oversight of postgraduate research degree studies. The terms of reference for the committee are as follows:

- i. Formulation of institutional policy in relation to postgraduate research degrees.
- ii. Oversight of the development and operation of Institute regulations and guidelines in relation to postgraduate research degrees.
- iii. Consideration of matters arising from School Graduate Research Programme Boards and the Research Sub-Committee in relation to postgraduate research degrees.
- iv. Consideration of graduate training elements for structured PhD provision submitted by Academic Schools.
- v. Consideration of research students' applications to transfer to the PhD Register.
- vi. Nominations for the appointment of External Examiners for research degrees and the PhD transfer process.
- vii. Research students' requests for extension of registration and early submission of thesis.

The membership is as follows:

- Head of Research and Graduate Studies
- President
- Registrar
- Assistant Registrar
- Chairs of School Graduate Research Programme Boards (4)
- Representative from the Teaching and Learning Unit (1)
- Representative of the Postgraduate research student body (1)
- Representative from Dublin City University (1)
- Elected members of Academic Council (2)

Admissions, student transfers to PhD register, examiners, etc. are approved by both the DkIT and DCU GRSBs and the DkIT Head of Research is a member of the DCU GRSB.

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

### Standard and Framework for Academic Policies and Procedures:

During the 2014/15 academic year, the Academic Quality Sub-Committee of Academic Council agreed a schedule for monitoring and review of the effectiveness of quality assurance policies and procedures. The purpose of this was to establish a consistent and enforceable system for the development, approval, implementation and review of academic quality policy documents at DkIT.

Other quality assurance and enhancement developments during the academic period 2014/15 are listed below:

#### Academic Integrity Policy:

A substantive review of the Institute's Academic Integrity policy was carried out during 2014/15. Much of the work was carried out by the Institute Academic Management and Planning Committee (AMPC) with final discussions and approval by Academic Council. The new procedures provide for Department-based disciplinary panels to deal with minor cases of breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy while more serious cases are referred to the Institute disciplinary process. Where breaches of the policy are found, penalties are issued with reference to a scoring system or 'penalty grid' which allows for improved consistency across the Institute. The Academic Policy and Procedures can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-integrity-policy-procedures>

#### Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards:

This policy was amended to introduce the categorisation of programme changes as 'major', 'minor' or 'structural'. Major changes require full validation. Under this policy, the Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC) determines the level of the proposed change and may agree minor changes or refer major changes to 'Differential Validation' by an external panel. These procedures were further reviewed in 2015/16 to bring them into line with ESG (2015). The current policy and procedures in relation to approval, monitoring and review of programmes can be viewed at the following links:  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy>  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes>

#### Student Voice Policy:

The Student Voice Policy was developed by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and was approved by Academic Council in December 2014. The policy established key principles for gathering student opinion on their experience of academic life and the Institute's wider service offering. The policy provides for facilitating and responding to the student voice.  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/student-voice-policy>

#### Ethics Policy and Procedures:

In March 2015, a review of the DkIT Research Ethics Policy and Procedures was carried out resulting in some revisions to the Institute Ethics Policy. The revised procedure is available at:  
<https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-themes/policies-procedures/research-ethics>

#### Admissions Policy:

A consolidated policy on Admissions, Guidelines and Regulations was presented to Academic Council in June 2015. This brought existing policies and procedures into one document and can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration/policies-procedures>

#### Marks and Standards:

Academic Council constituted a 'Marks and Standards Working Group' who commenced the work of reviewing DkIT Marks and Standards to ensure alignment with QQI Assessment and Standards (2013). The current Marks and Standards document can be found at:  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/marks-standards>  
This work is ongoing and will be completed before the commencement of the next round of Programmatic reviews.

#### New Leaving Certificate Grade Bands:

The Academic Council adopted the new sectoral points allocation aligned to the new Leaving Certificate Grade Bands. The Council also revised the Institute's matriculation requirements to align to the new grade bands. The new matriculation requirements for Leaving Certificate applicants will be implemented in 2017.

**The schedule of QA governance meetings for the period should be inserted here.**

There were **five** meetings of full Academic Council during 2014/15 and one special meeting. **Twenty one** sub-committee meetings took place, including the inaugural meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board which was held in May 2015. Executive Board meetings normally take place on fortnightly basis. DkIT Governing Body held **eleven** meetings during the academic year 2014/15, on a monthly basis with the exception of August 2015.

The Academic Management and Planning Committee (AMPC) was responsible until 2015 for the management of operational matters at Institute level, including the implementation of academic quality policies and procedures. The AMPC met on **five** occasions during 2014/15.

At the end of the academic year it was decided to integrate academic and other planning matters and thus to combine this committee with the OPC (Operations Planning Committee) to form the **Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)**. The membership of AMPC included all academic managers so in order to keep the membership of this new committee to a more to a functionally operational size, a new group, the Academic Heads Forum (AHF) was constituted, which has 4 nominated representatives on the IMPC.

**PART 2 - Section 2:  
Institution-led QA - Annual**

Reviews in the Reporting Period

**Area/Unit and links to relevant publications**

Programme Validations:

The following programme validations took place during 2014/15:

Full Validation by DkIT:

Major Awards:

Bachelor of Science in (Honours) in Agriculture  
Master of Science in Agricultural Biotechnology  
Postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Biotechnology  
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Film Practice  
Bachelor of Business (Honours), Collaborative Provision (DkIT and Monaghan Institute)  
Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Studies (Outreach, Monaghan Institute).

Special Purpose Awards:

Certificate in Contemporary Palliative Care Practice.  
Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse.  
Certificate in Hospitality Operations.  
Certificate in Building Information Modelling.  
Diploma in Construction Business Excellence.  
Certificate in Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse  
Certificate in 2D and 3D Digital Animation Production  
Certificate in Digital Video Post-Production  
Certificate in Writing for Transmedia

Minor Awards:

Certificate in Environmental Biotechnology  
Certificate in Food and Feed Biotechnology  
Certificate in Animal Biotechnology;

Programme details are available at  
<https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/study-dkit/courses-dkit>

Sample validation reports are available at  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/approval-programmes/20142015>

**Links to published internal reviews**

Second Set of Records

**Area/Unit and links to relevant publications**

Differential Validation by DkIT:

Bachelor of Science in Construction Technology (Common First Year).  
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying (Common First Year).  
Master of Arts in Traditional Music Studies (Blended Learning Mode).  
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Multimedia Web Development (Change of Title).

Programme details are available at  
<https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/study-dkit/courses-dkit>

Validation reports are available at  
<https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/approval-programmes/20142015>

**Links to published internal reviews**

Third Set of Records

<b>Area/Unit and links to relevant publications</b>	<p>Validation of Single Modules:</p> <p>Soil Science and Land Utilisation. Game Music Composition.</p>
<b>Links to published internal reviews</b>	Fourth Set of Records
<b>Area/Unit and links to relevant publications</b>	<p>Validated by QQI (Level 5): Certificate in General Studies;</p> <p><a href="https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/certificate-general-studies">https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/certificate-general-studies</a></p>
<b>Links to published internal reviews</b>	Fifth Set of Records
<b>Area/Unit and links to relevant publications</b>	<p>The Honours Bachelor of Arts in Youth Work programme received professional accreditation from the North South Education and Training Committee for Youth Work following a panel visit in June 2015. This review is carried out on a 5-year cycle.</p> <p>For further information see <a href="http://www.ycni.org/nsets/NSETS.html">http://www.ycni.org/nsets/NSETS.html</a></p> <p>Programme details are available at</p> <p><a href="https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bachelor-arts-honours-youth-work">https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bachelor-arts-honours-youth-work</a></p>
<b>Links to published internal reviews</b>	Sixth Set of Records
<b>Area/Unit and links to relevant publications</b>	<p>All DkIT academic programmes were reviewed by the relevant Programme Boards and reported in the Annual Programme Board Reports which were submitted to the Registrar's Office in autumn 2015. A review of the Annual Programme Boards reports was carried out by the Academic Quality Subcommittee of Academic Council.</p>
<b>Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval</b>	25
<b>Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Programme Review.</b>	1
<b>Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Review.</b>	1
<b>Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.</b>	0

<b>Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Service Unit Review.</b>	3
<b>Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Review of arrangements with a partner organisation.</b>	1
<b>Section</b>	Nothing to report for 2014/15
<b>Composition of Panels: % Internal</b>	20
<b>Composition of Panels: % National</b>	94
<b>Composition of Panels: % UK</b>	6
<b>Composition of Panels: % EU</b>	0
<b>Composition of Panels: % Student</b>	0
<b>Composition of Panels: % Other</b>	0
<b>Chair Profile: % Internal</b>	0
<b>Chair Profile: % Similar institution</b>	80
<b>Chair Profile: % Different institution</b>	20
<b>Chair Profile: % International</b>	0
<b>PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview</b>	Other Implementation Factors

**This institution can use this section to set out the ways in which data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.**

**Student Feedback:**

Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to the enhancement of the student experience and the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms place a significant emphasis on the voice of the student. The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experience in college and also as an input to curriculum design.

In the academic year 2013/2014 an institutional student feedback review was implemented to analyse current student feedback practices. This review resulted in a prioritisation and consolidation of the following student feedback mechanisms which were subsequently employed during 2014/15:

- 1st Semester Experience Survey
- Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) Survey
- QA Forms (QA1 and QA3)
- Student Services Survey

The data collected by these surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and continuously enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. The feedback is considered by programme boards in each Department and continuous improvement plans are then formulated. These action plans form a constituent part of annual programme board reports. The programme board reports are subsequently considered by the Academic Quality sub-committee of Academic Council.

Early in the 2014/15 academic year, an in-depth analysis of the DkIT data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) 2013 was carried out and presented to Academic Council. On the ISSE 2013/14 Student Engagement and Outcome Indices, DkIT scores were similar to elsewhere, particularly to 'all IoTs'. This was also true for General Learning Outcomes, although DkIT scores were relatively high for *Using computing and IT* and *Working effectively with others*. Group-work was identified as both very positive and very negative feature in our student feedback.

Some summary results are as follows:

- 4.8% of respondents felt DkIT provided the support needed to succeed academically but only 32.9% felt that there was support to help socialise.
- 13.8% accessed learning support services often while 58.8% never used them
- 36.7% would definitely go to DkIT again and 40.7% probably would
- 83.4% were satisfied or very satisfied with their programme of study

DkIT followed up with the following actions:

- Review of induction to include social supports and raise awareness of learning supports available.
- Increase in learning support provision for the academic year 2014/2015.
- Programme Boards consideration of student feedback resulting in improving the student experience locally.

In June 2015, the preliminary results of the 2014/15 ISSE survey were presented to Academic Council. The response rate had improved from 15.5% to 21.7% (607 students). Most of the feedback received was very positive, with respondents expressing satisfaction with their DkIT experience, particularly in relation to the standard of academic delivery and supportiveness of staff. Individual free text comments were sent to the relevant Schools for discussion by programme boards.

Other data analysis carried out by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) included:

- Student Survey on First Year Induction, October 2014
- Feedback on Student Ambassador training, September 2014
- Survey of Mature Students
- Survey of Students regarding Student Services

Results from these surveys were incorporated into the organisation of the student induction and orientation programme for 2015/16. In particular, the surveys revealed that less than 60% of students are availing of the DkIT support services and efforts are being made to improve student awareness of these supports.

Student progression data for 2013/14 was presented to Academic Council in June 2015. The overall progression rate was 81%, an increase from 77-78% in 2012/13. Some specific areas of concern were highlighted. It was agreed that the enhancement theme of 'Student Retention' would be adopted for the academic year 2015/16, in preparation for the next Institutional and programmatic reviews.



The institution may choose to highlight in this section information relating to factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period. These may be factors relating to national developments or initiatives, such as clusters/alliances/mergers, other external factors or intra-institutional factors.

#### **DCU/DkIT Strategic Alliance:**

The strategic positioning of research within DkIT continued to remain a priority in 2014/15 and work continued to progress DkIT's strategic alliance with Dublin City University and the launch of the DCU/DkIT Graduate School.

In December 2014 the Institute's Research Strategy 2014-2016 was presented to and approved by Academic Council, having been developed over the previous 12 months by the Academic Council Research Sub-committee. The strategy can be found at the following link:

<https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-themes/research-strategy-2014-2016>

A working group was established to monitor and report annually on progress against the key performance indicators in the Institute's Research Strategy.

The Research Office also launched a Postgraduate Research Scholarship programme to provide a source funding support for postgraduate students. In April 2015, the inaugural Research Leaders Seminar Series was launched whereby the Institute's leading researchers present an overview of their current research activity and how it is shaping and contributing to their respective research areas.

In June 2015 the Research Office launched the Research Career Framework. The purpose of this was to:

- Ensure DkIT is able to attract top quality researchers
- Ensure DkIT remains competitive in securing external research funding
- Implement its obligations under the European Union Charter for Researchers
- Support researchers through a structured career development programme which supports their professional development
- Support the principal investigators and the development of their research staff

Information regarding the framework can be found at the following link.

<https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-career-framework-dkit>

In May 2015 Academic Council approved the DCU-DkIT Postgraduate Regulations. This established the protocols and overarching quality assurance policies and procedures for the DCU-DKIT Graduate School. The formation of a new Academic Council subcommittee, the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) was also proposed. The regulations are available at the following link:

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

#### **MEND Cluster:**

Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dublin City University, Athlone Institute of Technology and Maynooth University (DkIT, DCU, AIT, and MU) form the Dublin-Leinster Pillar II cluster as envisaged by the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Skills. The partner institutions are strongly committed to the concept and practice of regional clustering, and the collaborative relationships that underpin the cluster pre-date the formal establishment of clusters by the HEA. These include the formation of a strong bilateral relationship between DCU and DkIT. The cluster has as its ultimate goal to *"develop a regional approach to access, transfer and progression."* Initiatives funded under the SIDF project were targeted towards this goal, which worked through enhanced collaboration both among cluster partners and between the cluster and Further Education partners and designated communication pathways to learners.

Progress in relation to the MEND (Mid Midlands, East and North Dublin) Cluster during 2014/15 resulted in the cluster partners collaborating on a series of activities supported through the Strategic Innovation and Development Fund. The main activities were:

1. **Coherence of provision:** the analytic and preparatory work required to enable a more coordinated provision, through mapping of existing provision, development of protocols for collaboration, and preparing for interoperable student records systems.
2. **Collaboration with Further Education:** a network of FE providers, a regional 'one stop shop' portal, a comprehensive mapping of progression paths, and foundation courses to assist transition.
3. **Enhanced Student Learning Supports:** enhanced supports for student learning and retention through increased resourcing of supports, and sharing of expertise among the support services. In this component, the partners have established a network of student support services in the 4 institutions, focussed on (i) writing support, (ii) maths support, (iii) learning skills, and (iv) programming support.

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.

### PART 3

#### Effectiveness and Impact

A commentary about the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures in the reporting period may be inserted here.

##### **External Examiners:**

External Examiners are approved by Academic Council with a term of office of three years, which may be extended by one year in exceptional circumstances. External Examiners report to the Registrar. Copies of external examiners reports are then circulated to the relevant Head of School, Head of Department and Programme Boards via the Registrar, for their consideration, action and feedback.

In September 2014, a review of External Examiners reports was carried out by the Registrar and discussed by Academic Council. The majority of reports were very positive, complimentary of the commitment of lecturing staff and endorsed the high standards achieved by DkIT students. Some minor concerns were raised regarding the lack of clarity of marking schemes. The Council requested the Centre for Learning and Teaching to organise both staff and External Examiner training in this regard. Training on assessment criteria was offered to academic staff during 2014/15 and the first round of External Examiner training, delivered collaboratively by CELT and the Registrar's Office commenced in May 2015.

An evaluation of the impact of QA policies and procedures through their implementation in the reporting period should be inserted here.

##### **Annual Programme Board Reports:**

An analysis of annual programme board reports for 2013/14 was carried out by Academic Quality Sub-Committee during 2014/15. This analysis revealed that students expressed overall satisfaction with programmes and were particularly positive regarding the professionalism and approachability of lecturing staff. Both staff and students were very positive about academic support services such as the Library, Careers Office, Placement Office and Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Staff acknowledged the important contribution of student representatives on programme boards.

Lecturers expressed a desire for some academic support in the design and assessment of group-work which was actioned via a Working Group of Academic Council.

This section should highlight an analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures, primarily through a thematic analysis of key recommendations, commendations and conditions for the reporting period.

The outcome of the above analysis demonstrated that the Institute's quality assurance was effective. The analysis was helpful in identifying and highlighting the requirement to review the following Policies and Procedures:

- Marking Criteria
- Group Work
- Technology Enhanced Learning

### PART 4

#### Quality Enhancement

**A description of improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period, identifying the reasons for the improvements (for example an evaluation of effectiveness and impact from the previous period or objectives set out in strategic compacts).**

## **Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching:**

### **Staff Training and Scholarship:**

At DkIT, the development of excellence in learning and teaching is led by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). An essential element in enhancing learning and teaching has been the establishment of a professional development pathway through the Institute's Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching. Activities of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching during 2014/15 included the following:

Another cohort of DkIT academic staff completed the MA in Learning and Teaching and graduated in 2015 - 11 Master of Arts and 2 Certificate graduates and 34 additional staff progressed on the programme including a new intake of 19 lecturers. Master classes offered included:

- Writing and using assessment criteria
- Writing for publication in learning and teaching
- Integrating ethical challenges into practitioner research
- Making space for writing in the first-year curriculum
- Writing in the curriculum

### **SIDF Projects:**

The SIDF-funded Regional Collaboration on Learning Supports was completed in 2014/15. The funding enabled collaboration between the learning support units in each of the partner institutions, including the development of shared resources and scholarly outputs. A number of sessions were offered on supporting academic writing including:

- Practical ideas for incorporating writing activities in subject teaching
- Supporting student essay writing

Additional English for Academic Purposes support was provided for international students, delivered by qualified EFL tutors.

The eLearning Unit ran a comprehensive programme of training in Technology Enhanced Learning and a total of 148 academic staff members attended these sessions. A staff survey revealed that 93% of respondents are using virtual learning environments such as Moodle.

**An analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated by the institution. This could also include reference to any national or international quality assurance developments in which the institution is engaged. The institution is encouraged to highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.**

## **National Forum for Learning and Teaching:**

In partnership with MEND Cluster partners, DkIT was successful in obtaining funding under the National Forum for Learning and Teaching 2014 Enhancement Fund. DkIT is a partner in 3 projects that have been successful in winning substantial funding, each of which involves collaboration with at least two MEND partners. The project details are as follows:

1. Supporting Transition: Enhancing Feedback in First Year Using Digital Technologies. Involving NUIM (Lead), DkIT, AIT and DCU. See <http://y1feedback.ie/>
2. Student Success Toolbox for Flexible Learners: Supporting Transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks. Involves DCU (Lead), DkIT, NUIM and Sligo IT. <http://studentsuccess.ie/>
3. Assessment for Learning Resources for First year Undergraduate Mathematics Modules. Involves NUIM (Lead), DkIT, AIT and DCU. <http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/assessment-for-learning-resources-for-first-year-undergraduate-mathematics-modules/>

In December 2015, three members of the academic staff who are part of the core delivery team for the MA in Learning and Teaching were awarded 'Teaching Expert' prizes by the National Forum of the Enhancement of Teaching. This team was one of seven who were selected for a special commendation, in their case for Facilitating Systemic Cultural Change. More information at: <http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/learning-impact-awards/teaching-expert-awards-2015/teaching-expert-team-awardees-2015/>

## Entrepreneurship and External Engagement:

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 with the Regional Development Centre and Lifelong Learning Centre both providing support to the business and general community.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) was identified in 2015 as a leading exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship in higher education by global economic advisory forum, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). A case study released by the OECD describes a strong culture of enterprise and innovation that permeates DkIT and examines its strategic approach to enterprise education as a best practice for developing entrepreneurial behaviours and traits amongst its students and staff. The Institute, through the activities of the Regional Development Centre, has adopted a bottom up and peer to peer approach to developing Campus Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial students using Student Enterprise Interns to encourage students to explore starting a business as a career option.

<http://www.rdc.ie/campus-entrepreneurship>

During 2014/15 the DkIT Regional Development Centre supported Entrepreneurship through the following initiatives:

1. Incubation Support Programme: 16 incubation companies resided in the RDC and Millmount Development Centre during this period in addition to 12 hot-desking companies from the New Frontiers Programme.
2. New Frontiers Programme: This is an Enterprise Ireland funded initiative to provide start-up and early-stage technology entrepreneurs with a suite of supports. The RDC supported 49 graduates/entrepreneurs during the period.
3. Student Enterprise Intern Programme: The intern is responsible for spearheading the promotion of an Enterprise Culture on campus.
4. Technology Transfer and Applied Research: A number of TT activities were completed during this period including collaborative research agreements, non-disclosure agreements and spin-out companies.
5. The VITAL Project: This involves the creation of new ventures by matching validated knowledge based ideas and technologies with experienced entrepreneurs and SMEs. A final showcase of the project was held in June 2015 in the Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross. <http://www.vitalforideas.com>
6. Honeycomb-Creative Works: This was a project in partnership with UU and Creative Skillsets which aimed at addressing the economic, educational, social and cultural needs of the creative industries sector. The project wrapped up with a Honeycomb Showcase Conference in April 2015 in DkIT.

Dundalk Institute of Technology is seeking to create a clear pathway for the community and voluntary sector in the North East to tap in to the resources at DkIT through an initiative launched in October 2014 called *Community Connect @ DkIT*. The purpose of this initiative was to provide an opportunity to inform the community about how they can get involved with DkIT and access the resources of the Institute (e.g. research capacity, lifelong learning centre, students and staff) to progress community based projects. The launch also included a Volunteer Fair to encourage staff and students to meet voluntary and community based organisations and work with them on research or volunteering activities.

The launch was also used as an opportunity to inform the Institute members and community that DkIT is also a participant in Campus Engage, a national initiative that brings together 20 higher education institutions along with HEA, IUA and IOTI. Campus Engage encourages connections between the community and the colleges to facilitate community-based research, community-based learning and volunteering.

Co-ordinated through a cross campus working group, DkIT held an Industry Open day on Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup> 2015. This provided an opportunity for local industry and businesses to work more closely with the institute as well as meet students and graduates to explore employment and placement opportunities. The event showcased student projects, placements, applied research projects, graduate internships and training provision with industry. School based events were organised which allowed academic staff to confer with industry representatives about programme needs and relevance and research project/placement opportunities. A total of 78 individuals representing over 50 companies attended the day and exhibited at the Industry Fair. The companies were from a diverse range of sectors to include SMEs and large multi-nationals. In addition 72 staff and 337 students attended the event. There was a general consensus from the working group that the event was a success and DkIT should facilitate an annual event with a similar focus.

## PART 5

### Objectives for the Coming Year

**A piece in relation to strategic objectives in the coming period and plans for quality assurance and enhancement.**

Plans for 2015/16 include:

- Ongoing revision of Policy and Procedures in relation to Group Work
- Further roll out of flexible delivery strategy as an element of widening learner access to DkIT
- Continued training for External Examiners
- Student Retention as a quality enhancement theme

**Programme validations** planned for 2015/16 are:

MSc in Computing (Medical Device Software)  
BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies (add-on)  
BSc (Hons) in Construction Project Management (add-on)  
BA (Hons) in Global Sales and Marketing  
BA (Hons) in Public Relations  
BBS (Hons) in Digital and International Business (add-on)  
BBS (Hons) in Business (Part-Time)  
BA in Digital Marketing, Communication and Public Relations  
BA Early Childhood Studies (Outreach Cork Chamber of Commerce)  
Higher Certificate in Property and Facilities Management  
Certificate in Psychosocial Interventions  
Computing Part-time programmes at levels 7 and 8 (Various)  
Certificate in Building Energy Management  
Certificate in Cultural Landscapes – The Boyne Valley  
Certificate in Employment Law  
Certificate in Lean Sigma (Outreach Manor Farm)

**Policies due for review in 2015/16:**

A review of the following:

Exit Awards Policy  
Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards  
Marks and Standards

**Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number**

**Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.**

The B.Sc. in Veterinary Nursing was reaccreditation by the Veterinary Council of Ireland in Autumn 2015.  
<http://www.vci.ie/Documents/Veterinary%20Nursing%20Qualifications.pdf>

**PART 6**

Preparation for Periodic Review

**A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.**

Institutional Review is due in 2018.

**A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review cycle.**

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

Quality Assurance (QA) remained a central and prioritised activity at Dundalk Institute of Technology during the period September 2014 to August 2015. The ownership of QA continued to be relevant to all staff members within the Institute and there is a keen willingness to embrace continuous improvement and enhancement within the Institute.

### **Student Retention**

Student retention has been adopted as an enhance theme in advance of Institutional Review in 2018. In order to ensure support for the initiative a Working Group of Academic Council, chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar and consisting of academic members from each of the four Schools at DkIT and the Head of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, has been established.

Progression figures are monitored at programme and Institute level. In 2012/2013 progression rates for DkIT across Levels 6, 7 and 8 stood at 72%, 76% and 87% respectively and were higher than the sectoral averages for Level 7 and 8 (74% for Level 6; 72% for Level 7 and 83% for Level 8) (A Study of Progression in

Irish Higher Education 2012/13 - 2013/14). For Levels 7 and 8 these figures were higher than the sectoral average with the exception of Level 6. In 2013/2014 progression rates for DkIT across Levels 6, 7 and 8 stood at 63%, 77% and 86% for all students. It might be noted in this context that in 2015/2016 DkIT offered only 4 programmes at Level 6. For 2014/2015 progression rates at DkIT for all students across Levels 6, 7 and 8 stood at 70%, 74% and 85% respectively. The first year progression rates for 2014/2015 were 64%, 68% and 84% respectively. The overall progression rate for the Institute in 2014/2015 was 79% with 1st year progression rate of 74%. Sectoral averages for 2014/2015 have not yet been published.

### **Access and Delivery Modes**

DkIT has also benchmarked itself against the norms in the Institutes of Technology sector for the provision of accredited programmes in the part time mode of delivery. Having identified a shortfall in this mode, all four Schools at DkIT have adopted a plan to develop programmes for delivery in part time mode with many programmes on offer to learners for commencement in September 2016. In addition to the use of blended learning within programmes, additional access to accredited programmes will continue to widen access to education both in the region and beyond.

**Submission**

Final Submission