



# The Garda College

## Programme Review Process for the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Policing



**UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK**

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

**Academic Accrediting Body**

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## **1 Introduction and context**

This document outlines the programme review process for the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Applied Policing. As a linked provider of the University of Limerick (UL) for the aforementioned taught programme, the Garda College is obliged under the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) to submit its quality assurance procedures for formal approval to UL. The adoption of these procedures will also address some of the requirements set out in the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG 2015\)](#). In particular, in accordance with ESG 1.9 and Core Statutory QA Guideline 3.3, there is a requirement to monitor programmes on an ongoing as well as periodic basis.

## **2 Overview of the Garda College**

The Garda College is the police training, development and learning centre within the Irish state. The Garda Training Centre opened in 1964 in the historic McCann military barracks in Templemore, Co Tipperary. In 1989, the Garda Training Centre became the Garda Síochána College. In 1992, the Garda College was designated an institute of higher education by the National Council of Education Awards. The Garda College provides a wide range of training courses for trainee Gardaí and Garda staff. Some accredited courses are delivered in cooperation with other institutions. The motto of the college is “*in scientia securitas*” – “in knowledge, safety”.

The Garda College is divided into three sections:

1. Foundation Training
2. Leadership, Management and Professional Development
3. Crime, Specialist and Operational Skills

## **3 Overview of the BA in Applied Policing**

In February 2008, the Garda Commissioner Fachtna Murphy established An Garda Síochána Training and Development Review Group (“the Murphy Review”) to review all education, training and development for Garda and civilian staff in An Garda Síochána and to make recommendations to fully equip the organisation to deliver an effective and professional policing service in the twenty-first century. The review group conducted a thorough analysis of education and training structures, planning, design, development and administration. The group also conducted an analysis of international best practice in police education and other industry practice in Ireland.

The review report made a series of recommendations for education, training and development, which have been adopted as the strategy for learning in the organisation. One of the report’s key recommendations was to design a trainee and probationer programme that would act as a bedrock for organisational learning and development. The BA in Applied Policing was designed on foot of that recommendation. It was launched in 2014 to replace the BA in Policing Studies, which had been on offer from 1992 to 2009.

Accredited by UL, the BA in Applied Policing is delivered by the Garda College's Foundation Training section through a hybrid model of problem-based learning (PBL) and work-based learning (WBL). The programme was designed to encourage a high level of critical thinking in Garda trainees and probationers with a view to developing professional Gardaí capable of reflective and responsive practice in the operational policing field. The scaffolding learning approach reduces cognitive load and keeps novice learners on track while at the same time allowing for self-directed learning. Garda trainees and probationers are encouraged to take an active role in learning the practical application of policing.

To date, over 2,812 Garda trainees have enrolled in the BA in Applied Policing, 487 of whom have been conferred with the award.

#### **4 Scope and objectives of the programme review**

This programme review applies only to the BA in Applied Policing and does not extend to other programmes delivered in the Garda College, to attached facilities or to the Garda College as a whole.

The objectives of the programme review are to:

- Facilitate a critical self-assessment of the programme by staff involved in the delivery of all phases of the programme
- Provide an opportunity to review the content and concept, relevance and applicability, curriculum design and delivery of the programme in the light of feedback obtained from Garda trainees and probationers, instructors, CPD staff, external examiners and other stakeholders
- Ensure that academic standards are maintained in the delivery of the programme
- Provide assurance to all stakeholders, including the designated awarding body (University of Limerick), in relation to the quality of the programme in the context of national statutory requirements and international norms
- Promote a culture of programme enhancement

#### **5 Benefits**

The following benefits accrue from reviewing the programme periodically:

- The programme's curriculum, learning and teaching are assessed to evaluate whether or not the Garda trainees and probationers are being given a range of critical knowledge, skills and understanding in order to prepare them for the workplace and/or opportunities in further study.
- There is an opportunity to reflect on the quality of the learning experience of the trainees and probationers.
- The Garda College's commitment to the cyclical quality review assurance of programmes of education and training is being fulfilled.
- Alignment with national and international expectations as outlined in the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012, ESG 2015](#) and QQI's [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) is demonstrated.

## **6 Ethos**

The ethos of the programme review process is that participants proactively engage in a mutually supportive and constructive spirit and that the process be undertaken in a transparent, inclusive, independent, evidence-based and cost-effective manner. The process provides scope for recognising achievement and best practice as well as identifying opportunities for quality enhancement.

## **7 Process development, authorisation and governance**

The Garda College (GC) cyclical quality review schedule was approved by UL at the GC/UL Annual Dialogue Meeting on 5 March 2018. This process document was developed collaboratively by the Garda College and UL. It was approved by the Garda College Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development on 30 January 2019 and by the University of Limerick Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement on 1 March 2019.

The Garda College Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the programme review process (summarised in Figure 1 below). As the designated awarding body, UL owns and has overall responsibility for the governance of the process. The roles and responsibilities of the various offices and officers, both within the Garda College and the University, in relation to the process are indicated, as appropriate, throughout this document and are summarised in Figure 2 below.

## **8 Process modifications**

Minor proposed modifications to this review progress document can be approved by the chairperson of the Programme Quality Assurance Board (PQAB). Minor modifications are those that would not have a significant material impact upon the scope, timescale or operationalisation of the review. Requests for major modifications must be submitted to the University of Limerick Director of Quality and approved by its Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement (VPAASE).

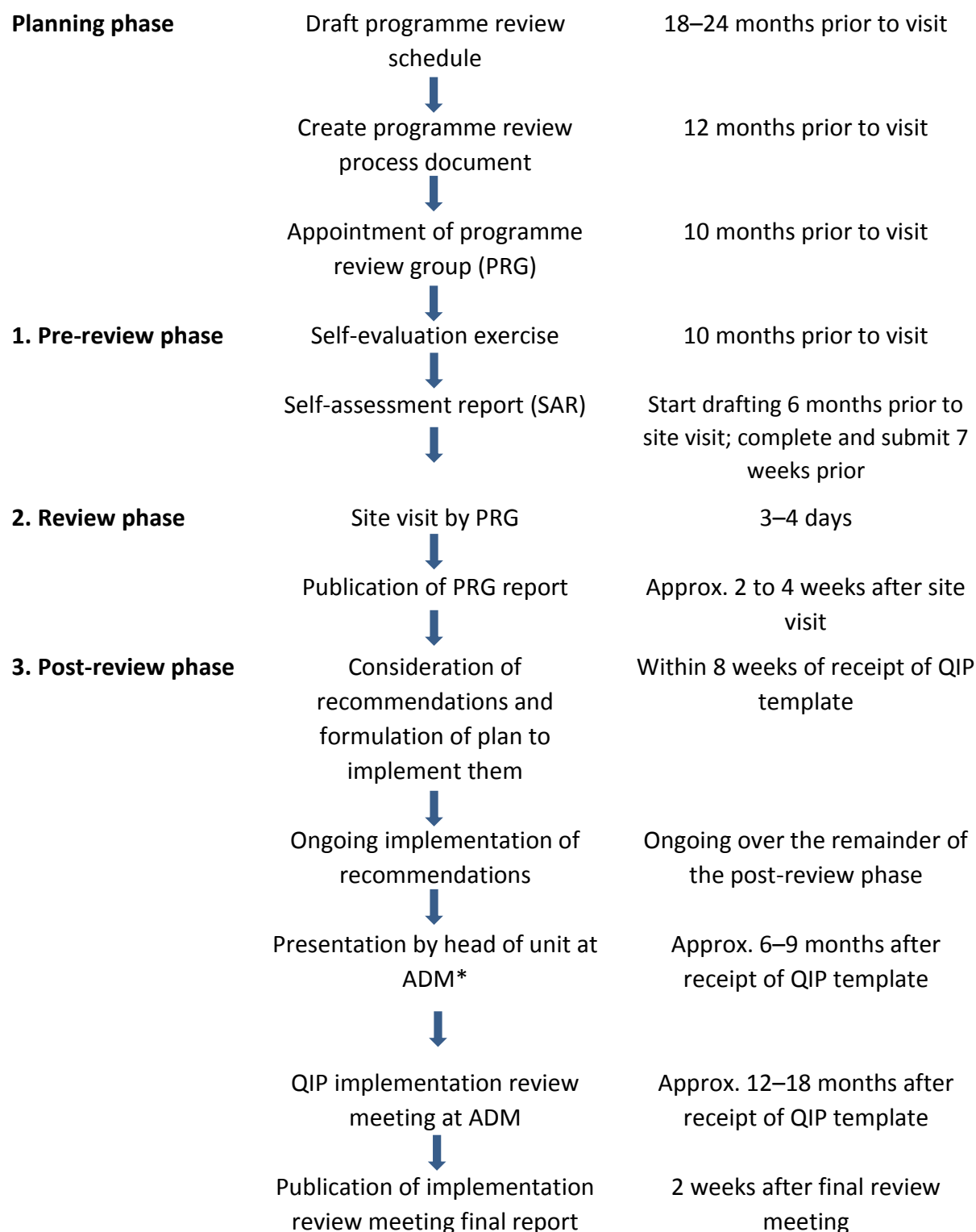
## **9 This document**

The purpose of this document is to outline the Garda College programme review process as it applies to the BA in Applied Policing. Each phase of the process is set out in its own section, and additional information is included in the appendices.

## **10 Programme review process and procedure**

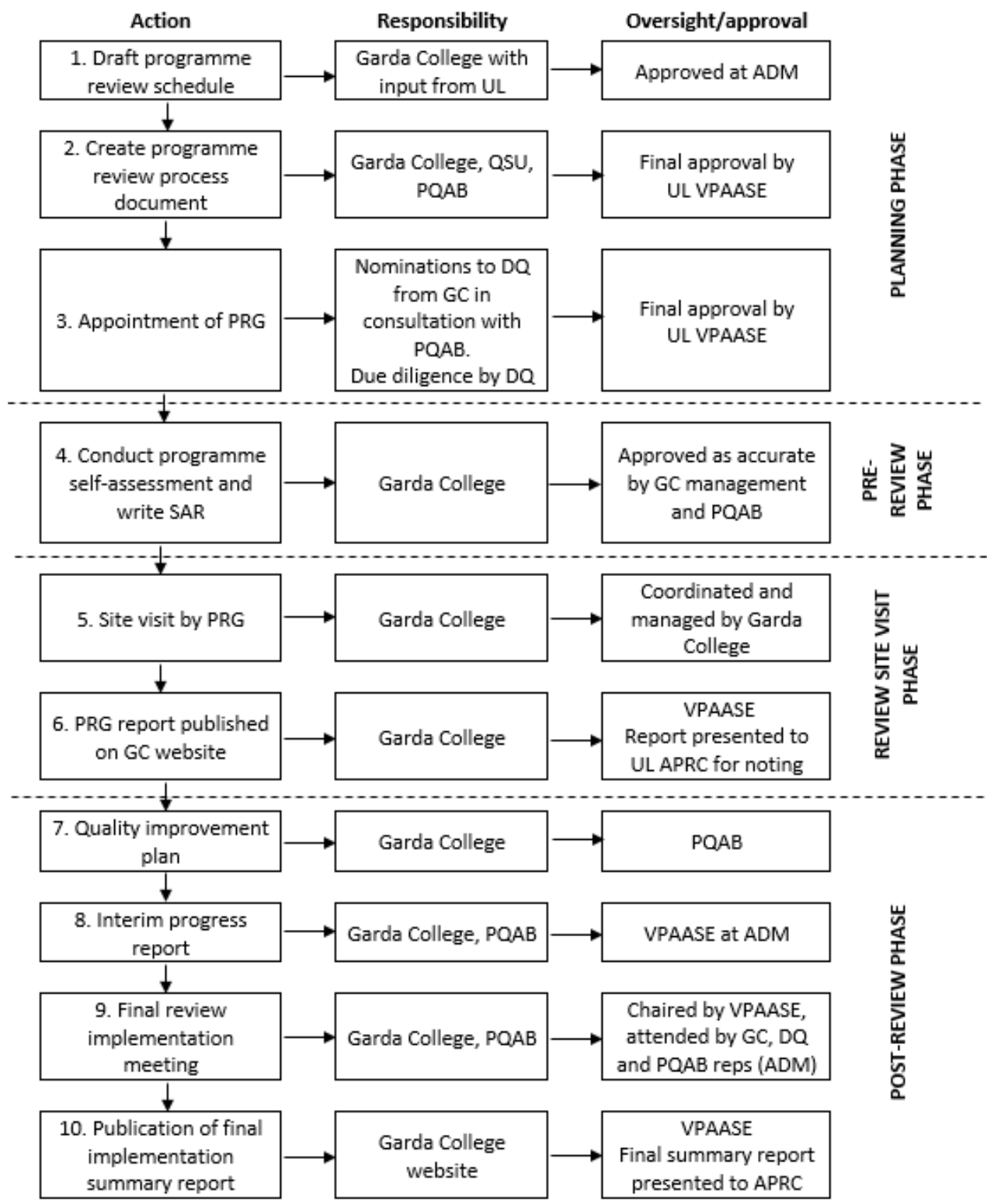
The programme review process involves three key phases preceded by a planning phase. Figure 1 outlines the key times for each phase. Figure 2 details the review flow diagram.

**Figure 1: Timelines for the programme review process**



\*ADM: Garda College/UL Annual Dialogue Meeting, chaired by the UL VPAASE and attended by key UL and Garda College personnel. Should the desired timing of this meeting not coincide with the default ADM schedule, a special ADM meeting may be convened.

**Figure 2: Programme review process flow diagram**



**Key:**

ADM	Annual Dialogue Meeting	PRG	Programme review group
APRC	Academic Programme Review Committee	QSU	Quality Support Unit
DQ	Director of Quality	SAR	Self-assessment report
GC	Garda College	UL	University of Limerick
PQAB	Programme Quality Assurance Board	VPAASE	Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement

## **11 Planning phase**

There are three key stages in the planning phase of the programme review process: (i) drafting the review schedule; (ii) creating programme review process documentation; and (iii) appointing the programme review group.

### **11.1 Draft review schedule**

To fulfil the requirement for a cyclical schedule of internal quality reviews, the Garda College compiles a review schedule every five years. The schedule is formally presented for approval to UL. The schedule is approved as part of the GC/UL ADM, and the UL VPAASE signs off on it.

### **11.2 Create programme review process documentation**

Tailored programme review process documentation (i.e. this document in the case of the review of the BA in Applied Policing) is prepared for each programme review. Process documentation is prepared by the Garda College with input from the UL Quality Support Unit and the PQAB. The finalised process document is formally approved by the UL VPAASE.

### **11.3 Appointment of programme review group**

The programme review group (PRG) is appointed approximately 10 months before the site visit. The PRG comprises a chair, two international peers, one national peer and a Garda trainee/probationer representative. Appendix 1 provides full details on reviewer profiles.

In conjunction with the PQAB, the Garda College Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development nominates potential reviewers. The UL Director of Quality undertakes a due diligence exercise in terms of nominee calibre, impartiality and independence before presenting final nominations to the VPAASE for consideration and approval. Before making a final decision, the VPAASE may request additional nominees to be submitted by the Garda College, PQAB or Director of Quality. The PRG nomination form can be seen in Appendix 2.

Once appointed and prior to the site visit, any required communication between the Garda College and members of the PRG should be facilitated by the Garda College QA Unit.

## **12 Pre-review phase**

### **12.1 Self-evaluation**

Coordinated and driven by the Garda College Foundation Training section, the self-evaluation exercise involves a critical self-evaluation of the BA in Applied Policing and takes into account the findings emanating from focus groups, trainee and probationer evaluation surveys and data analysis. The aim of the review is to engage all staff involved in the delivery of the programme in identifying the programme's strengths and weaknesses and in making suggestions on how to improve and enhance the quality of the programme. Trainee and probationer surveys and focus groups should form a key element of the self-evaluation



exercise. The information and data are then written up in a self-assessment report by the Foundation Training section.

## **12.2 Self-assessment report**

### 12.3.1 Issues to report upon

Writing the self-assessment report (SAR) provides the Foundation Training section with an opportunity to reflect upon:

- The programme's staffing, management and oversight
- The programme's structure, academic standards, learning outcomes, alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications ([NFQ](#)) and continuing relevance to the needs of all stakeholders
- The extent to which the learning outcomes are met
- The quality of the learning experience of the Garda trainees and probationers
- How feedback on the programme is systematically gathered from stakeholders and how the programme is continually enhanced

### 12.3.2 Structure

The SAR should be 20 to 30 pages in length (approx. 9,000 to 13,000 words) and supported by appendices. Presented as standalone files rather than being included at the end of the SAR, the appendices typically contain the factual data upon which the report is based, and each appendix should be comprehensive and self-explanatory.

These are the default chapter headings:

- Chapter 1: Programme structure, governance and management
- Chapter 2: Programme curriculum
- Chapter 3: Programme delivery, assessment and feedback
- Chapter 4: Learner engagement, support and experience
- Chapter 5: Staff support and experience

### 12.2.3 Content

Each section of the SAR should be concise and clear to the reader. The SAR should accurately describe the state of development of the programme in relation to each topic, identify any gaps or opportunities for enhancement and specify planned quality improvement actions for completing and resolving any outstanding issues. It is important to identify programme strengths as well as areas or issues targeted for further enhancement. The details of feedback surveys, reports of focus groups and other evaluation measures, including results and actions arising, should be briefly described in the relevant section and included in full in the appendices. By way of summary, the specified planned action items should be presented in a bulleted list at the end of each chapter.

The layout, formatting and writing style of the document should be consistent. Appendix 3 provides more detail on the suggested structure and content of the SAR.

#### 12.2.4 Consensus

To the extent that it is possible to do so, the opinions/conclusions expressed in the SAR should reflect the consensus views of the programme delivery team as a whole. The SAR must be available to all members of the Foundation Training section (including CPD staff) for comment during the final drafting stages. The final SAR will be approved as a full and accurate overview of the state of the programme internally by the Garda College in conjunction with the PQAB (see Figure 2).

#### 12.2.5 Review and distribution

The SAR and its appendices are reviewed by the PRG's chairperson in advance of the site visit and will form the basis of the PRG's assessment of the programme. All members of the Foundation Training section, including the CPD staff involved in the delivery of the programme, must have access to the final report and appendices.

Five weeks prior to the onsite visit, the Garda College QA Unit will send the SAR and appendices to each member of the PRG. If the SAR makes negative reference to the services (or lack thereof) provided by a third party, the Garda College must make the relevant section of the SAR available to the third party and invite them to the appropriate review session during the onsite visit.

#### 12.2.6 Confidentiality

The SAR is confidential to the Foundation Training section, including CPD staff. The report will not be seen by persons other than staff members of the aforementioned section, the PRG, the Garda College QA Unit, the Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development and relevant staff at UL without prior consent from the PQAB chairperson and the Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development.

### **13 Review site visit phase**

The review site visit phase refers to the week during which the PRG visits the Garda College (the site visit) to meet with staff and stakeholders of the BA in Applied Policing.

The visit is intended to give the PRG the opportunity to review the programme, investigate issues identified in the SAR and reassure themselves that the SAR is a comprehensive and accurate reflection of the programme. The visit enables the PRG to meet and enter into dialogue with the programme staff, Garda trainees and probationers and other stakeholders, tour relevant Garda College facilities and meet members of senior management. This, in turn, allows the PRG to record its findings in an evidence-based PRG report, at the heart of which are both commendations and recommendations made in respect of the programme.

#### **13.1 Preparatory steps**

Five weeks prior to the visit, the SAR and appendices are sent by the Garda College QA Unit to the members of the PRG. The PRG chairperson asks each member of the PRG to study the entire SAR but to take special interest in specific assigned chapters or sections with a view to leading the questioning and reporting on those sections during the visit. Individual PRG

members will be asked to prepare a one-page brief on each of their assigned sections under the following headings:

- Positive and praiseworthy aspects
- Apparent weaknesses and/or areas of apparent challenges
- Topics that need to be explored during discussions
- Additional data required in advance of the site visit
- Opportunities identified in the SAR for further enhancement

These brief overviews are circulated by the Garda College QA Unit to all members of the PRG before the visit and form the basis of the initial questioning and discussions during the visit. It may be the case that additional material/information is required by the PRG; if so, this must be sent to them prior to the site visit.

### **13.2 Visit schedule**

Details of the visit schedule are arranged by the Garda College, with input from the PQAB, in advance of the visit. A sample site visit schedule is given in Appendix 4.

The visit to the Garda College will most likely commence at 19h00 on a Monday evening and conclude on the following Thursday at approximately 16h00. A briefing meeting will be held between the PRG and the Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development on the Monday evening, after which members of the PRG convene in private session to become acquainted with each other, share their first impressions of the programme and seek clarifications, if necessary, from the review chairperson. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the PRG meets members of senior management and programme staff, Garda trainees and probationers and stakeholders.

Beginning on Wednesday afternoon and concluding on Wednesday evening, members of the PRG draft those sections of the programme review report for which they are taking the lead. Thursday morning and early afternoon is spent sharing the drafts and finalising the report while working as a team. The finalised report is read back to the programme team and other invited stakeholders at approximately 15h00.

### **13.3 PRG report**

The PRG report follows a standard report template (see Appendix 5). All members of the PRG have collective responsibility for the contents of the report. The main body of the report lists the PRG's commendations and recommendations. Recommendations are divided into two categories, level 1 and level 2. Level 1 recommendations are those that the PRG believes to be particularly significant in enhancing the overall programme.

### **13.4 Report feedback**

It is key to the success of the review that the findings of the PRG be made available promptly to all programme staff. This is achieved in two ways:

1. Prior to departure on the Thursday, the PRG chairperson reads back sections 3 and 4 of the report to the programme team and other invited stakeholders. No paper copy of the report is made available at this stage.
2. Immediately after the visit, the PRG chairperson formally approves the report. The report is then made available to the Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training strictly to check for factual errors.

### **13.5 Finalisation and publication of the PRG report**

Garda College senior management will (i) check the report for institutional-level factual errors, (ii) verify that the recommendations fall within the scope and purpose of the programme review process and (iii) approve the publication of the report on the Garda College and UL websites. Should issues arise as a result of the verification process, the Garda College QA Unit brings these to the attention of the PRG chair, who then works with the PRG to respond or amend the report appropriately. Should the report contain passages that have implications for national security or the state's interest in the proper investigation of crime, such passages may be redacted prior to publication. In such circumstances, the UL VPAASE must have sight of the unredacted report and be given the opportunity to discuss any programme quality issues, in confidence, with the Garda College Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development. The final report is published on the Garda College and UL websites. The published report is presented to the UL Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) for noting.

## **14 Post-review phase**

The post-review phase of the programme review process comprises the following stages:

1. Consideration of recommendations and formulation of implementation plan (QIP template)
2. Ongoing implementation of recommendations
3. Interim progress report
4. Final implementation review meeting

### **14.1 The QIP template**

The PRG recommendations and progress with their implementation are recorded in a quality improvement plan (QIP) template (Appendix 6). Once the PRG report has been formally approved, the Garda College QA Unit copies the recommendations from the report into sections 1 and 2 of the QIP template. Once the PRG report has been published, the QA

Unit forwards the template to the Foundation Training section for consideration and follow up.

The Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training is responsible for implementing the PRG recommendations, and the QIP template is designed to facilitate this effectively. The template allocates one page to each recommendation and provides space to record:

- The Garda College's response to the recommendation
- Specific actions to be taken by the college to address the recommendation
- The state of resolution of the recommendation and outstanding actions that need to be taken to fully implement the recommendation

#### **14.2 Consideration of recommendations and formulation of implementation plan**

Within six weeks of receiving the QIP template, the Foundation Training section meets to formally consider and respond to each recommendation. The Superintendent in charge of the section records the response by completing section 3 of the QIP for each recommendation. At that meeting or as a follow-up action, the Foundation Training section develops specific implementation plans and records them in section 4 of the QIP for each recommendation. Section 4 is also used to record who is responsible for ensuring the planned actions are carried out and by when.

#### **14.3 Ongoing implementation of recommendations**

Over the next few months, work progresses to implement the recommendations. The Garda College liaises with the PQAB, whose members must be satisfied that the implementation of the QIP is proceeding satisfactorily. Approximately four to five months after receiving the QIP template, the Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training carries out a brief, interim self-assessment of progress made in relation to the implementation of the level 1 recommendations and records the assessment in sections 5 and 6 of the QIP for each recommendation.

#### **14.4 Interim progress report**

Approximately six months after receiving the QIP template, the Garda College submits the partially complete QIP to the UL Director of Quality. The Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training, who is responsible for project managing the implementation of the QIP, is invited to deliver a short presentation at the next ADM. While he/she may wish to provide an initial overview commentary on the PRG report, the presentation will focus on the level 1 recommendations only, the response to those recommendations, specific implementation progress made to date and planned actions, as appropriate. The presentation is then followed by a question-and-answer session. Via this mechanism, the UL VPAASE must be satisfied that the implementation of the QIP is progressing satisfactorily. Should the desired timing of this meeting not coincide with the default ADM schedule, a special ADM meeting may be convened. The VPAASE can invite to the meeting additional individuals, as appropriate, to optimally facilitate consideration of progress.

#### **14.5 QIP final implementation review meeting**

Following the interim progress report, the Garda College continues to implement the planned QIP recommendations. Approximately 12 to 18 months after receiving the QIP template, the Garda College organises a QIP implementation review meeting (as part of the ADM) between the Garda College, UL Director of Quality, PQAB chairperson and VPAASE (meeting chair). To prepare for this meeting, the Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training summarises in section 7 of the QIP progress to date on each recommendation and specifies outstanding matters or actions required. The Garda College returns the QIP to UL at least two weeks before the implementation review meeting. The status of resolution of each recommendation is considered at the meeting, and any further actions required are identified and recorded. The exact follow-up and reporting process relating to these further actions is at the discretion of the VPAASE. The VPAASE (or nominee) presents the QIP and a summary of the implementation review meeting outcomes to the UL APRC and to any other UL committees, offices or officers as deemed by her to be appropriate to the circumstances.

A final QIP implementation summary report is prepared by the Garda College (Appendix 7) and is published on the Garda College and UL websites.

The timelines and responsibilities applicable to the Garda College in relation to the programme review process are outlined in Appendix 8.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Programme review group profiles

The programme review group (PRG) usually comprises five persons. The profile of the membership is as follows:

- **Chairperson:** The chairperson will be external to the Garda College and to UL and will be familiar with quality assurance processes in a higher education context. The chairperson does not need to be familiar with the discipline of the reviewed programme.
- **Two international peers:** Peers will possess the requisite knowledge and experience that renders them competent to evaluate the core activities of the programme under review. Each peer will typically have a significant and relevant international reputation and will have worked in a leading international police training college, university or other appropriate organisation.
- **One national peer:** This person will typically be a recently retired senior Garda officer or senior affiliate to An Garda Síochána with a proven track record of engaging with applied policing matters in Ireland.
- **One Garda trainee/probationer representative:** This person is chosen to provide a learner's perspective and is selected on the basis of their experience of the programme. The person will be either a current Garda trainee/probationer or a recent graduate of the BA in Applied Policing.

In addition to the above positions, the QA Unit of the Garda College will appoint a recording secretary to the group. The recording secretary, who is independent of An Garda Síochána, will generate summary notes during the programme review site visit meetings to serve as a memory aide to the group during its deliberations. The notes are confidential to the PRG and are not retained beyond the site visit. The recording secretary also helps to collate and finalise the PRG report.

#### *PRG roles and responsibilities*

All members of the PRG will commit to reading the SAR and supporting documentation and providing the requested preliminary feedback prior to the site visit and to attending the site visit in full. Post-visit obligations include responding in a timely manner to any follow-up communications.

The following sections outline the specific roles and responsibilities of (i) the chairperson, (ii) PRG members other than the chairperson and (iii) the recording secretary.

#### *Specific role of chair*

The primary roles of the chairperson are:

- To project-manage the PRG site visit meetings and reporting process, ensuring all activities occur in a timely manner and in accordance with the process guidelines and ethos

- To ensure that the PRG review and reporting process is conducted in accordance with the review process document (this document) and that the process is independent, impartial and evidence-based
- To act as a liaison person between the PRG and the Garda College or other stakeholders

On a practical level, the chairperson will typically carry out the following tasks:

- Approximately 10 weeks before the review, read the SAR and offer feedback to the Garda College.
- Assign to each individual PRG member appropriate section(s) of the SAR for which the member will act as topic coordinator during the site visit.
- Prior to the site visit, outline roles and responsibilities to each member of the PRG.
- Give a verbal briefing to the PRG members at the opening meeting on Monday evening.
- Coordinate the site visit: ensure that all meetings are conducted according to the schedule.
- Encourage reviewers to draft their commendations and recommendations after each session.
- Write the introductory section of the PRG report.
- Facilitate the completion on Thursday morning of commendations and recommendations for the PRG report.
- At the final meeting with the unit on Thursday afternoon, read out in its entirety the PRG report or assign sections of the report to members of the PRG to read out.
- In the days following the visit, read and approve the PRG report after it has been finalised by the recording secretary.
- In the days following the visit, communicate any suggested changes in the report to the PRG (if necessary).

In addition, the chair may be requested by the Garda College QA Unit to evaluate and lead on one assigned SAR chapter or topic.

#### *Role of PRG members other than the chair*

Each member of the PRG other than the chair will:

- Prepare a one-page, pre-visit report using the template provided for each assigned topic.
- Within the required timeframe, email the pre-visit report to the chairperson, copying the Garda College QA Unit.
- Act as topic coordinator for the specific sections of the SAR that have been allocated by the chair. Being the coordinator of a topic involves:
  - Leading the questioning for that topic during the site visit
  - Consulting with other members of the PRG to gather opinions and ideas
  - Preparing first-draft commendations and recommendations relating to that topic
- Submit completed commendations and recommendations to the recording secretary on Wednesday afternoon/evening, as appropriate.
- Participate in the discussions on Thursday morning when the report is being finalised



#### Role of the recording secretary

- The recording secretary generates summary notes during the quality review site visit meetings to serve as a memory aide to the group during its deliberations. The notes are confidential to the PRG and are not retained beyond the site visit.
- The recording secretary helps to collate and finalise the PRG report.

## Appendix 2: PRG nomination form

### Membership of a Programme Review Group (PRG) Nomination Form

**Programme title:**

**Review date (site visit):**

**Date issued:**

**Please return to the Garda College QA Unit by:**

#### **Purpose of this form**

To allow the Garda College, in consultation with the Programme Quality Assurance Board (PQAB), to nominate potential programme review group members to UL for selection and approval.

#### Notes:

1. The Garda College may wish to liaise with the UL Director of Quality in the context of nominating a chairperson.
2. The Garda College is free to nominate more than one candidate for each PRG position.

#### **Chair:**

1	Name and affiliation:
2	Email address:

#### **International Peer 1 nominee:**

1	Name and affiliation:
2	Email address:
3	Telephone number:
4	Briefly describe why you think this person is suitable to fulfil the indicated role:
5	Please identify any current or prior linkages or relationships between this nominee and individual members (current or past) of the Garda College:

**International Peer 2 nominee:**

1	Name and affiliation:
2	Email address:
3	Telephone number:
4	Briefly describe why you think this person is suitable to fulfil the indicated role:
5	Please identify any current or prior linkages or relationships between this nominee and individual members (current or past) of the Garda College:

**National Peer nominee:**

1	Name and affiliation:
2	Email address:
3	Telephone number:
4	Briefly describe why you think this person is suitable to fulfil the indicated role:
5	Please identify any current or prior linkages or relationships between this nominee and individual members (current or past) of the Garda College:

**Garda Trainee/Probationer nominee:**

1	Name and affiliation:
2	Email address:
3	Telephone number:
4	Briefly describe why you think this person is suitable to fulfil the indicated role:
5	Please identify any current or prior linkages or relationships between this nominee and individual members (current or past) of the Garda College:

## **Appendix 3: Self-assessment report structure**

### **1 Overview**

The self-assessment report (SAR) should be approximately 20 to 30 pages in length (approx. 9,000 to 13,000 words) and supported by appendices containing the documentation upon which the evidence is based.

### **2 Structure**

Default chapter headings are suggested in section 4 below. However, the final structure of the SAR will be determined by the Garda College in consultation with the PQAB.

### **3 General content and approach**

The content of the SAR should be clear and cohesive. The narrative should be succinct but comprehensive. Links to websites can be embedded in the text, and supporting data should be presented in appendices. It would be appropriate to include in appendices items such as programme academic regulations, detailed programme curricular information (e.g. a programme handbook with programme learning outcomes, module descriptors and learning outcomes for each module), external examiner reports and Garda trainee and probationer survey reports. The primary audience for the SAR is the external PRG, and the report should be written with this in mind.

In addition:

- The SAR content must take due account of the scope of the review.
- The narrative should be data/evidence-based and analytical. It should provide an appropriate balance of information, evaluation and discussion of the information and should specify conclusions drawn.
- The self-assessment of the quality of the programme must place a clear and prominent focus on the programme's overall fitness for purpose.
- The report should provide evidence of the views of Garda trainees/probationers and stakeholders.

To enable the PRG to prepare well for the site visit and ultimately produce a report that is of maximum benefit to the Garda College, it is essential that the SAR be realistic, open and honest in relation to the programme's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges and proposed improvements. The review ethos emphasises the mutually supportive and constructive spirit underpinning interaction between the Foundation Training section, UL, the reviewers and the QA Unit.

The layout, formatting and writing style of the document should be consistent and professional.

### **4 Sections of SAR**

The Foundation Training section is encouraged to take ownership of the SAR and its structure, and the report's exact contents will likely evolve over the writing process. It is

appropriate that the writers of the SAR take due cognisance of the inclusions listed below. These are grouped within the default chapter headings provided. While chapter content is not restricted to these topics/areas, the writers must at least consider and address them. The SAR writing team may wish to alter the default chapter titles/structure to most effectively 'tell its story'. The length of chapters may vary.

The default chapter titles are as follows:

- Chapter 1: Programme structure, governance and management
- Chapter 2: Programme curriculum
- Chapter 3: Programme delivery, assessment and feedback
- Chapter 4: Learner engagement, support and experience
- Chapter 5: Staff support and experience

#### **4.1 Chapter 1: Programme structure, governance and management**

- Brief introductory overview of the Garda College, its mission and educational organisational structures (for context)
- Overview of the BA in Applied Policing, including:
  - Programme structure overview (phases 1, 2 and 3)
  - Programme staffing, management and governance structures within the Garda College
  - The linked provider relationship with UL (the designated awarding body); the specific roles and responsibility of UL in relation to the programme; and broader UL/Garda College interactions
  - Programme strengths and any perceived weaknesses and challenges, including perceived or potential risks to the programme and how these are managed
  - An overview consideration of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the arrangements described above
- Programme statistics: describe and evaluate/comment, as appropriate, on:
  - Programme intake schedules and class sizes
  - Progression statistics by phase
  - Programme retention statistics
  - Examination results by intake
- Overall self-evaluation of the functional excellence (fitness for purpose) of the programme
- Describe how the programme is benchmarked against international practice (e.g. how do you inform yourselves of relevant international best practice and trends as well as practice/performance in other police foundation training institutions?)
- Indication of any key areas in which the Foundation Training section would find reviewer input to be especially useful
- Please provide any further information you believe to be relevant to this chapter. You may present this information under headings/sub-headings of your choice. Please present the additional material in an analytical rather than a descriptive manner.

#### **4.2 Chapter 2 Programme curriculum**

- Describe the programme curriculum in detail, including reference to programme aims and learning outcomes. Include the programme specification and module outlines as appendices.
- Constructive curriculum alignment; i.e. aligning the intended learning objective, the learning outcomes and how these are assessed.
- Describe how the curriculum is periodically reviewed and assessed and how curricular changes are proposed, considered and introduced.
- Describe any recent changes to the curriculum (over the last two or three years); how the changes were identified, considered and implemented; and the impact of the changes on the programme.
- Evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current curriculum.
- Please provide any further information you believe to be relevant to this chapter. You may present this information under headings/sub-headings of your choice. Please present the additional material in an analytical rather than a descriptive manner.

#### **4.3 Chapter 3: Programme delivery, assessment and feedback**

- Describe and evaluate the extent to which the delivery of each phase of the programme is effective.
- Describe and evaluate the assessment methods (formative and summative) applied to the various programme components.
- Describe how feedback on assessments is provided to the Garda trainees and probationers.
- Describe and evaluate the extent to which the quality of delivery is uniformly maintained and monitored while Garda probationers are on placements outside of the Garda College.
- Describe and evaluate how the growth in the number of Garda trainees and probationers on the programme has affected programme delivery and assessment.
- Describe any programme delivery (including assessment) issues that have arisen over the past three years and how these issues were addressed. Evaluate the extent to which the issues were dealt with effectively.
- Please provide any further information you believe to be relevant to this chapter. You may present this information under headings/sub-headings of your choice. Please present the additional material in an analytical rather than a descriptive manner.

#### **4.4 Chapter 4: Learner engagement, support and experience**

- Describe and evaluate the programme's entry requirements, including any specific programme prerequisites.

- Describe and evaluate the programme information that is published on the Garda College website or communicated by other means to prospective and current Garda trainees and probationers.
- Describe and evaluate the Garda trainee induction processes.
- Describe and evaluate the supports (e.g. any additional educational supports, medical supports, etc.) made available to trainees and probationers over the entire course of the programme.
- Describe and evaluate the adequacy of physical resources (learning spaces and facilities, etc.) that underpin programme delivery.
- Describe and evaluate the mechanisms by which trainees and probationers can provide feedback and suggestions to relevant staff (e.g. interviews, student surveys, etc.). Address:
  - Trainee and probationer representation on the programme
  - How feedback is considered by the programme team
  - How the programme team informs trainees and probationers of feedback (e.g. survey) results and what actions are taken on foot of the feedback received (how you close the feedback loop)
- Please provide any further information you believe to be relevant to this chapter. You may present this information under headings/sub-headings of your choice. Please present the additional material in an analytical rather than a descriptive manner.

#### **4.5 Chapter 5: Staff support and experience**

- Describe and evaluate the types of staff supports that are in place, specifically in relation to ensuring the programme is delivered to a high standard (e.g. induction process for new instructors; academic CPD opportunities for all instructors). Please consider both core Garda College instructors and ‘non-core’ instructors, such as occasional external presenters and those supervising work-based learning.
- Evaluate the impact of staff turnover in the Garda College on programme delivery and quality.
- Describe and evaluate how staff suggestions in relation to any aspect of the programme are collected and considered by the programme team.
- Please provide any further information you believe to be relevant to this chapter. You may present this information under headings/sub-headings of your choice. Please present the additional material in an analytical rather than a descriptive manner.



## Appendix 4: Sample site visit schedule

### Garda College Programme Review Sample Site Visit Schedule

<i>Mins</i>	<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Date</i>		
	<b>Time</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Location</b>
30	19h00	PRG +	Introductory meeting and briefing	TBD
	19h30	PRG	Dinner	TBD

*Note – the unit brings relevant persons to each meeting.*

<i>Mins</i>	<i>Day 2</i>	<i>Date</i>		
	<b>Time</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Location</b>
10	08h30– 08h40	PRG +	Welcome	TBD
30	08h40– 09h10	PRG	Planning session. Brief overview by each of the PRG members of their findings from the self-assessment report, focusing on any big issues. Planning for topics 1 and 2.	TBD
60	09h15– 10h15	PRG +	Brief introductions Discussions and questions • <b>Topic 1</b>	TBD
20	10h15– 10h35	PRG, all members of staff	Coffee break with staff	TBD
60	10h40– 11h40	PRG +	Discussions and questions • <b>Topic 2</b>	TBD
25	11h45– 12h10	PRG	Planning for stakeholder session and topic 3	TBD
60	12h15– 13h15	PRG, Garda trainees and probationers	Meeting with Garda trainee/probationer stakeholders	TBC
30	13h20– 13h50	PRG	Lunch	TBD
30	13h55– 14h25	PRG, unit staff	Tour – brief tour of facilities	Unit facilities
60	14h30– 15h30	PRG +	Discussions and questions • <b>Topic 3</b>	TBD
60	15h30– 16h30	PRG	Review of day's findings. Identification of questions for the following day, particularly with respect to topics 4 and 5.	TBD
	19h30	PRG +	Informal dinner	TBD

<i>Mins</i>	<i>Day 3</i>	<i>Date</i>		
40	08h30–09h10	PRG	Private meeting of PRG to plan for topics 4 and 5	TBD
60	09h15–10h15	PRG +	Discussions and questions • <b>Topic 4</b>	TBD
30	10h15–10h45	PRG	Coffee, private session	TBD
60	10h50–11h50	PRG +	Discussions and questions • <b>Topic 5</b>	TBD
60	11h55–12h55	PRG and stakeholders	Meeting with stakeholders (internal and external)	TBD
	13h00–13h30	PRG	Lunch	TBD
60	13h35–14h35	PRG +	Discussions and questions • <b>Topic 6</b>	TBD
30	14h40–15h10	PRG +,	Closing session, discussions and questions. Final questions for clarification on any issues (to be confirmed by PRG on the day, if required).	TBD
75	15h15–16h30	PRG	Brief recap on afternoon activities. Review of key findings in each area. Presentation by individual reviewers of their key findings in each area of responsibility. <b>Begin drafting report</b>	TBD
	18h30	PRG	Email draft commendations and recommendations to recording secretary	
	19h30	PRG +	Dinner	TBC
	<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Date</i>		
240	08h30–12h30	PRG	Draft PRG report Finalisation of PRG commendations and recommendations (including context and rationale)	TBD
30	12h30–13h00	PRG +	Update Garda College and UL senior management on review findings	TBD
30	13h00–13h30	PRG	Light lunch served	TBD
75	13h35–14h50	PRG	Finalisation of PRG report	TBD
30	15h00–15h15	PRG, staff	<b>PRG report read out to staff</b>	TBD
15	15h15–15h30	PRG, staff	Coffee served following report read-out	TBD
	<b>15h30</b>		<b>Conclusion of visit</b>	

## Appendix 5: PRG report

The QSU provides the QRG with a report template in which to record its findings. The default template comprises four sections and appendices, as follows:

### 1. Programme review process

This will be a one-page (approx.) summary of the programme review process (written by the UL QSU).

### 2. Programme review of the BA in Applied Policing

This one-pager will present a brief overview of the BA in Applied Policing. The overview will be prepared by the Garda College before the site visit has been completed and will provide a suitable introduction to the programme for persons from outside the Garda College who may wish to read the report.

### 3. Preliminary comments of the programme review group (PRG)

Typically one or two pages in length, this section provides the PRG with an opportunity to report upon:

- The extent to which the programme team engaged enthusiastically, honestly and effectively in the self-evaluation exercise
- The programme team's openness during the visit
- The quality of the self-assessment report (SAR)
- Stakeholder feedback relating to the programme and the extent to which the team is fulfilling stakeholder needs
- The overall findings of the review

### 4. QRG commendations and recommendations

Section 4.1 of the report template provides the QRG with a box to list commendations. Each commendation should be clear, concise, evidence-based and, as far as possible, single issue.

No.	Commendation
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

The total number of commendations included is at the discretion of the QRG and will be driven by the review findings but, as a general guideline, 5 to 15 would be appropriate.

Section 4.2 of the report template provides the QRG with a box to list recommendations (level 1 and level 2). Each recommendation should be clear, concise, evidence-based and, as far as possible, single issue. Level 1 recommendations may be more expansive than level 2 recommendations. The QRG must include a short narrative with each recommendation. The commentary should provide a context, rationale or any other elaboration that might help the programme team to effectively interpret, implement and monitor the recommendation.

#### **Level 1 recommendations**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

#### **Level 2 recommendations**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

The total number of recommendations given (i.e., level 1 and level 2) is at the discretion of the QRG and will be driven by the group's findings but, as a general guideline, 15 to 20 would be appropriate. The inclusion of more than 20 recommendations should be considered very carefully by the QRG in terms of practical implementation.

#### **5. Appendices**

The QRG report template includes two appendices: (i) membership of the QRG and (ii) membership of the Garda College team that coordinated the programme review.

**Appendix 6: Quality improvement plan (QIP) template**

The quality improvement plan (QIP) template document includes an inside cover page (shown immediately below) and a single page dedicated to each recommendation (one sample page given on the next page).

## Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Template

**QIP Implementation Record**  
**(to be completed by the programme team as each milestone is reached)**

**Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development, Garda College: \_\_\_\_\_**  
***(responsible for QIP implementation)***

1. Date on which QIP received by the programme team:
2. Date on which the programme team met to discuss and ratify the QIP:
3. Date on which interim self-assessment of progress on level 1 recommendations (sections 5 and 6 in table) was returned to QSU:
4. Date on which QIP progress was presented:
5. Date on which implementation review meeting was held:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Overview of the post-review phase of the programme review process**

The post-review phase of the programme review process comprises the following stages:

1. Consideration of recommendations and formulation of (this) implementation plan
2. Ongoing implementation of recommendations
3. Interim progress report
4. Implementation review meeting

### **QIP template**

The PRG recommendations and progress with their implementation are recorded in this quality improvement plan (QIP). The template initially allocates one page to each recommendation and provides space to record:

- The Garda College's response to the recommendation
- Specific actions to be taken by the unit to address the recommendation
- The state of resolution of the recommendation and outstanding actions that need to be taken to fully implement the recommendation

### **Consideration of recommendations and formulation of implementation plan**

Within approximately four to six weeks after receiving the QIP template from the Garda College QA Unit, the Foundation Training section meets to formally consider and respond to each recommendation. The response is recorded in section 3 (per recommendation) of the QIP. At that meeting or as a follow-up action, the Foundation Training section develops specific implementation plans and records them in section 4 (per recommendation) of the QIP. Section 4 is also used to record who is responsible for ensuring the planned actions are carried out and by when.

### **Ongoing implementation of recommendations**

Over the next few months, the Foundation Training section works to implement the recommendations. Four to five months after receiving the QIP template, the Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training carries out a brief, interim self-assessment of progress made in relation to the implementation of the level 1 recommendations and records the assessment in sections 5 and 6 (per recommendation) of the QIP. The Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training then sends a copy of the QIP to the QSU.

### **Presentation at Annual Dialogue Meeting (ADM)**

Approximately six months after the unit was given the QIP template, the Foundation Training section submits the partially complete QIP and PRG report to the QA Unit, who forwards them to UL for consideration at the next ADM. The Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training, who is responsible for project managing the implementation of the QIP, is invited to deliver a short presentation at this meeting. While the Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training may wish to provide an initial overview commentary on the PRG report, the presentation will focus on the level 1 recommendations only and the Garda College's response to those recommendations, specific implementation progress made to date and planned actions, as appropriate. The presentation is followed by a question-and-answer session.

### **QIP implementation review meeting**

Following the interim presentation, the Foundation Training section continues to implement the planned QIP recommendations. Approximately 12 to 18 months after receiving the QIP template, the QA Unit organises a QIP implementation review meeting (as part of the next ADM). To prepare for this meeting, the Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training summarises in section 7 of the QIP progress to date on each recommendation and specifies outstanding matters or actions required. The Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training returns the QIP to the QA Unit at least two weeks before the implementation meeting. The status of resolution of each recommendation is considered at the meeting, and any further actions required are identified and recorded. The exact follow-up and reporting process relating to these further actions is at the discretion of the VPAASE. A final QIP implementation summary report is prepared by the QA Unit and is published on the Garda College and UL websites.

The implementation of the QIP must be evidence-based. The Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training should ensure that those leading the implementation of each recommendation retain records that provide evidence of their actions (e.g. headline email correspondence, meeting minutes, etc.). When preparing for the implementation review meeting, the UL Director of Quality will ask the Garda College for a copy of the evidence records pertaining to a representative sample of recommendations.

**Notes:**

- + denotes time after the unit receives the QIP template from the Quality Assurance (QA) Unit
- DQ = Director of Quality;
- Sections 5 and 6 to be completed for level 1 recommendations only.

Sections 1 and 2 to be completed by the QA Unit					
1	n/a	Rec. no. _ (Level _)			
2	n/a	Recommendation:			
Sections 3 and 4 to be completed by Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training					
3	+ 1 to 2 months	Unit response to recommendation: (e.g. accepted in full, accepted in part/modified form, rejected. Include succinct justification if recommendation not accepted in full)			
4	+ 1 to 2 months	Action planned (add more rows as required)			
		Action item	Action item description	Person responsible	Target completion date
		a.			
		b.			
		c.			
		d.			



<b>Sections 5 and 6 to be completed for level 1 recommendations only. Both sections to be completed by unit and copied back to QA Unit prior to interim presentation</b>				
5	+ 4 to 5 months	Action item	Progress made	Outstanding matters
		a.		
		b.		
		c.		
		d.		
6	+ 4 to 5 months	<b>Self-evaluation by unit of progress to date</b> Status of progress: On a scale of 0-5, where 0 = no progress, 5 = fully resolved, underline the most appropriate score: 0 1 2 3 4 5 Any additional comments if appropriate:		
<b>Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training makes presentation at ADM approx. + 6 months</b>				
<b>Section 7 to be completed by unit and copied back to QSU prior to implementation review meeting</b>				
7	+ 11.5 months	Action item	Progress made for level 2 recommendations and further progress made for level 1 recommendations	Outstanding matters
		a.		
		b.		

		c.		
		d.		
<b>Section 8 to be completed by DQ immediately prior to implementation review meeting</b>				
8	+12 months	Status of progress: On a scale of 0-5, where 0 = no progress, 5 = fully resolved: 0 1 2 3 4 5 Comments as appropriate:		
<b>Review implementation meeting between Garda College, DQ and VPAASE approx. + 12 months</b>				
<b>Section 9 to be completed by DQ immediately after implementation review meeting</b>				
9	+ 12 months	Actions arising from the implementation meeting (including person responsible & timeframe for completion):		
<b>Section 10 to be completed by Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training and copied back to QA Unit</b>				
10	+ 13-15 months	Description of actions taken since implementation review meeting:		
<b>Section 11 to be completed by DQ on receipt of QIP from unit</b>				
11	+ 13-15 months	Final status of recommendation (Closed, Open, Rejected):		

**Appendix 7: QIP implementation summary report**

**Programme:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(responsible for QIP implementation)*

1. Date on which QIP received from QA Unit:
2. Date on which the Foundation Training section met to discuss and ratify the QIP:
3. Date on which interim self-assessment of progress on level 1 recommendations (sections 5 and 6 in table) was returned to QA Unit:
4. Date on which QIP progress was presented:
5. Date on which final implementation review meeting was held:
6. Summary status of recommendation implementation:

<b>Rec no. (level)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Closed</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Comment (if remains open)</b>


\_\_\_\_\_  
UL Director of Quality

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix 8: Garda College timeline and responsibilities before and during the review

(See also figures 1 and 2 in the core process text)

	Action	Responsibility	Inputs	Completion date
1	Agree process timeline	QA Unit, Garda College Director of Training and Continuous Professional Development, Garda College	Approval from QSU, University of Limerick	September 2018
2	Nominate and select external reviewers	University of Limerick Garda College	Garda College management Programme Quality Assurance Board (PQAB)	Q1 2019
3	Conduct a SWOT analysis	QA Unit, Garda College	Staff Trainee and probationer Gardaí CPD staff	Q1 2019
4	Collation of data and other information for SAR	QA Unit, Garda College	QA Unit with input from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– External examiners' reports</li> <li>– SWOT analyses</li> <li>– Trainee/probationer Gardaí feedback and surveys</li> <li>– Other stakeholder feedback</li> </ul>	Q1 2019
5	Draft SAR	QA Unit, Garda College	Draft of SAR open for one week to all members of the Foundation Training section in its entirety for comment	Q2 2019
5	Submission of SAR for approval	QA Unit, Garda College	Garda College management, PQAB	Q3 2019
6	Dissemination of SAR to external programme review group (PRG)	QA Unit, Garda College	PRG Foundation Training staff, including CPD staff, to have access to the final report	Q3 2019
7	Onsite visit	QA Unit, Garda College Superintendent in charge of Foundation Training, Garda College	PRG Garda College	October 2019 Proposed dates 28, 29 and 30 October 2019