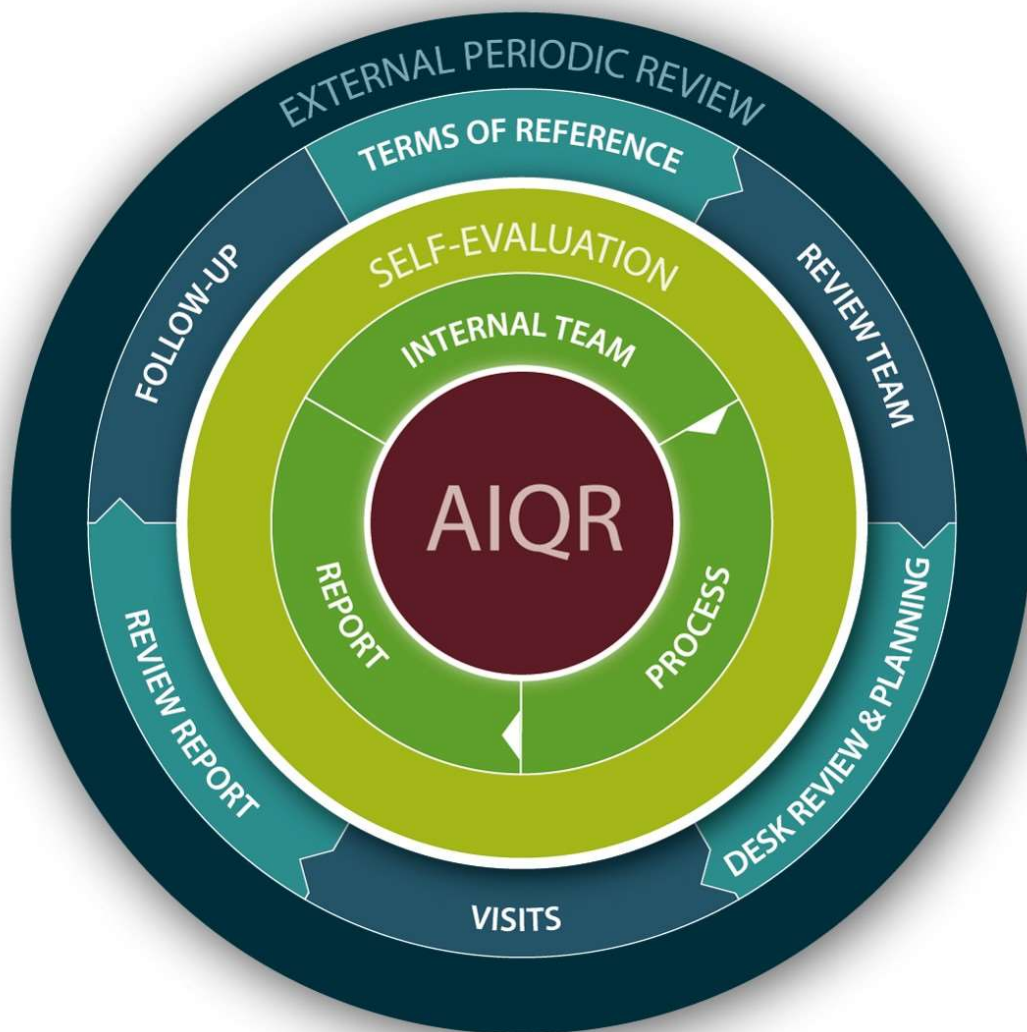# University of Limerick

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2020

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019

The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

Overarching institution-level approach and policy for QA (ESG 1.1)

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy
A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

The University of Limerick (UL) strategic plan was approved by Governing Authority on 27 September 2019 and launched on 1 November 2019. Entitled UL@50 Strategic Plan 2019-2024, the plan articulates institutional mission, vision and strategic priorities. The overall strategic plan is supported by (a) the UL Equality and Human Rights Strategy, which details objectives, actions and expected outcomes for 13 grounds of Equality and Human Rights under 10 themes: Governance; Leadership; Staff Experience; Educational Experience; Research Experience; Campus Development; Events, Clubs and Societies; Public Relations, Marketing and Communications; Technology; and Procurement and Budgeting; (b) our teaching, learning and assessment strategy (*Engaged Learning*), which includes a specific commitment to quality in all our activities; and (c) our research and innovation strategy (*Excellence and Impact 2020*), the first objective of which commits us to maximising the quality of research outputs across all disciplines. These strategic documents each have associated implementation plans, which are subject to regular monitoring and review.

The University is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of its activities and to fostering a quality culture throughout the institution. The University recognises the pursuit of quality, and hence excellence, as a core value. Responsibility for the quality of our activities rests at institutional, local and individual level. The University Quality Policy is available here. The University's Quality Manual is available here. UL's risk management policy and associated processes also represent a core university system linking risk, quality and strategy.

UL's institutional arrangements for developing, monitoring, reviewing, enhancing and managing the quality of its activities are multi-layered and multifaceted. They are informed by national acts, statutory quality guidelines and international good practice and are appropriately underpinned by UL policies. The arrangements have evolved and are tailored to institutional organisational structure and mission. They are developed and overseen by relevant institutional and local unit-level governance committees and are reviewed by various means, including internal quality reviews and periodic institutional (external) reviews. Cornerstone institutional-level QA processes are described in our annual institutional profile.

The University's Policy Management Framework sets out a standard set of principles to follow when developing, implementing and managing institutional policies with a view to promoting a consistent approach to both the development process and format of policies across the University.

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora
A brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora

UL's administrative and academic organisational structures are available here. Overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested in the Governing Authority, whose functions include approving high-level strategy and policy, statutes and regulations. The Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement (VPAASE) reports directly to the Governing Authority on all quality-related issues. Matters relating to internal audit or risk management are dealt with by the GA Audit and Risk sub-committee.

Executive Committee, which is accountable to the President, is the senior management committee with responsibility for developing strategic policies and procedures, monitoring corporate performance and ensuring that all aspects of the corporate function operate with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

Academic Council controls UL's academic affairs. It oversees academic awards, standards and regulations and approves all new programmes and changes to existing programmes. Chaired by the President, Academic Council comprises senior officers, deans of faculty, heads of academic departments, Students' Union officers, assistant deans of academic affairs and elected staff representatives.

As per the academic organisational chart, UL comprises four faculties and 23 academic departments and schools. Overall responsibility for the academic faculties resides with the faculty executive deans, who report to the President. Each dean is supported in his/her role by heads of academic schools/departments, a faculty manager, an Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, an Assistant Dean of Research and an Assistant Dean of Internationalisation. All academic members of a faculty, together with student representatives, comprise the faculty board, which meets regularly to discuss academic matters, such as proposals for new programmes.

All UL service (support) units report to a senior member of Executive Committee. Full details of all support units with links to individual functional areas are available here. As with academic units, periodic quality reviews are undertaken for all support units. Academic unit quality review reports and the implementation of the associated quality improvement plans are monitored by the VPAASE while those of support units are monitored by the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar.

Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

In accordance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 3.1 (Programme development and approval) and European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) no. 2 (Design and approval of programmes), the University follows a well-established, rigorous process for developing and approving new programmes. The process and its related procedures and guidelines are documented internally on SharePoint. All new programmes must align with the institutional strategic plan, with justification included in approval documentation, and must comply with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The NFQ level, award type, entry requirements, total credits, calculated credits, mode of delivery (full-time, part-time, blended, distance, evening, etc.), progression points and core pathway must all be specified on the programme submission application form for subsequent consideration by the approving groups. The University's Awards Title Framework is available here.

New programmes are formally approved in five stages by five different groups: the host department, host faculty, Executive Committee, Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) and Academic Council. Academic Council approves new programmes on the advice of APRC. Students and representative stakeholders of the academic units (faculty and department/school) proposing the programme are represented on Academic Council.

Procedures for institution-wide programme design, approval and modification are stored on SharePoint. The approval process procedures and guidelines, including defined criteria, are documented in *Procedures for Processing Programme Proposals* and *Guidelines to Ensure Quality and Consistency of Submissions*, respectively. Joint or dual degrees are subject to the provisions of UL's Joint and Dual Degree Awards Policy.

Following approval by Academic Council, the modification or creation of programme records is maintained by the Programme Management Office of the Academic Registry Division. Further information is available here.

> **2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)**
> Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

In line with **ESG 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment)**, active and collaborative learning forms a central element of UL's teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Given the diversity of programmes on offer at UL, programmes are delivered in many ways. In accordance with **ESG 1.3**, the mode of delivery is defined for all programme modules in the (new or revised) programme submission documentation approved by APRC/Academic Council (see last section). Academic regulation 1.4.3 (in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures) requires the academic staff member(s) to provide details to the students of the learning outcomes of the module, indicative grade descriptors corresponding to each grade, the criteria on which assessment is to be based, the minimum performance standard, the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument associated with the module and repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module. Programme assessment policy and procedures are clearly articulated in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular chapter 2, Marks and Standards).

The UL Academic Council is charged under the Universities Act 1997 with ensuring academic standards and the quality of all awards made by the University. In accordance with the University's quality assurance procedures, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes to provide an independent view and report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. Academic Council examination boards will consider recommendations from faculty examination boards and submissions from both internal and external examiners before determining students' final awards. The University's External Examiners Policy is available here.

Under the terms of the University's Academic Programme Review Policy, all taught programmes are subject to formal annual review by the relevant course review board and to periodic review (usually every five years) by a panel that includes external personnel. Master's and PhD theses by research are monitored by means of an annual progression and monitoring system involving research review panels within each academic unit. The theses are examined and reported upon by internal and external examiners.

Working with UL's four faculties, Graduate & Professional Studies (GPS) manages the development and delivery of flexible and relevant professional and personal development programmes. GPS uses a hybrid model: academic schools/departments retain ownership of courses and academic material, and GPS provides the support, procedures and processes that enable the delivery of flexible learning pathways.

Students are systematically involved in programme delivery and assessment-related activity. Programme boards include student representation (with students absenting themselves when exam results are discussed), as do associated QA oversight fora, including Faculty Board, Academic Council and Governing Authority. Institutional-level student feedback is collected systematically through the annual student exit survey and the module satisfaction survey as well as through a range of other survey activities, including, but not limited to, the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, the UL

postgraduate research experience survey and surveys of international students. Survey findings are considered, as appropriate, at local level (by individual academic staff, programme boards, heads of department) and at institutional level (by deans, Executive Committee, Academic Council), and summary reports are made publicly available (accessible here and here). In line with formal UL processes, individual programmes are subject to annual monitoring and periodic review activities.

3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)
Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

Overall research strategy and policy is articulated by the University's (a) strategic plan; (b) research strategy, which is informed by the overall strategic plan; and (c) quality statement. Procedures relating to the quality of research are many and varied according to purpose. Regulations pertaining to postgraduate research students are included in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular chapters 2 and 5). Graduate & Professional Studies, which leads on the development of guidelines, procedures and processes pertinent to research and taught postgraduate education, resides in the portfolio of the VPAASE.

The Research Projects section of the Finance Department oversees and reports on financial aspects of research activity. The quality of research is reviewed through the quality review process for academic departments, the quality review process for research institutes and the range of research support services provided by support units, including the Research Office and Graduate & Professional Studies, the Finance Office, HR, the Library and Information Services Division, the Information Technology Division and Buildings and Estates, all of which are reviewed through the quality review process for support units. Several of the above support units regularly develop, deliver or coordinate various research-related professional development courses, which are widely advertised throughout the institution via global email. In addition, the assessment of research quality forms the basis of periodic research quality initiatives undertaken by the Research Office and through the annual UL research report prepared by the Research Office, which is considered by Executive Committee. Research conduct is guided by the University's Research Integrity Policy.

UL operates recruitment policies and procedures for research scholars, research staff and academic staff.

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

Policies and procedures for student enrolment, registration, assessment, grading, performance standards, progression and academic awards are all incorporated into the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures. In line with **ESG 1.4 (Student admission, progression, recognition and certification)**, UL operates policies and procedures relating to access, recognition of prior learning, admission processes and criteria. Admissions procedures for undergraduate entry is operationalised in the main by the Admissions section of the Academic Registry Division, with the majority of undergraduate students entering through the national Central Applications Office (CAO) system. In support of UL's Access Policy and through the Access Office, Mature Student Office and Disability Support Services Office, Student Affairs promotes and supports the participation of students from groups that have been under-represented in higher education (see also below). Respect for the diversity of learners is enshrined in UL's Equality and Diversity Policy. UL also has an Access and Widening Participation Policy.

As specified in the University's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy, RPL is used at UL (i) to enable applicants to gain entry to a programme, (ii) to award credits for part of a programme and (iii) to award exemptions for some programme requirements. Non-EU student applicants apply directly to the International Education Division while postgraduate taught and research applicants apply to Graduate & Professional Studies. Entry requirements for all UL programmes are articulated in published, annually updated course documentation (undergraduate and postgraduate). QA/QE mechanisms employed by these offices in support of their admissions and related processes form part of each unit's quality management system, which is periodically reviewed as part of the quality review process for support units. Students undergoing work placement involving activities relating to children or vulnerable adults are subject to the provisions of the UL Student Vetting Policy.

Also, in line with **ESG 1.4**, UL operates student orientation and induction processes through the Academic Registry's Orientation Programme, the Centre for Teaching and Learning's First Seven Weeks programme, the Student Engagement and Success Unit and the International Education Division's 7-day orientation/welcome programme for new international students as well as faculty, department and programme-based inductions.

UL collects, monitors and acts upon information on student progression and maintains graduation and student records in a number of ways. Under governance of the Steering Group, Academic Registry maintains, controls and develops UL's student records, including all personal information, grant records, student registrations, module grade entry, performance reports and student results, the issuing of all graduate parchments and the publication of all class and examination schedules. Student progression information is considered at a number of fora, most notably the faculty exam boards, the Academic Council Grading Committee and the University Exam Board. Student progression is also considered during the annual programmatic review process, at which course boards propose quality enhancements on the basis of (in part) annual programme performance metrics.

Students with additional requirements are supported by the Disability Support Services Office, which provides a range of services to students, including assistive technology. The Disability Support Services handbook provides detailed information for current and prospective students.

UL's Mature Student Office supports mature students who are registered on full-time undergraduate programmes in UL and students who are registered on the Mature Student Access Certificate. The office helps to ease these students' transition into full-time higher education.

Part of the Cooperative Education & Careers Division, the Careers Service offers support to students and recent graduates in developing and implementing successful career plans and facilitates the recruitment process for students and employers.

As part of the restructuring of Governing Authority, an Access, Equality and Student Affairs Committee was reconstituted. Its remit includes ensuring that 'policies prepared are in accordance with good practice, student equality and diversity principles, and student, University and legislative requirements'.

Led by the International Education Division, the University's compliance with the Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners is documented here.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning offers a number of initiatives to students to support their learning, including the First Seven Weeks programme, study skills and exam technique workshops, and a number of student support centres.

HR's Learning and Development section provides training and development courses to support the development of research skills for research and academic staff. Popular programmes include networking for research, grant writing, communicating research effectively, research ethics and PhD supervision. In addition, HR operates a research coaching programme, which brings together those involved in research to share experience and provide each other with guidance and support in achieving research outputs, including publications, books and research grants.

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

The University's HR policies and procedures for the recruitment of academic, support and research staff comply with Irish public sector recruitment and appointment procedures. Recruitment policies, procedures and practices comply with the Universities Act 1997, the Employment Equality Acts 1998/2004, the Equal Status Acts 2000/2004 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The University's Equality and Human Rights Policy is designed to ensure that the University's procedures and practices operate in a manner that is consistent with the institution's commitment to equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against individuals on grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, socio-economic status, ethnicity, national identity or neurodiversity.

The University's recruitment and staff development procedures for academic staff are designed to ensure that teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their teaching and research roles. Applicants called to interview are required to submit references prior to interview, and subsequent offers of employment are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Prior to taking up an offered position, the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of academic, professional or technical qualifications. PhD qualifications are the norm for academic staff. The recruitment policies are reviewed regularly, updated as required, approved by Governing Authority and published on the HR website.

Newly recruited members of staff participate in an intensive, one-day general induction programme delivered by HR. General induction includes reference to web-accessible HR employee policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct for Employees and the Acceptable Behaviour in the Workplace Policy. In addition, new staff are provided with local induction to familiarise them with their designated roles and responsibilities and their place within the unit.

Ongoing CPD is a central feature of the University's professional development environment. Through the Performance and Development Review System (PDRS), the head of department/school meets with each member of staff to agree on specific CPD requirements for that staff member. The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) operates a peer observation of teaching process whereby an academic member of staff observes a colleague's teaching and gives them feedback on how their teaching could be improved. The CTL offers the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process, which is designed to provide useful information to individual lectures on their students' experiences of the modules they teach. The CTL promotes graduate diploma and master's courses in teaching, learning and scholarship. In conjunction with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the Shannon Consortium, the CTL offers teaching staff regular workshops on various aspects of pedagogy and a wide variety of resources and supports for improving their teaching. The University's Technology Enhanced Learning Unit (TELU) provides a coordinated approach to the use of technology-enhanced and blended learning, as described in *Engaged Learning*, the teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

The HR Learning and Development section promotes and coordinates professional training and development courses, including teaching-related courses, and a campus-wide mentoring scheme.

6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning activity and direction is informed by UL's strategic plan, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and overarching quality statement. Implementation of the strategic plan is regularly monitored at various institutional fora, most notably Executive Committee and Governing Authority. Implementation of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy is monitored by the VPAASE. As part of the annual programme report, course review boards are requested to outline how the programme complies with UL policy and procedures, including the teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

Teaching and learning-related QA policy and procedures (**ESG 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6**) are described in these sections of this report: (a) Student Lifecycle; (b) Teaching Staff; and (c) Resources and Support. In summary, the Centre for Teaching and Learning takes a primary institutional lead on promoting teaching and learning, and cornerstone institutional QA mechanisms for monitoring teaching-related activity include:

- Ongoing cyclical quality review of all academic units
- The external examiner system
- Programme reviews (annually by the relevant course review board and periodically (usually every five years) by an external panel)
- The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process
- The Module Satisfaction Survey (MSS)
- The Student Exit Survey
- The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)
- The maintenance and periodic review of a comprehensive framework of academic practices and regulations, as articulated in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures

Other relevant policies and procedures include, but are not limited to:
- UL Quality Policy
- UL Quality Manual
- UL Linked Provision Framework
- Equality and Diversity
- HR Mentoring Programme
- Athena SWAN
- Sabbatical Policy
- Family Friendly Policies

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

In line with **ESG 1.6 (Learning resources and student support)**, UL invests (and regularly reviews) appropriate levels of funding for learning and teaching activities and ensures that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

The provision of module resources is the responsibility of relevant academic schools/departments with support provided by professional services including ITD, Buildings and Estates, the Library and the Student Affairs Division.

The course review board's annual programme review process includes an evaluation of the adequacy of the programme's learning resources. The review takes into account feedback from external examiner reports and from various student survey mechanisms. Where review processes (quality reviews, course review board annual programme review, external examiner reports, student surveys) point to a shortfall in a programme's learning resources and/or learner supports, the course director liaises with the head of department/school to rectify the situation.

SAA is the main provider of administrative services (e.g. maintains student records, administers end-of-semester examinations, issues graduate parchments and transcripts, and develops and administers procedures for complying with the University's academic regulations and marks and standards) to units running programmes of study and their students. SAA is subject to periodic quality review and, through its QMS, regular QMS auditing.

The main learner support units (Access Office, Mature Student Office, Disability Support Services, Counselling, Chaplaincy and Student Health Centre) reside in the Student Affairs umbrella division. The Access Office works to promote and support the participation of students from groups that have been under-represented in the third-level education sector. The Mature Student Office supports mature students who are registered on full-time undergraduate programmes and students who are registered on the Mature Student Access Certificate. The office helps to ease these students' transition into full-time higher education. Students with additional requirements are supported by Disability Support Services, which provides a range of services to students, including assistive technology. The Disability Support Services handbook provides detailed information for current and prospective students. Pastoral care is provided to students through the Personal Academic Support System (PASS), Counselling, Chaplaincy and the two students' unions (Student Life and Postgraduate Students' Union). The Student Health Centre's service is provided to registered students only.

The Careers Service (a section of the Cooperative Education & Careers Division) offers support to students and recent graduates in developing and implementing successful career plans and facilitates the recruitment process for students and employers.

The remit of the University's Access, Equality and Student Affairs Committee includes ensuring that "policies prepared are in accordance with good practice, student equality and diversity principles, and student, University and legislative requirements".

Led by the International Education Division, the University's compliance with the Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners is documented here.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning offers a number of initiatives to students to support their learning, including the First Seven Weeks programme and study skills and exam technique workshops, and a number of student support centres (the five learner support centres listed in section 6.2.2 and the Student Engagement & Success Unit (SESU)).

HR's Learning and Development section provides training and development courses to support the development of research skills for research and academic staff. Popular programmes include networking for research, grant writing, communicating research effectively, research ethics and PhD supervision. In addition, HR operates a research development programme, which brings together those involved in research to share experience and provide each other with guidance and support in achieving research outputs, including publications, books and research grants.

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

Responsibility for policy and procedural development relating to information management is devolved across appropriate individual UL units and offices, including the Office of the President and the Information Technology Division. The effectiveness of such information management policies and procedures is assessed via individual unit quality reviews. In line with **ESG 1.7 (Information management)**, UL collects, analyses and uses relevant information for managing programmes and other activities effectively. Some primary procedures include the following:

- **At a strategic institutional level**, the strategic plan, the teaching, learning and assessment strategy and the research and innovation strategy all articulate specific aims and objectives, each with accompanying outcomes and targets. Internal procedures are in place to routinely monitor, document and report progress to key decision-making individuals or committees, including Executive Committee, Management Council, Academic Council and Governing Authority.
- **Profiles of the student population as well as student progression, success and drop-out rates** are gathered, reported and analysed in a number of ways. Under governance of the Steering Group, the Academic Registry Division maintains, controls and develops UL's student records through its student information system, from which various officers and offices can extract and tailor data to generate reports for relevant internal stakeholders at institutional level (e.g. Academic Council and Executive Committee), at local level (e.g. course review boards) and for external stakeholders (e.g. HEA, DES). Among other responsibilities, UL's Student Engagement & Success Unit (SESU) undertakes research and data-analytics relating to student engagement.
- **The student voice:** Information relating to students' levels of satisfaction with their programmes is gathered in a number of ways. Cornerstone institutional-level student surveys include student evaluation of teaching surveys, module satisfaction surveys and student exit surveys, for which survey reports are delivered to relevant internal stakeholders for consideration and follow up (e.g. Academic Council, Executive Committee, heads of department, course directors, course boards and individual academics). The UL institutional survey register recorded an additional 35 surveys, which, in the main, targeted one or more specific cohorts of students (first-year students, international students, etc.).
- **Institutional processes** provide a framework for individual students or student groups to avail of various local mechanisms to receive immediate feedback on modules and programmes of study during delivery, with a view to local consideration and response. These mechanisms include direct contact with a lecturer, head of department, academic advisor or student representative. Student feedback and dialogue is also facilitated by student representation on various committees and boards, both at institutional level (e.g. Governing Authority, Academic Council and faculty boards) and local level (e.g. course review boards).
- **External examiner reports** are considered by relevant programme review boards, and the outcome of programme reviews are considered at departmental and faculty level and by the Academic Programme Review Committee in accordance with UL procedures.

- The **quality review process** for academic and support units requires input from students, customers and stakeholders. The quality review reports, which address all aspects of units' operations, are considered by Executive Committee, the relevant dean and the VPAASE.
- A comprehensive range of **learning resources and support services** are provided by UL to facilitate student learning. The programme approval process incorporates a detailed analysis of the resources required by each programme, including student supports. Quality reviews include an evaluation of the provision of learner resources and supports by the unit under review.
- **Career paths of graduates**: The Cooperative Education & Careers Division provides comprehensive career advice and support to students and organises work placements for students. The division conducts an annual First Destinations Survey of graduates, which helps inform relevant strategic planning activity as well as local and institutional decision making.
- **The Research Office** uses a research information system (ULRIS) for tracking research output and publications and has numerous internal processes for recording, monitoring and reporting upon research activity.
- **The Marketing and Communications Division** is responsible for gathering and disseminating a wide range of information to audiences both internal and external to UL.

The University operates an institutional records management and retention policy. Policies and procedures on the maintenance and retention of quality-related documentation at unit level form part of each support unit's QMS. One of the quality management processes of the QMS is documentation control. All QMS processes are published on the Quality section of each unit's website.

Data protection forms part of the remit of the Corporate Secretary's Office. The University operates a data protection policy, which was revised in 2018 to reflect changes under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a European Union (EU) regulation introduced in May 2018 to strengthen and unify data protection within the EU. GPDR replaces the Irish Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

The Corporate Secretary's Office website has a dedicated web page that outlines how and why the University shares personal data with third parties and lists all relevant parties. The Corporate Secretary's Office also manages the University's freedom of information function. The University complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and has an FOI unit and FOI officer.

The Corporate Secretary's Office website includes an Information and Compliance page. In addition to the aforementioned records management, FOI and data protection, this page provides information on the Disability Act, the Official Languages Act, copyright and environmental regulations.

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

A diverse range of procedures are enacted at institutional, local and, indeed, personal level with a view to monitoring, self-evaluating and enhancing the quality of our activities. Institutional-level self-evaluation activities incorporate, but are not limited to, the following:

- The University collects, analyses and reports upon a whole range of datasets and other information to external stakeholders (e.g. the HEA, QQI and Department of Education and Skills). These activities are undertaken by a wide range of (largely) support units and offices/officers, as relevant to functional area.
- At an institutional level, the strategic plan sets priorities, objectives and measures of success. Progress on the achievement of the plan's aims and objectives, as defined in terms of indicators of success and outcomes, is monitored on an ongoing basis by Executive Committee and Governing Authority.
- The University's research strategy specifies action items and targets for each strategic objective. The Vice President Research & Enterprise oversees regular reviews of the strategy and reports on performance against targets to Executive Committee and Governing Authority.
- Self-evaluation activities (and associated authorship of a self-evaluation report) are carried out as part of both academic and support unit quality reviews. Review reports are made publicly available, and the review recommendations form the basis of a subsequent quality improvement plan (QIP). The implementation of the QIP is monitored by the QSU, the VPAASE, the relevant dean and the university Quality Committee.
- UL implements an external examination process for both taught and research programmes, and external examiner reports are considered at local unit and individual level. External examiners are requested to contact the Office of the VPAASE directly if they have particular concerns.
- Under the terms of UL's Annual Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review policy, all taught programmes are subject to formal annual monitoring by the relevant course review board and to periodic review (usually every five years) by an external panel. The review outcomes are considered at departmental and faculty level and by Academic Council's APRC.
- Student feedback is gathered by means of the module satisfaction survey and student exit survey, and detailed and/or aggregate reports are considered by individual academics, heads of department, course boards, deans, Executive Committee and Academic Council.
- All UL support units are required to implement a QMS. A requirement of the QMS is the inclusion of a 'QMS Audit' process, whereby all processes are audited by trained QMS auditors on an annual basis. An Inter-Department Audit Process is in place to help units prepare for quality reviews. The audits are referred to as 'inter-department' because they are conducted by trained auditors both from within the unit under review and from other UL support units. The purpose of the audit process is to ensure that all components of the unit's QMS are audited for compliance with UL's quality framework. The process allows for a sharing of best practice and a focus on inter-department collaboration. Support units are also required to complete an annual quality report, which provides valuable input for the annual institutional quality report (AIQR).

- Faculties provide an annual quality report, which is linked to the annual programme monitoring process and resulting faculty action plan.
- Systematic and ongoing risk assessment exercises (feeding into risk registers) are undertaken by academic and support units in line with UL's risk management policy, the implementation and monitoring of which is undertaken by Executive Committee and Governing Authority's Audit and Risk Committee.
- Led by the QSU, the University conducts compliance exercises to document the extent to which the institution meets its external QA obligations. This work is guided by the *Process for Assessing Compliance with Statutory and Related Quality Requirements* (an internal document stored on SharePoint). Once the University receives notice of a new or revised quality requirement, the QSU coordinates an exercise that assesses the extent to which the University complies with that requirement. Examples include the 2015 ESG and QQI guidelines and codes of practice. Responsibility for assessing how the University complies with the requirement lies with the unit(s) or officers that have functional responsibility in the area concerned. Refer to the Compliance page of the QSU for more details. Identified enhancement opportunities lead to the development of a QIP, which is implemented by relevant units.

10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

Peer Relationships with the Broader Education and Training Community
A diverse range of initiatives, procedures and activities are enacted at institutional and local level with a view to promoting stakeholder engagement. The following are some examples:

- UL Community Engagement hub including the K4C (Knowledge for Change Centre, one of two in Europe of this UNESCO-endorsed global network) and the UL Practicum modules, which span diverse disciplines and foster engaged learning and research with the communities of Limerick city and the region. These initiatives aim to inculcate civic values and promote access to higher education, learning attainment, research with societal impact and knowledge exchange. Building and strengthening community relations informs the development and delivery of programmes of study and research. The CWELL Specialist Diploma offers opportunities for communities to develop leadership.
- In line with the 2025 National Skills Strategy, the University is an active member of the Regional Skills Forum and participates in initiatives such as Springboard, Apprenticeships and Skillnets to develop, deliver, accredit and quality-manage flexible, work-based programmes.
- Students are systematically represented in all aspects of University governance and quality assurance activity (e.g. student representation on Governing Authority, Academic Council, faculty boards, course review boards and review panels of academic units).
- As part of the quality review process for academic, research and support units, individual units identify their customers and stakeholders and reflect upon levels of engagement with a view to identifying opportunities for enhancing quality. The quality reviewers meet with stakeholders as part of review site visits, and key stakeholders (e.g. student and employer representatives) are invited to participate on quality review teams.
- Engagement with employer and related stakeholders is largely facilitated by the Research Office (research, intellectual property and technology transfer), the Cooperative Education & Careers Division (managing a network of over 2,000 employers in the context of student placements) and Graduate & Professional Studies. These networks and linkages are routinely used to identify employer and related stakeholders for participation in QA activities (such as the external examining process, unit quality reviews and periodic programme reviews).
- The International Education Division facilitates stakeholder engagement by the faculties with academic institutions and other relevant organisations abroad. These networks and linkages are at the heart of the University's internationalisation agenda and are used to inform institutional quality improvement (learning from best practice).
- The University has a Director of China Engagement. The director's main function is to contribute significantly to the University's profile in China and the growth of Chinese student numbers at the University.
- One of the principles of the QMS framework operated by every support unit is relationship management, which involves managing relationships with suppliers, partners and other relevant parties. One aspect of this work is the establishment of criteria to select and evaluate external service providers. The extent to which units achieve this is audited through the inter-department auditing process and the periodic quality review process.

External Partnerships

The University considers entering into partnership agreements with public and private bodies to develop and accredit programmes of study that align with the institution's aims and goals as described in the strategic plan. The University pursues a defined framework (documented on SharePoint) to establish, following discussion with the external partner, the terms of reference of any accreditation arrangement. The accreditation process involves a review of the academic programmes of study and the capacity of the external partner to deliver the programmes in a manner consistent with the University's QA processes. The process entails establishing an accreditation committee tasked with reviewing external partner documentation and facilities and reporting recommendations to the relevant institutional committee.

External Examiners

In accordance with the University's QA procedures, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes to provide an independent report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. The External Examiner Policy specifies the examiners' roles and function, how they are appointed (including reference to conflict of interest) and how the system is administered.

External examiners of research programmes are approved by the relevant head of department/school and the Assistant Dean Research and appointed by Academic Council. Two-thirds of external examiners of taught programmes and PhD theses are international.

11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (details of specific engagements should be provided in the online section of the form).

Engagement with professional, statutory and other regulatory bodies is managed directly by the relevant academic or support unit.

Unit-level QA oversight of how these interactions are managed and enhanced falls under the auspices of each (support) unit's QMS activities and quality review processes (academic and support units). For example, the Office of the President's QMS encompasses a range of documents (quality policy and manual, customer charter and key business processes), which, collectively, record the Office's engagement activities with relevant statutory, regulatory and other bodies. The QMS also incorporates a quality improvement plan to drive continual improvement. The effectiveness of each unit's QMS and operational excellence is assessed by periodic quality review.

UL maintains (and updates annually) a central institutional repository (database) of programmes accredited by external/professional bodies.

In instances where engagement between a professional, regulatory or statutory body and an academic or support unit raises issues outside of the scope of the unit concerned, the unit liaises with the relevant UL committee, unit or management group.

> **12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)**
> Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

Public Information

The University regularly updates its website so that its wide range of stakeholders can easily source information relevant to them. The Office of the President is responsible for maintaining the high-level pages, such as those providing information on institutional leadership, Governing Authority, Academic Council and strategic publications. Individual units are responsible for maintaining their own websites, all of which are accessible from the University homepage.

The University adheres to the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which informs institutional practice in this area. Section 8 of the Act requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. Links to each section of the University's FOI Publication Scheme are maintained by the FOI section of the Corporate Secretary's Office. Links include:

- General Information about the University of Limerick
- Information on Functions & Services Provided
- Information on Decision-Making Procedures
- Financial Information
- Procurement Information
- Other Routinely Published Information / FOI Disclosure Log

The Corporate Secretary's Office website also includes sections on data protection, records management and environmental information.

The University's Student and Staff Gateway provides information on calendars and timetables; policies, procedures and handbooks; learning resources; support and administration; further study; and details on upcoming events.

The Marketing and Communications Division is responsible for gathering and disseminating a wide range of information to audiences both internal and external to the University. The Division also manages the University's institutional social media accounts. The University's Social Media Strategy and Social Media Policy are available here. The focus of the strategy is to develop a core tier of social media channels and adopt a proactive social media publishing process that integrates the four faculties and key business units. The Division supports the campus-wide University Social Media Community Group and offers training, strategic advice and policy guidelines.

Learner Information

The online prospectuses for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and the Graduate & Professional Studies (GPS) and International Education Division websites specify details of (or provide links to) the University's programme offerings. The published information for each programme specifies the programme's title; NFQ level; entry requirements; duration; structure; list of modules; career prospects; student profiles; video clips from students, graduates and staff; and a contact name

and email address for requesting more information. Hard copies of the prospectuses and supplementary programme descriptor documents are made available to the public during open days, career fairs and information evenings.

Current and prospective research students can access information on the University's research activities and offerings on the Research and GPS websites.

All programmes published on the online prospectuses lead to an award. Once a programme has been selected on the GPS website, the page specifies whether the programme leads to an award and, if so, what the award is. The International Education Division's International Foundation Programme web page makes it clear that the programme does not lead to an award itself but provides international students with an alternative application route to undergraduate study.

Information on internal transfer and progression is available in the Student Handbook, which all new students receive during enrolment.

Publication of QA Reports
QA evaluation reports are published at unit level in the context of the periodic quality review process for academic, research and support units. The outputs of the process for each unit include (i) a reviewers' report, which is published on the QSU website; and (ii) a quality improvement plan (QIP) for the unit, which is based on the recommendations from the reviewers' report. The final QIP implementation summary report is published on the websites of the QSU and the relevant unit, and the QSU informs the campus community (by email) about the publications.

The University publishes the reports from its institutional reviews (2004 and 2011 to date) on the Office of the President and QSU websites.

13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.

In the context of the 2012 Education and Training Act and in its role as a designated awarding body, the University accredits a number of programmes offered by linked providers. The University's linked provision arrangements are guided by its Linked Provider Framework. The framework covers linked provider approval, annual monitoring and periodic review processes, which include clear governance guidelines.

As a designated awarding body, the University has established relationships with two educational linked providers: Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick and the Garda College, Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

QA procedures for engaging with linked providers are governed by memorandums of understanding and agreement (MoUs/MoAs) between the University and individual linked providers. The MoUs/MoAs, and hence the exact profile and scope of the resultant QA oversight, are tailored to best suit individual institutional contexts and are approved ultimately by Academic Council and Executive Committee.

14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)
Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

N/A

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

The Office of the VPAASE follows internal guidelines when responding to requests for accreditation from external bodies. These guidelines, which are retained on an internal SharePoint site, have been informed by the IHEQN guidelines on collaborative provision.

In July 2015, QQI published a Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. The Code of Practice (or 'the Code'), which both draws upon and informs international effective practice, can be accessed here or from the QQI website. The Code represents a set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners. In the introductory text, QQI indicates that compliance with the Code should be integrated into the provider's quality assurance policies and procedures.

An evidence-based overview of (a) how compliance with the Code is integrated into UL's quality assurance policies and procedures and (b) how UL complies with each of the specific criteria included in the Code is available here.

In May 2018, the QSU undertook a scoping exercise in relation to (a) exemplar national and international practice as applied to collaborative and transnational provision and (b) current UL practice in this area. This, in turn, facilitated a preliminary gap analysis to be undertaken in relation to our current practice. A discussion document was prepared for the VPAASE for consideration by the International Committee.

16. Additional Notes
Any additional notes can be entered here.

17. Internal Review Schedule
The internal reviews schedule or cycle at the level of unit of review within the institution. The units of review can be: module; programme; department/school; service delivery unit; faculty. The cycle will usually run over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

Year	**2018/19**
Areas/Units	Students' Union (Oct '18); Postgraduate Students' Union (Oct '18); UniJobs (Dec '18); Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (Feb '19)
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

Year	**2019/20**
Areas/Units	Library & Information Services Division (Sept '19); Cooperative Education & Careers Division (Dec '19); Buildings & Estates (Mar '20)
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

Year	**2020/21**
Areas/Units	Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (Oct '20); National Council for Exercise & Fitness (Dec '20), Human Resources Division (Jan '21), Lero Research Institute (April '21), Information Technology Division (May '21)
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

Year	**2021/22**
Areas/Units	Faculty of Science & Engineering (Sept '21), Bernal Research Institute (Nov '21); Finance (Jan '22); Health Research Institute (Feb '22); Faculty of Education & Health Sciences (Mar '22); International Education Division (May '22)
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

Year	**2022/23**
Areas/Units	Research (Oct '22); Academic Registry (Nov '22); UL Sport (Feb '23); Plassey Campus Centre (Apr '23)
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

Year	**2023/24**
Areas/Units	Marketing & Communications (Sept '23); Office of the President (Nov '23); Graduate & Professional Studies (Feb '24); UL Alumni (May '24)
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

Year	**2024/25**
Areas/Units	Institutional Cornerstone Quality Assurance Processes
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	https://www.ul.ie/quality/current-review-cycle

18. Engagement with Third Parties Section

Details of engagement with third parties, including:

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies
2. Collaborative Provision
3. Articulation Agreements

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	23
Awarding Bodies	0
QA Bodies	2

First Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	QA Body
Name of Body:	European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Business Studies https://www.efmdglobal.org/accreditations/
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	20 June 2015
Next Review Year	2020

Second Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Architecture https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/education/accredited-programmes
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	26 March and 16 May 2019
Next Review Year	2020 (year 5 only)

Third Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Irish Medical Council
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/Education/Career-Stage-Undergraduate/Quality-Assurance/Medical-School-Accreditation/
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	16 October 2019
Next Review Year	2024

Fourth Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	The Teaching Council
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science in Physical Education https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education/Review-and-Professional-Accreditation-of-Existing-Programmes-of-ITE/Completed-Reviews/Completed-Reviews.html#Concurrent%20Post-primary
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	20 April 2015
Next Review Year	2020

Fifth Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	The Teaching Council
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science (Education) in Biology with Physics or Chemistry or Agricultural Science https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education/Review-and-Professional-Accreditation-of-Existing-Programmes-of-ITE/Completed-Reviews/Completed-Reviews.html#Concurrent%20Post-primary
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	20 April 2015
Next Review Year	2019/20

2. Collaborative Provision

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
Joint Research Degrees	1
Joint/double/multiple awards	7
Collaborative Programmes	9
Franchise Programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	2

First Collaborative Provision:	Linked provider
Name of Body (bodies):	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Full list of programmes available at www.mic.ie
Date of Last Review	30 November 2016
Next Review Year	2023

Second Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of Body (bodies):	KEDGE Business School, Marseille, France
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Arts in International Business https://www.ul.ie/business/kbs_kedge
Date of Last Review	29 July 2016
Next Review Year	2021

Third Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	Irish Revenue Commissioners
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Diploma in Applied Taxation and Bachelor of Arts in Applied Taxation https://www.ul.ie/business/taxation_programmes
Date of Last Review	14 February 2014
Next Review Year	TBC

Fourth Collaborative Provision:	Linked Provider
Name of Body (bodies):	The Garda College
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	• Bachelor of Arts in Applied Policing and Criminal Justice • Graduate Certificate / Masters in Serious Crime Investigation https://ulsites.ul.ie/law/sites/default/files/BA%20Applied%20Policing%20Brochure_0.pdf
Date of Last Review	17 November 2014
Next Review Year	2021

Fifth Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of Body (bodies):	National University of Ireland, Galway
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Professional Diploma in Mathematics for Teaching
Date of Last Review	8 February 2013
Next Review Year	2020

Sixth Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of Body (bodies):	National University of Ireland, Galway
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Master of Science in Sustainable Resource Management: Policy and Practice
Date of Last Review	1 March 2019
Next Review Year	TBC

3. Articulation Agreements

Articulation Agreements - Total Number	33

First Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Shandong University of Technology, China.
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science in Computer Systems www.sdut.edu.cn
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	June 2013
Review Year for Agreement	TBC

Second Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Henan Polytechnic University, China.
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic and Computer Engineering www.hpu.edu.cn
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	June 2012
Review Year for Agreement	2020

Third Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Henan Polytechnic University, China.
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering www.hpu.edu.cn
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2019
Review Year for Agreement	TBC

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

Parts 2-6 are completed annually with information pertaining to the reporting period (i.e. the preceding academic year only).

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

Part 2 provides information relating to institution-led quality assurance for the reporting period.

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

> **1.1** The evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems in support of strategic objectives in the reporting period.

- **Quality Policy**: Academic Council endorsed the UL Quality Policy at its meeting on 15 May. Like most of the Irish universities, UL had a quality statement outlining its commitment to quality assurance and enhancement. In line with sectoral developments, a full policy has been designed to replace the institutional quality statement. This policy formally articulates the University's commitment to quality in all of its endeavours. It aims to foster and underpin a quality ethos and culture within the institution. It articulates the influences and principles upon which institutional quality arrangements are based and the general characteristics of such quality arrangements. The policy provides an overview of the primary institutional quality arrangements and how these arrangements satisfy core statutory quality requirements. It provides details of the principle UL committees, bodies, offices or officers holding primary responsibility for the development, implementation and oversight of core quality systems. The policy provides transparency, along with evidence-based reassurance, to stakeholders and interested parties of the University's commitment to quality as a core institutional value.
- **Quality Manual**: The University published a Quality Manual in August 2019. The purpose of the manual is to provide an overview of the quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) arrangements of the University. The first chapter provides an overview of the University itself and its institutional-level QA and QE arrangements. Chapters 2 to 12 are structured around and address the individual elements of the core statutory QA guidelines established by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for providers of higher, further and English language education and training. The Quality Support Unit (QSU) will review and update the manual on an annual basis and ensure that the most recent version is published on its website.
- **Linked Provision Framework**: As a designated awarding body (DAB), UL has long-standing relationships with two linked providers: Mary Immaculate College and the Garda College. The

University has integrated its linked provider arrangements into a single [Linked Provider Framework](). The published framework:

- o Articulates a UL policy framework in respect of linked providers
- o Presents procedural documentation that facilitates the implementation of this framework
- o Clarifies governance and oversight responsibilities in relation to linked provision
- o Provides information in a transparent manner to interested parties, internal and external to the University, in relation to linked provision policy and procedures
- o Provides assurance to interested parties that UL's linked provision arrangements are in line with national statutory requirements.

- **AACSB Accreditation**: The Kemmy Business School (KBS) at UL was awarded a prestigious global accreditation, thereby joining the top 5% of international business schools recognised by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). KBS has been recognised by AACSB International for demonstrating excellence in teaching, research, curriculum development and student learning. AACSB is the longest-serving global accrediting body for business schools, with its accreditation being the hallmark of excellence in business education. UL joins UCD and DCU in receiving the AACSB endorsement among Irish universities.

- **Athena SWAN Awards**: UL was awarded a Bronze Athena SWAN Award to the Expanded Charter in April 2019. The expanded charter recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women. Therefore, Athena SWAN is not just about one gender or academics or the sciences but promotes equality and diversity across all disciplines (including arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law) and all professional and support roles and includes trans staff and students. Three individual schools/departments also received bronze awards in April 2019 (Graduate Entry Medical School, Kemmy Business School and School of Allied Health). The Department of Mathematics and Statistics renewed their bronze award. In total, eight schools/departments now hold Athena SWAN Bronze Awards.

- **City Centre Campus**: The University signed the contracts to purchase the Dunnes Stores site on Sarsfield Street in Limerick city. Dunnes Stores directors attended on campus on Thursday May 23 to formalise the agreement in favour of the University. The decision to purchase the site represents the beginning of what will become the largest ever development in higher education in Limerick city centre. The 5,500m^2 building on a one-acre site will become the location for the University's City Campus.

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

- **Senior Management Appointments**:
    - **Director of Quality**: In May 2019, the University of Limerick appointed a new Director of Quality. The Director of Quality has responsibility for embedding and strengthening a culture of quality through policies, guidance and procedures that safeguard and enhance quality in all areas of institutional operation.
    - **Vice President Research and Enterprise**: In July 2019, the Governing Authority approved the appointment of an Executive Vice President for Research and Enterprise. Given that research in the university sector in Ireland is now gaining significant attention, the research function is vital to the future of UL. Research and innovation forms a main pillar of the new UL Strategic Plan, which was launched in the October 2019.
    - **Director Human Resources**: The Director of Human Resources is responsible for establishing and delivering an ambitious people strategy that balances organisational change and rationalisation with evidenced commitment to employee engagement, partnership, equality and inclusiveness.
    - **Head of Operations, HR**: The Head of Operations has accountability for the effective discharge of all day-to-day operations with particular emphasis on recruitment, contract management, payroll services, pensions and HR systems. The appointee's role includes identifying and documenting strategic priorities to form part of the overall HR strategic plan.
    - **Head of Service Engagement, HR**: The Head of Service Engagement has accountability for the effective deployment, leadership and coordination of the Business Partner resource, employee relations and organisational development and change capability in line with the HR strategic plan.
    - **Head of Learning and Development, HR**: The Head of Learning and Development is responsible for creating, implementing and maintaining a comprehensive talent development strategy for a high-performing university. The appointee leads a team to deliver a range of customer-centred talent development programmes with the aim of enhancing individual and organisational performance in line with the University's strategic goals.
    - **Assistant Dean, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS)**: The agenda of the Assistant Dean, EDI has, in recent years, become a key strategic priority and a key performance indicator (KPI) for universities, and its remit has grown in significance. As a faculty, AHSS is strongly committed to the EDI agenda and will apply under the extended charter for Athena SWAN accreditation in spring 2020. In addition, access and retention are key priorities and KPIs for the sector and represent particular challenges for AHSS. The new role will lead the faculty in prioritising and addressing all of these issues and will make a significant contribution to advancing them at institutional level.
- **Executive Committee**: The structure of the University's Executive Committee, which advises the President on all aspects of UL activities, was reviewed in 2018 and revised in 2019. New

sub-committees were created to focus on six strategic areas in line with the new strategic plan: Quality Committee, Education and Student Experience Committee, University Research Strategy Board, University Global Engagement Committee, Operations Committee and Campus Infrastructure Committee.

- A UL Policy Management Framework was approved by Executive Committee in June 2019. The purpose of the framework is to establish a standard template for policy documents, a set of policy principles and instruments for policy development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review throughout the University. The use of the framework will enable a consistent policy development process to be taken and will promote best practice across the University. The framework sets out the requirement to identify policy owners and their roles in relation to the need, proposal, development, approval, implementation and review of UL policies. The framework was formally approved by Governing Authority in September 2019.

- A new UL Student Complaints Policy and Procedures document was approved by Academic Council in June 2019. The policy covers complaints from students in relation to the provision, facilities, services and staff of the University. The new policy streamlines the process and provides clarity on the correct procedure to follow after a student complaint has been received.

- The University's Research Integrity Policy, which was first established in 2016, has undergone a review in line with international best practice and to reflect updates in the National and European Codes of Conduct for Research Integrity and the updated Data Protection Policy (GDPR). The updated policy was approved by Academic Council in May 2019 and will be operational for the coming 2019/2020 academic term. Online training in the area of research integrity is available to the campus community and is organised by the Research Governance Officer.

- The following policies were approved by Governing Authority during the reporting period:
  - o Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedures
  - o Further Study Policy
  - o Data Protection Policy
  - o Code of Conduct for GA Members
  - o Policy on the Provision of Non-Audit Services by the External Auditors
  - o Policy for the Award of University Honorary Doctorates
  - o Statute No. 4
  - o Internal Audit Charter

- The UL Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures was updated in June 2019 and approved by Academic Council. Amendments were made to Chapter 3 (Programme-Specific Regulations) and Chapter 5 (Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations).

- Following a benchmarking exercise against Irish, UL and US higher education institutions, the University's IT Security Policy was reviewed and published in July 2019. The policy details the responsibility each member of the campus community must share in protecting UL's computer network and data against external threats to the University's academic reputation and excellence.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Governing Authority (GA)
4 October 2018
14 December 2018
1 February 2019
5 April 2019
7 June 2019

Finance, HR and Asset Management Committee (GA sub-committee)
21 September 2018
15 November 2018
12 February 2019
16 April 2019
20 May 2019

Access Equality and Student Affairs Committee (GA sub-committee)
18 October 2018
13 December 2018
5 March 2019
4 April 2019
6 June 2019

Audit and Risk Committee (GA sub-committee)
12 September 2018
21 November 2018
21 February 2019
10 April 2019
19 June 2019

Academic Council
3 October 2018
12 December 2018
6 March 2019
15 May 2019
12 June 2019

Academic Council Grading Committee
5 September 2018
25 September 2018
6 December 2018
14 January 2019
7 May 2019

31 May 2019
12 June 2019
28 June 2019

Academic Programme Review Committee
7 September 2018
5 October 2018
2 November 2018
7 December 2018
11 January 2019
8 February 2019
8 March 2019
12 April 2019
17 May 2019

Academic Regulations Committee
4 September 2018
16 October 2018
27 November 2018
8 January 2019
12 February 2019
26 March 2019
23 April 2019
28 May 2019

Executive Committee
19 September 2018
3 October 2018
14 November 2018
28 November 2018
12 December 2018
 9 January 2019
23 January 2019
6 February 2019
20 February 2019
6 March 2019
20 March 2019
3 April 2019
17 April 2019
15 May 2019
29 May 2019
12 June 2019
10 July 2019

Faculty Boards (KBS = Kemmy Business School; EHS = Education and Health Sciences; S&E = Science and Engineering; AHSS = Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)
26 September 2018   EHS
10 October 2018   AHSS, KBS, S&E

21 November 2018	AHSS, KBS
28 November 2018	EHS, S&E
6 February 2019	AHSS, EHS
13 February 2019	KBS, S&E
27 March 2019	AHSS, EHS, KBS, S&E
University Teacher Education Board	
28 September 2018	
9 November 2018	
15 February 2019	
26 April 2019	

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

Unit Reviews

UL Student Life (October 2018)
Link to Publication

Postgraduate Students' Union (October 2018)
Link to Publication

UniJobs (November 2018)
Link to Publication

Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (February 2019)
Link to Publication

2.2 Profile of internal approval/evaluations and review completed in the reporting period.

Number of new **Programme Validations/Programme Approvals** completed in the reporting year 　New programmes 　Existing programme modifications	 20 114
Number of **Programme Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Research Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **School/Department/Faculty Reviews** completed in the reporting year	1
Number of **Service Unit Reviews** completed in the reporting year	3
Number of **Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations** completed in the reporting year	0

2.3 Profile of reviewers and chairs internal approval/evaluations and review for reviews completed in the reporting period.

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	10
National	19
UK	43
EU	
Student	14
Other	14

Chair Profile	%
Internal	
Similar Institution	
Different Institution	75
International	25

Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

3.1 A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

- **Student Exit Survey**: The 2019 Student Exit Survey was launched online in March and was available to students until mid-September. A total of 5,347 students were invited to participate; the response rates were 24% for bachelor's programmes and 16% for non-bachelor's programmes. The reporting structure is as follows:
    - Individual programme reports are sent to the lecturer listed as course director.
    - Heads of departments/schools receive reports on all programmes associated with their department/school.
    - Deans receive reports on all departments/schools associated with their faculty.
    - Executive Committee and Academic Council receive a report on the aggregate data for the University. The Director of Quality makes a presentation to Academic Council on the key findings of the exit survey.
    - Heads of support departments/divisions receive reports based on comments that respondents make in relation to their services.
- **Survey (MSS)**: In accordance with published policy and procedures, the University of Limerick regularly conducts a module satisfaction survey (MSS) of students undertaking UL modules. In October 2018, MSS requests were distributed to students who were undertaking one or more UL modules that semester. This represented approximately 62,000 individual requests to almost 15,000 students taking one or more of approximately 1,270 current modules on offer. A total of 17,223 responses were received, which represents an overall response rate of 28%.
- **Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)**: The SET is used by UL's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to gather in a structured manner feedback from students about individual approaches to teaching. The SET process is voluntary and confidential and is designed to provide useful information to individual lecturers on their students' experiences of the modules they teach. In the academic year, 269 lecturers requested a SET, which involved 404 modules and 5,971 student responses.
- **Peer Observation of Teaching**: The observation of teaching by peers has continued to provide a forum for partners to develop their teaching practice by observing and being observed. With 60 participants engaging with the process during the year and inter-institutional partnerships being established, this network is providing a valuable platform for dialogue on teaching and learning. In its leadership of this initiative, the CTL facilitated Shannon Consortium regional peer observation workshops on 4 October 2018 and 5 February 2019.
- **Studentsurvey.ie**: The StudentSurvey.ie (previously named the Irish Survey of Student Engagement – ISSE) is a national survey that is distributed annually to first-year, final-year and postgraduate students across the country. The survey covers a range of aspects of student life, and the results can help inform local and national strategies. The survey was open to UL students from weeks 7 to 9 in the second semester. The UL response rate for 2018/19 was 22%.

- **Postgraduate Research Experience Survey**: Since 2013, the Graduate School has conducted an annual exit survey of research postgraduate students who have successfully completed their studies. Areas covered include supervision, resources, culture, progression thesis submission and examination processes as well as professional development and research skills. The number of respondents over the six-year period 2013 to 2018, inclusive, ranged from 33 to 58 and the response rates varied from 24% to 43% with a mix of gender, award level and mode of attendance. The 2018 response rate was 43%. The feedback from the surveys is used to drive improvements in the Graduate School's support services to research postgraduate students and to identify potential amendments that need to be made to UL's academic regulations.
- **Graduate Outcomes Survey**: The UL Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) is a detailed review of the employment outcomes of UL graduates conducted annually by the University and supported by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The survey forms part of a nation-wide review of the employment outcomes of Irish university graduates. This year, 3,685 graduates were surveyed, with a response rate of 70%. The survey results can be found [here](#).
- **UL Learning Support Centres**: Dedicated and technology-enhanced learning support is provided by UL's five learner centres (ICT, Maths, Peer Support, Science and Writing). With their tailored advice and through ongoing research and innovation, the learning centres play an important role in improving student retention, progression and completion.
  - **Science Learning Centre**: A total of 3,574 visits were made to the Science Learning Centre (SLC) during 2018/19 from students on 27 different programmes. The SLC works in collaboration with the Department of Physics on the SOPHia outreach project, which aims to increase the number of school students, especially females, taking physics at Senior Cycle. In 2018/19, the project leaders engaged with 550 school students and nine teachers and delivered workshops in Intel Shannon and NUI Galway (NUIG).
  - **Mathematics Learning Centre**: The level of student interaction with the Mathematics Learning Centre (MLC) in 2018/19 was high. The service recorded 7,844 contacts/attendances by students during the year: 4,190 attendances from 1,013 individuals in Semester 1 and 3,654 attendances from 1,009 individuals in Semester 2. MLC online videos on Sulis (UL's online learning environment) received 8,196 views as part of its on-demand support for students.
  - **ICT Learning Centre**: During 2018/19, the ICT Learning Centre (ICTLC) delivered more than 600 hours of various academic enrichment and intervention schemes and facilitated visits from 4,308 students, of whom more than 82% were first-year, second-year, graduate diploma or higher diploma students. The collaborative learning method of pair programming (PP) was delivered in both semesters in the Computer Science & Information Systems and Electronic & Computer Engineering departments' first-year programming labs. In total, 136 hours of pair programming support was delivered, which was more than twice that provided in the previous year.
  - **Regional Peer-Supported Learning Centre**: Regional Peer-Supported Learning Centre (PSLC) programmes provided support across both academic semesters to more than 1,600 accounting, computer programming and computer science students. Analysis shows that students who participated in the support schemes offered by the PSLC were more likely to achieve a C3 or higher grade than those who did not.
  - **Regional Writing Centre**: The Regional Writing Centre (RWC) co-directors devoted 425 hours to working with academic staff to develop 31 'Writing in Disciplines' activities designed to help integrate writing into modules. The work had an impact on

1,289 students (undergraduate and postgraduate) – a slight increase on last year. Fourteen peer tutors in academic writing facilitated 848 one-to-one peer-tutoring consultations for 578 students.

- **Teaching, Learning and Scholarship Programmes:** During the year, 15 academic staff members enrolled on the Graduate Diploma in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship. Seven candidates from the previous cohort progressed to the MA in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship in Higher Education, the first three graduates from which were conferred in autumn 2018. Thirty-three instructors from the Garda College completed the Specialist Diploma in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship.

3.2 Factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period.

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place to cover the academic linkage between Mary Immaculate College and UL was reviewed and amended through an iterative process. In its renewed form, the MoU will continue to provide a strong basis for the development of the relationship between the two institutions. The MoU now includes strengthened processes for quality monitoring, a specified period of review of at least once every five years and a clause to enable either partner to trigger the termination of the MoU. The revised MoU was endorsed by UL Academic Council at its meeting in December 2018 and by Governing Authority in February 2019.
- In partnership with University College Dublin and Maynooth University and with industry partners coordinated by Skillnet Ireland, UL is to lead a new €21 million SFI Centre for Research Training in Foundations of Data Science. This largescale collaborative initiative will address existing skills gaps in data analytics such as advanced analytics, high-performance computing and the ability to create bespoke algorithmic methods to turn data into knowledge.
- UL piloted the QQI Maths for STEM course in 2018/19 after formally recognising it as an alternative to the Higher-Level Leaving Certificate Mathematics (HLLCM) for Adult Learners. The HLLCM for Adult Learners had been delivered by UL in 2016/17 and 2017/18 in collaboration with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB). Delivered once again in collaboration with the LCETB, the pilot Maths for STEM course went well, and an MoU was signed on 10 July 2019 between UL and LCETB to continue to deliver the course for four years.
- UL was awarded funding for seven apprenticeships. Led by consortia of industry and education partners, the apprenticeships will lead to awards up to NFQ Level 10. They will be of two to four years in duration and will include a minimum of 70% on-the-job learning focusing on engineering, supply chain and software development. The core teaching and learning methodologies will be delivered flexibly using a mixture of online, blended and on-the-job learning. This collaboration with industry, regional partners and membership of the Shannon Consortium is in line with the University's commitment to increase industry engagement and to maximise regional resources for the provision of education, research and industry up-skilling.
- In January 2018, UL launched Ireland's first master's degree in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Funded by Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet, the programme includes a fast-track introductory certificate delivered in collaboration with the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC). More than 90 of the 100 students who completed the certificate in December 2018 applied for the MSc in AI that began in January 2019. Given its success, UL plans to offer the certificate programme twice per year. The programme was nominated for best contribution in AI at the recent Artificial Intelligence (AI) awards held in Dublin.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

- Funding was secured for two projects under the 2018 Higher Education Authority (HEA) Innovation and Transformation funding call. The two projects, described below, will make strategic contributions to transformative learning and teaching in UL.
    - o Enhanced Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning: A collaborative initiative with the Irish University Alliance, this project will directly respond to and shape students' established and emerging learning practices and build staff teaching capability.
    - o REAP – Regional Enterprise-Academic Partnership: A collaborative initiative with Limerick Institute of Technology and Mary Immaculate College, this project will engage practitioners in industry and business in designing and delivering online and blended learning.
- In collaboration with Hibernia College and Cork Institute of Technology, the CTL developed and piloted a short course under the National Forum Digital Badge series. The 'Getting started with online teaching' digital badge was piloted in April to June 2018. Due to its success, a second, UL-localised version was rolled out in September 2018.
- The Collaborative Knowledge Exchange for Learning Impact project (Crannóg) is a partnership between NUIG, UL, MIC and DCU. The aim of the project is to support the professional development of those in leadership roles in teaching and learning and to build digital capacity. The project concluded with a workshop on leadership perspectives in December 2018. Details and resources for the project can be found on the Crannóg website.
- As part of UL's international engagements, a new inter-institutional agreement was drafted with the Open University in Spain (UNED), and the lead educational developer in the CTL participated in Erasmus+ teaching mobility by leading a distance module on digital identity in the institution's online master's degree for career counsellors.
- In February 2019, SSPC, the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Pharmaceutical Research Centre, hosted by UL, won new funding under the EPSRC-SFI Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT) Partnership programme, an investment of approximately €39 million to support the involvement of SFI Research Centres in seven new joint Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs). The awards have been made under a new partnership between Science Foundation Ireland and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), which is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The funding, secured from SFI, will enable the SSPC to engage with two of the world-leading Schools of Pharmacy in the UK, at the University of Nottingham and University College London, in a new CDT in Transformative Pharmaceutical Technologies. The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) will fund the UK component of the CDT, with partners in industry adding to the overall investment. The funding will create 15 new PhD positions in Ireland, the first of which will commence later this year. The SSPC is committed to training industry-relevant graduates and will support the CDT researchers through the SSPC-structured PhD programme, which comprises credit-bearing, assessment-based modules as well as employment-relevant transferable skills training, industrial placements, and entrepreneurship and innovation programmes.
- UL received €1.4m under the HEA Innovation and Transformation scheme for the UL MEITHEAL project to draw together a range of existing strengths and initiatives across UL with a view to advancing an Irish prototype for a 'Civic University'. UL will exemplify how the strategic re-organisation of diverse academic and practitioner expertise and experience in

existing engaged activities can remove intellectual, structural and financial constraints to the achievement of cost-effective, cross-university approaches to best practice civic engagement.

- The CTL was selected to join an EUA Learning and Teaching Thematic Peer Group on internationalisation. The group will report the outcome of its work at the EUA Annual Learning and Teaching conference in Utrecht in February 2020.
- Following SFI reviews, two centres led by UL had their funding renewed for a further six years each.

Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.

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1. Effectiveness

Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

- **University of the Year 2019**: The University of Limerick was announced as 'University of the Year 2019' in The Sunday Times Good University Guide. UL's leading position in graduate employability, its cooperative education and internship programmes, its research in partnership with industry and the opening of the new Glucksman Library were among the many reasons cited for the award.
- **CECD ISE Award:** UL's Cooperative Education and Careers Division was the 2019 winner of the Institute of Student Employers (ISE) award for 'Best University and Employer Engagement Strategy'. ISE is the leading independent voice for student employers in the UK. It brings together employers, the higher education sector and other partners and provides leadership in all aspects of student development and employability. ISE awards benchmark outstanding performance and recognise and reward excellence across a number of categories. Entrants are judged independently by industry professionals. The award showcases best practice in an important domain and represents a major boost to UL's international profile.
- **Green Campus:** In 2018, UL successfully underwent a full reaccreditation assessment as well as adding Waste and Green ICT to its list of accredited themes. Achieving the Green ICT accreditation saw the Buildings and Estates Department partnering primarily with academia and the Information Technology Division (ITD) to refine the processes and procedures for safely disposing of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) in addition to making energy savings in server rooms. Achieving Green Campus accreditation for Waste gave rise to, among other things, the establishment of a Waste Management group within Buildings and Estates, the rollout of initiatives aimed at preventing waste (e.g. installation of fit-for-purpose water bottle refill stations), improvements to waste collection and segregation processes and improved data collection on waste.
- **2019 Education Awards**: In February 2019, the International Education Division won the award of Best Erasmus Programme at the Irish Education Awards for the second consecutive year. The Education Awards were designed to recognise, encourage and celebrate excellence among third-level education providers across the island of Ireland. The academic study placement abroad forms an integral and mandatory part of seven degree programmes in UL while further degree programmes offer a voluntary academic placement. These academic placements are all awarded credit and appear on the student's final transcript. Data for 2018/19 reflects a 22% increase in the number of outgoing students from a wide range of subject areas, with almost 500 students availing of the Erasmus KA103 funding. A further 600 students availed of the Erasmus+ academic programme in UL.
- **I-Graduate Student Barometer:** In the results of the I-Graduate Student Barometer (ISB) survey undertaken in autumn 2018, UL ranked No. 2 in the world for international student

happiness, is the most recommended university in Ireland, offers the best accommodation in Ireland, has the best International Office in Ireland and the UK, has the best library in Ireland, is No. 1 globally for social activities and is perceived as No. 1 for multicultural classrooms. Covering all aspects of university life, the survey involved feedback from almost 200,000 international students, of which 49,036 were from the UK, 5,598 from Ireland and 394 from UL. UL benchmarked very well against six Irish HEIs (five universities and RCSI), 51 UK universities and 199 global universities.

- During the reporting period, the Student Engagement and Success (SES) educational developer and first-year support coordinator collaborated with the Department of Computer Science & Information Systems to pilot a student leadership initiative. The aim of the programme was to increase the level of programme socialisation and academic culture through staff and student interaction. The initiative involved three key groups: first-year students, older peers in the same programme, and academic teaching staff within the school/department. An evaluation of the pilot was undertaken to inform the expansion of the initiative in 2019/20.

- The University of Limerick is one of only 139 universities and colleges around the world to be honoured by Exercise is Medicine® for its efforts to create a culture of wellness on campus. A diverse complement of opportunities for education on, and engagement in, physical activity as a vital sign for health helped UL earn silver-level designation from the Exercise is Medicine® On Campus (EIM-OC) programme.

> **2. Impact**
> Evidence of the impact of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

- **SITS Stabilisation Project**: In order to mediate the risks and improve the ability of the student records system to support the university's needs, UL accepted the recommendations of external review in 2015 for a student records systems development strategy with the following three stages: QCA Calculator development, Tactical Stabilisation Programme followed by a Strategic Implementation stage. Stage 1, implement the QCA calculator was completed for the 20116/7 academic year. Stage 2, Tactical Stabilisation programme was commenced following tender process in January 2018 when a strategic partner was appointed to deliver on tactical stabilisation. The tactical stabilisation programme completed a review during 2018/9 of Academic Registry staffing levels and operating model and the recommendations led to the creation of a new academic registry structure. The new structures was supported by the appointment of key management staff with additional executive administrative staff to address skills deficits identified in the review. One of the key activities in this period was training and development programme to provide new staff with the skills and knowledge to support the processing operations during the student lifecycle and in preparation for the process mapping during the 2019/20 academic year. The appointment of a data governance facilitated the completion of a data quality audit and the creation of a student records data dictionary. The plan for 2019/20 is to develop and implement a service model and complete process reviews, mapping and definition phase across a number of key business areas. A project roadmap Phase 2 tactical stabilisation will then be agreed by the project steering committee for completion during this year.
- **New Glucksman Library**: The new Glucksman Library was officially opened in June 2019. With the addition of 7,600m^2 to the original library building, the library has doubled in size and capacity. The library now includes a range of world-class innovations in book storage and retrieval, digital research, accessibility and inspirational learning spaces. One standout feature is the ARC (Automated Reserve Collection) – a 10-meter-high book vault and robotic crane with the capacity to store 500,000 volumes in a space one-ninth the size of conventional shelving. The expanded building also features a Law Library and Appellate Court and a Medical and Health Sciences Library. There are discrete spaces for postgraduate and faculty study, group study and exhibition spaces. Other bespoke areas include a Digital Scholarship Centre, social learning spaces and an Assistive Technology Centre. The opening of the new library will greatly enhance the student learning experience at UL. An International Advisory Board has been established to support the future development of the Glucksman Library, including the areas of digitisation of collection and digital data management; development and implementation of new digital learning strategies; and outreach and income generation initiatives. The Advisory Board met for the first time on 3 December 2018. It will meet three times a year and will promote the international networking and enhanced recognition of the library.
- **Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)**: Following the externally led quality review of the CTL in 2017/18 and its recommendations, the CTL underwent an internal review in 2018/19 with

the aim of consolidating its strengths and further growing its impact on widening participation in higher education and student success at UL. Outcomes of that review have informed the structural alignment of roles and responsibilities in the CTL with UL's emerging strategic plan and Academic Transformation Programme.

- **Campus Wi-Fi Project**: In response to customer feedback, the provision of a high-quality wireless system throughout the campus has been included in the ITD strategic plan (UL Enable), which is aligned with the University's initiatives to enhance the student experience and develop the campus infrastructure. In January 2019, ITD commenced a project to design and deliver a high-quality wireless system to meet the requirements of students, staff and other relevant stakeholders. The system will provide wireless coverage for all buildings and select external spaces and will greatly enhance the teaching and learning experience of over 15,000 students.
- **Compliance Assessment**: An assessment-of-compliance exercise was undertaken with reference to the QQI Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for the Providers of Research Degree Programmes. Facilitated by QSU with input from Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS), the exercise resulted in the production of a quality improvement plan (QIP) that outlines seven actions to improve UL's compliance with the research guidelines.
- **UL Web Development Project**: UL is home to a large number of websites including the core University corporate site as well as numerous ancillary websites for faculties, schools and departments. With now more than 180 such websites, the sites have grown organically and differentially over time, which has led to a wide variety of heterogeneous offerings that have little or no coherence in look, feel or underlying technology and often do not display responsively on mobile or tablet devices. The web development project plan will provide the direction and operational resources required to deliver a new mobile-optimised accessible website and to elevate the entire UL web offering to modern standards and practices. It will establish a user-centred design process that will not only clearly identify and meet external user needs and goals but also clarify and align internal business and stakeholder aims to produce a usable modern website that advances UL's strategic, marketing and communications ambitions.
- **Research Week**: In 2018, a pilot Research Week was programmed and organised by the Research Office in collaboration with faculties, institutes and research centres. Feedback on the Research Week was very positive, and there are plans to make it an annual event in the future.

3. Themes
Analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

Preparations for the institutional review in 2020 identified a number of thematic areas of relevance to UL. Several enhancement actions were identified, both from the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) process and from conducting assessment-of-compliance exercises against statutory requirements and codes of practice. To enable corporate oversight of the implementation process, all actions have been included in an institutional quality improvement plan (QIP). Recommended actions were grouped into themes. Each action has a number of sub-actions to strengthen compliance. Areas of responsibility have been assigned for each sub-action. Enhancement themes include the following:

1. To ensure that the UL community understands the purpose of University committees and that committees work effectively
2. To ensure that practice is supported by and situated in a UL-wide policy, where appropriate
3. To ensure that stakeholder feedback mechanisms are effective and appropriate
4. To ensure that collaborative relationships between the University and current and prospective partners are effective
5. To enhance the provision of assessment feedback to students
6. To enhance student recruitment processes
7. To enhance data management and security
8. To enhance QA/QE monitoring and evaluation
9. To enhance programme development, review and evaluation
10. To ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and briefed for their role
11. To ensure that the needs of our diverse student body are accommodated
12. To enhance the University's processes governing research and research programmes

After each quality review, the QSU issue a survey to the review panel seeking feedback on the quality review process. On an annual basis, an analysis is undertaken of the feedback with a view to highlighting areas of good practice and suggestions for improvement. This year's feedback report has been published on the QSU website. It outlines themes arising from good practice identified and suggested areas for improvement. The report details a proposed actions plan for the coming year.

Each year, faculties complete an annual quality report. Themes emanating from examples of good practice reported this year include the following:
Accreditation
- International and national accredited programmes across diverse disciplines (project management, human resource management, accounting, insurance, taxation and finance) add to high graduate employability and status of programmes (EPAS, AMBA, CIPD, PMI and GAC).
- Significant proportion of programmes are professionally accredited, adding to employability and status of the programme.

Employability
- According to the UL Graduate Outcome Survey (2017), 95% of AHSS graduates were in employment or pursuing further study. AHSS had the highest number (24%) of students of any faculty pursuing further study. Those in employment had an average starting salary of €26,334 (which is increasing annually for KBS graduates). Of those employed, 15% are abroad, which is the highest number for any faculty, indicating the global reach of our programmes.

Impact
- Commitment to teaching and learning, as evidenced by the Disciplinary Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DELTA) awards conferred on two EHS schools and faculty members in 2018 (School of Allied Health and the Graduate Entry Medical School).
- S&E Summer Bursaries: now in its seventh year with 20+ undergraduate students per annum gaining experience of research and an awareness of options for PG study.
- The MA in Technical Communication and E-Learning has twice won the Grad Ireland award for Best Course in Arts and Humanities (in 2018 and 2019).
- LLM (General) won the best Law Postgraduate course at the HEA Grad Ireland Awards in 2018 and the MA in Serious Crime Investigation and the LLM in Criminal Justice were both shortlisted.
- Several programmes meet regional and national priorities, including meeting the strategic goals of the Government's 10-Year Foreign Language Strategy or the provision of courses to An Garda Síochána.

Industry Engagement
- Strong linkages with industry and professional bodies, such as the research scholarships from the Project Management Institute Educational Foundation (PMIEF). Such linkages also provide guest speakers, networking opportunities and value the strong emphasis on applied and research-led experiential learning.

Internationalisation
- Commitment to internationalisation through student recruitment; student, faculty and staff exchanges; dual degree offering; and international lecturers (especially on the MA International Tourism), and the international workshop/field trip differentiates some programmes from other competitive offerings.
- Promotion of internationalisation through the development of a jointly awarded programme shared with four other European universities (European Master in the Psychology of Global Mobility, Inclusion and Diversity in Society), as well as programmes designed purposely with international students in mind (see, for example the BSc in Nursing Studies and Paramedic Studies – pathway programme).

Student Engagement
- The University of Limerick Interdisciplinary Forum for Healthcare – student-led initiative bringing together students from different disciplines.
- Strong student engagement as evidenced by the student-led, inter-professional groups (UL Interdisciplinary Forum for Healthcare, Irish Interdisciplinary Forum for Healthcare and World Interdisciplinary Forum for Healthcare).

Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Incorporation of individual and team lab practice in Years 1 and 2 using Sulis. This improved engagement has seen an improvement in performance in first- and second-year electrical and programming courses that have traditionally seen high failure rates.
- Strong reputation in the workplace (public, private and voluntary sector) for providing a unique (sometimes sectoral focused) learning and personal development journey with

customised learning materials and supported self-directed study, with strong emphasis on practically focused assessments such as project management simulation.

- Range of relevant innovative assessment techniques that map appropriately on to learning outcomes, at both individual and group level.
- Professional development modules along with informal career advice from faculty with industry/professional experience bridge the gap between the theoretical world of business and the practical aspects of working within the financial sector.

Part 4: Quality Enhancement

Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.

4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period
Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

- In order to develop UL's Living Learning Programme in Residence, a senior manager from Plassey Campus Centre (PCC) attended the annual ACUHO-I Learning Initiatives Conference in Minnesota, USA with a view to benchmarking US university methods of integrating student residences into the academic life of a university. A number of different models were reviewed, and there are plans to further develop the initiative in 2020.
- During the reporting period, PCC gave autonomy to one of the student village managers to develop the concept of Rainbow Housing. With 250 students now living in LGBTQ+ themed housing, the initiative was a resounding success. The programme attracted media attention both nationally and internationally as UL is the first university in Ireland to have Rainbow Housing.
- During the reporting period, to reflect feedback obtained from the student complaints process, the UL Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures was revised to deal with instances where an external examiner for a research thesis fails to return his/her examiner's report within a reasonable timeframe. Also, in relation to research student progression, the regulations were amended to preclude the chairperson and the two independent panel members of the research progression appeal panel from acting as examiners at the examination stage.

4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights

Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

Case Study 1: Transforming the Glucksman Library: 'One Step at a Time'

Opened in autumn 2018, the new library extension was the culmination of a planning process that was informed by many years of user feedback, usage data, international benchmarking and best practice. Through the biannual library survey (since 2007), the University had a large corpus of feedback on library spaces in terms of what worked and what frustrated library users. University and international data indicated that effective quiet space for individual work remains a key priority for readers. At the same time, the very high usage of a small number of collaborate spaces in the original library highlighted a need for areas where groups could work together. At a furniture fair during the tendering stage, students were invited to sample different study desks and chairs and give feedback on what they wanted most in the new space. Two student members of the Library Building Design Committee provided insights throughout the process.

Staff visits to the newest, state-of-the-art libraries in Europe and North America provided a bank of images and ideas on international trends. These visits yielded examples of international best practice and pitfalls to be avoided. Popular features in other new libraries were replicated in the Glucksman. Library staff developed a keen understanding of the needs of taught postgraduates from survey feedback, which informed the planning of the Graduate Commons. Awareness of new trends and international best practice led to the inclusion of innovative new spaces, such as the Digital Scholarship Centre and Data Visualisation Lab. The success of the new library extension is evidenced in the most recent library survey by substantial increases in satisfaction levels. Usage data further illustrate the popularity of the building: visits to the library increased by 31 per cent to 1.06 million, the occupancy of bookable group study rooms reached 64 per cent in mid-semester, and 19,322 online bookings were made during 2018/19. Now an exemplar of best practice, the new library extension has drawn a national and international audience of visitors who are planning their own new libraries and learning spaces.

Case Study 2: Listening to External Examiners

External examiners report annually on the quality of education across all disciplines and programmes (see section 3.6). Drawn from the School of Law, the following case study provides one example of how this process enhances quality. At the first School meeting of the academic year, comments from external examiners are collated and discussed. For example, at the first meeting of 2018/19, positive comments such as the following were noted:

I am very happy with the content and standard of the exams and assessments…; The papers, essays, and other assessments that I reviewed have been marked fairly and conscientiously; Coursework and examinations had evidently been rigorously assessed against the intended learning outcomes; I would congratulate the team on putting together an excellent programme; I found the assessment methods entirely suitable in providing feedback, assessing student attainment, and achieving the learning outcomes of the modules and programme; I received very detailed information which assisted me

greatly in my role as extern; The staff are very committed, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and professional. The students perform to a high standard; The modules I evaluate are all taught by academics passionate about their subjects. The students are given the opportunity to engage with the relevant law and given suitable feedback and support.

The examiner reports are very useful in reassuring staff of the excellent work in which they engage, pointing out areas where improvements can be made and highlighting best practice in other institutions. In 2018/19, for example, items raised related to feedback, multiple choice question (MCQ) assessments and approaches to plagiarism. The School dealt with these issues in the first meeting of the academic year, where it was agreed that MCQ assessment techniques should not be overused or given too much weight. It was also agreed that decisions on plagiarism should be decided internally and that feedback should always be provided on formative assessments.

The issue of feedback was again followed up at the School's meeting of 13 February 2019, where exit survey results were discussed. While survey participants were positive in relation to the approachability of lecturers, it was noted that feedback on assessments is an ongoing issue and that continual assessment needs to be available across a range of modules. A review of assessment practices across all law modules and programmes was actioned by the School's Director of Teaching and Learning. Based on a review of the results at the School's April meeting, it was agreed that for formative assessments, students must receive individual feedback during the semester. For summative assessments, an answering guide will be prepared with each examination and an exam report will be prepared at the end of grading. This report will be sent to the external examiner and should be available, together with the answering guide, for all student script viewings and appeals. The guidelines and reports will be available on SULIS (the University's online learning environment) after the relevant examination process is complete.

Combined with exit survey results, the external examiner reports enable the School to discuss what is working well and what can be improved. On foot of such feedback, the School has put in place:

- best practice guidelines for staff in relation to submitting materials to external examiners (2015),
- an internal book of modules for clarity on how each module is being assessed (2015),
- a teaching and learning policy (2017), teaching and assessment practice guidelines (2017),
- a web page providing students with information on grade rechecks and appeals (2017), and
- a review of the assessment of all law modules across all programmes (2019).

Case Study 3: Annual Strategic Planning Process

While fulfilling their obligations to publish a five-year strategic plan, a number of universities have become aware of the need to be more flexible when striving to meet the changing environment in which they operate. In considering the current challenges within the higher education sector in Ireland, the performance of the University against the existing strategic plan and the emerging new Higher Education Performance Framework with the HEA, the President, with the support of Executive Committee and the Office of Strategic Projects and Transformation, embarked on an annual strategic planning process. There was wide engagement with the campus community and relevant external stakeholders in developing the new strategic plan, which covers the period 2019–2024.

The new annual strategic planning process enables an agile approach that allows for goals and targets to be adjusted annually, with a five-year horizon, to address changing local, regional, national and

sectoral requirements and opportunities and to build the academic reputation of the institution. A key outcome of the engagements referred to above was the recognition of the need to align the new strategic plan and its objectives and performance measures with the annual strategic planning process and the academic, as opposed to the calendar, year to ensure optimal strategic, financial and resource planning.

The implementation of the new strategic plan, aligned to the annual strategic planning process, will empower divisions, faculties and academic units to devise their own associated annual plans to support the implementation of the University's strategic plan. While these supporting plans will be annual, they will be written in the context of the institutional plan's five-year cycle. In addition, a suite of institutional strategies are being developed to support the implementation of the institutional strategic plan and the development of local annual plans.

Other key characteristics of the new, dynamic strategic planning process are as follows:

plans are adjusted annually to address changes in targets, opportunities, and regional and sectoral requirements;

- schools, faculties and professional services are empowered and supported in 'owning' annual plans with a five-year horizon and aligned to the University strategic goals and targets;
- plans are academically led, within resource constraints, collaboratively developed with other units and external partners and executed with the aim of maximising sustainability;
- plans will be considered by Executive Committee when it develops the annual budget and support plans;
- the process will lead to a more two-way iterative process of bottom-up and top-down planning;
- accountability and responsibility is clearly articulated and defined, with more independence given to the faculties; and resource allocation will be aligned to maximising the academic reputation of the University.

Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020).

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans
Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

Plans for quality assurance and enhancement for 2019/20 can be categorised as follows:
- Evaluation of the impact on quality assurance and enhancement of the implementation of the University's new strategic plan, UL@50: Strategic Plan 2019-2024.
- Evaluation of the impact of the implementation the University of Limerick Equality and Human Rights Strategy on quality policies and procedures.
- Evaluation of the impact on quality assurance and enhancement of the development of the Healthy UL Framework.
- Approval and publication of a UL-wide Policy Management Framework with supporting procedures and platform.
- Using funding from the Strategic Alignment Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Fund 2019, the Student Evaluation & Learning Analytics (StELA) Project will provide the basis of the development of the University's student evaluation and survey policy and use of data for student success policy.
- Ongoing preparations for the University of Limerick Institutional Quality Review.
- Evaluation of the impact of the new Executive Committee structure on quality assurance and enhancement.
- Enhancement of the annual programme monitoring and periodic programme review process and procedures.
- Development of a suite of academic quality policies to include the following:
  - Collaborative and Transnational Education Provision Policy
  - Policy on Provision of Apprenticeships
  - Work-Based Learning Policy
  - Policy for Management and Reporting of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)
- As part of the restructure of the Office of the VPAASE, a unit for Student Complaints, Appeals, Disciplinaries and Garda Vetting will be created at the end of 2019. Three full-time equivalent (FTE) members of staff will work in the unit.

5.2 Review Plans

A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

Unit Reviews:
- Library and Information Services Division (September 2019)
- Cooperative Education and Careers Division (December 2019)
- Buildings and Estates (March 2020)

Institutional Review:
- UL Institutional Review (March 2020)

5.3 Other Plans

Implementation of items identified through preparation for institutional review

Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

6.1 The Institution and External Review
A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

Preparations for the institutional review commenced in February 2018 with the agreement of a project plan governing all aspects of the CINNTE review process to the post-review phase. Executive Committee delegated responsibility for routine operational oversight of the institutional quality review process and its project management to the Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement (VPAASE), who was supported by the Quality Support Unit (QSU).

1. Personnel

Self-evaluation team
In October 2018, the VPAASE appointed Dr David Fleming to chair a team to undertake the self-evaluation exercise and prepare the ISER in advance of the review panel visit. The VPAASE wished to appoint someone with experience of core University activities but who was not part of the University's management structure. An employee of UL since 2005, Dr Fleming is Assistant Dean (Academic Affairs) in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and a member of Academic Council.

The self-evaluation team was selected to represent a cross-section of the campus community. The 21-member team includes 16 staff members and five students and is supported by the office of the VPAASE, members of the QSU and a technical writer. Gender balance was considered when establishing the composition of the team.

The five student representatives actively engaged in the team's work. Given the focus of the review's terms of reference, an international student was randomly identified. The respective presidents of the Students' Union (UL Student Life) and the Postgraduate Students' Union accepted the invitation, as did an undergraduate and a postgraduate student.

The staff members on the self-evaluation team were selected on the basis of having demonstrable interest and expertise in quality improvement. Of the 21 members of staff on the team, four (including the chair) represent the four faculties, five represent support departments (Graduate and Professional Studies, Student Affairs Division, QSU, International Education Division) and associated companies (Plassey Campus Centre) and one represents Governing Authority.
Since November 2018, the self-evaluation team met regularly in the initial phase of the exercise to undertake the data-gathering and analytical activities described in section 4 below. Communication to and feedback from the team relating to drafts of the ISER during the writing phase were undertaken by email.

Steering group

A [steering group](#) was formed to lead and support the self-evaluation (or 'core') team in its work. The steering group comprises the core team chair, a member of Academic Council, an academic staff member from the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the QSU Quality Officer, the Mature Student Access Officer and a postgraduate student. From February to June 2019, the steering group met fortnightly to coordinate project activities and direct the work of the core team.

2. Process milestones

Feb 2018	Project management plan adopted
Oct 2018	Dr David Fleming appointed to lead the self-evaluation team
Nov 2018	Self-evaluation team recruited
Nov 2018	First meeting of self-evaluation team and induction
Mar 2019	Meeting of QQI representatives with VPAASE and members of core team
Spring 2019	Regular meetings of steering group and self-evaluation team
June 2019	First draft of ISER completed
Sept 2019	ISER reviewed by Executive Committee
Oct 2019	ISER reviewed by Academic Council and noted by Management Council
Nov 2019	ISER noted by Governing Authority
Nov 2019	Finalisation of ISER and appendices
Dec 2019	ISER sent to QQI: 16 December

3. Keeping the campus community informed

On 21 December 2018, the Director of Quality informed the University community of the forthcoming institutional review by email. On 6 December 2018, the chair of the core team and Director of Quality met with Management Council to brief them on the review process. In April 2019, memoranda on current and future activities were circulated to Executive Committee, Academic Council and Management Council, while a general email update was sent to the campus community.

To keep the general campus community informed of the review and abreast of developments, a dedicated [web page](#) was added to the QSU website in November 2018. The page provides information on the self-evaluation exercise and the forthcoming review visit and contains links to the QQI Handbook, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and a list of both ISER teams. Once the final ISER and appendices were sent to QQI in December 2019, the report itself was uploaded to SharePoint (the University's internal file-sharing portal) for dissemination to the campus community, the members of whom were alerted to this by email from the VPAASE.

4. Data-gathering activities

The first meeting of the core team in November 2018 included an induction and planning workshop to help the team identify what it considered to be the University's main quality assurance and enhancement activities. As well as focusing on identifying what formal QA activities applied to the University's four core areas, i.e. teaching, learning, research and services, the workshop provided team members with an opportunity to get to know each other.

The core team met on six occasions. At its third meeting, the team reviewed and assessed how the University had implemented the recommendations of the 2012 review. It also began the process of an

in-depth analysis of how the University complies with ESG and QQI guidelines. The results of that analysis form a significant portion of the ISER.

During the spring of 2019, core team subgroups were formed to analyse the University's QA/QE activities with respect to each of the areas under review:
- research
- governance
- access, transfer and progression
- international learners
- compliance

The subgroups consulted widely in their respective areas and presented their findings to the core team in May 2019. Following discussion, the reports were finalised in June and used to inform the ISER.

An early decision was made to avoid contributing to 'survey fatigue' by using pre-existing survey data wherever possible, along with focus group activity. Following an email invitation to all students from the VPAASE, two student focus groups were held on 19 March 2019 with a random selection of students. Scheduled by the student representative on the ISER steering group, both focus groups were facilitated by final-year students with note-taking services provided by the QSU. One group provided feedback on how the University deals with assessment and feedback while the other dealt with learning resources.

Facilitated by an external consultant, three staff focus groups were held on 2 April. Members of staff were selected from departments and support units. Comprising 15 senior members of academic and support staff, the first group considered a number of QQI core guidelines (CG), including governance and management (CG 1); documented approach to quality (CG 2); staff recruitment, management and development (CG 4); and self-evaluation, monitoring and review (CG 11). The second group of 12 academic staff considered programmes of education and training (CG 3); teaching and learning (CG 5); and assessment of learners (CG 6). Comprising 12 professional service or support staff, the third group examined how the University dealt with information and data management (CG 8) and public information and communication (CG 9).

The results of both student and staff focus groups were considered by the core team on 7 May and were cited, where relevant, throughout the ISER report.

A quality team leaders' forum, which normally convenes as part of the quality management system, met on 11 June 2019 to consider and deliberate on the University's quality systems as they apply to support divisions. Members were asked to contribute case studies of enhancements undertaken as a result of quality review recommendations or customer feedback.

5. The ISER

The writing and editing of the ISER involved extensive consultation. With reference to the outcomes of the data-gathering activities described above, the chair began writing the initial draft of the report in spring 2019. That first draft was reviewed by the core team and the VPAASE in June and July, and the second draft was given to a technical writer in August. The next version of the ISER and all finalised appendices were reviewed in September by the core team, Executive Committee,

Management Council, Academic Council and Governing Authority, and amendments were made accordingly. The final ISER was submitted to QQI on 16 December 2019, and the main review visit is scheduled for March 2020.

6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance
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.

At the time of writing, the University of Limerick awaits the visit of its international panel for the CINNTE review. In considering the impact that the institutional review has had on the institution, the University has already begun working on the areas of enhancement that it has identified during the review process. Individual faculties, support and professional service departments and course boards continue to use the University's internal quality assurance system to improve their services and programmes on an annual and cyclical basis. The CINNTE review comes at an opportune time for the University as it has launched its new strategic plan (UL@50) for the next phase of its development. We are confident that the outcomes of our self-evaluation, our internal quality assurance mechanisms and the advice given to us by the international panel will inform the implementation of that plan.

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

Findings from the self-evaluation process were combined with compliance activities and categorised under 12 themes (as previously listed in Part 3, section 3 of this report) into an institutional quality improvement plan, the implementation of which will be overseen by the VPAASE.