Annual Quality Report (CCT College Dublin)
Reporting Period 2019-2020

CCT College Dublin

2021

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2019-2020

CONTENTS

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

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

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - *Internal QA Framework*	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*				
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
5.0 - *Staff Recruitment, Development and Support*	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - *Learner Resources and Supports*	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - *Information and Data Management*	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - *Public Information and Communication*	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - *Programme Delivery and Development*	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*				
9.0 - *Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for CCT College Dublin for the reporting period **1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020.**
The AQR has been approved by Academic Council of CCT College Dublin and is submitted by Naomi Jackson, Dean of Academic Affairs.

Institution Overview

CCT College Dublin is the trading name of CCT Education Limited an independent higher education institution with a city centre campus at 30-34 Westmoreland St., Dublin 2. The College was established in February 2005 and has a proven record in the delivery of further and higher education programmes as well as programmes of professional development. CCT has previously collaborated with a UK University in the delivery of programmes leading to awards of that University but since 2012 all academically accredited programmes of CCT have been awarded by QQI.

In 2018, CCT successfully re-engaged with QQI, securing approval of its QA procedures. As part of the re-engagement process the College outlined the intention to apply for extension of scope of provision up to level 9 taught Masters programmes. This intention was realised in March 2019. More recently, during the year that is the focus of this report, the College has further extended its scope of provision to include blended learning provision. The intention to extend scope to include blended learning was reflected in the QA policies and procedures approved as part of the reengagement process. The current scope of provision therefore comprises of major and non-major awards, from level 6 to level 9 taught Masters, in the discipline areas of business, computing and IT, in full time, part time and blended learning modes.

CCT College operates exclusively in Ireland and is not engaged in any collaborative, transnational or joint award programmes.

The College attracts both domestic and international students and also provides access to its undergraduate programmes through the CAO. It is well regarded by employers, many of whom are represented on the CCT Industry Engagement Forum (IEF) which provides for varying degrees of engagement by employers up to and including strategic partnerships.

CCT College Dublin is a member of the Higher Education College's Association (HECA) and is represented on the HECA Board, the HECA Higher Education Quality Assurance and Enhancement Forum, and the HECA Library Committee. The College is a member of the HECA PEL Scheme, enabling compliance with legal obligations in respect of the protection for enrolled learners.

Fit for purpose management and governance structures are in place to ensure there is no undue influence of commercial matters on academic decision-making. Further detail on management, governance and organisational structure and roles is documented in the QA manual.

Process for Development and Approval of the AQR.

The Dean of Academic Affairs leads the AQR working group comprising the Dean of School, QA Officer, Head of Enhancement and the Head of Student Services. The Working Group ensures the AQR is representative of the wider institution and reflects the input of all relevant stakeholders. The AQR is primarily populated with information and data obtained from quality assurance, enhancement and monitoring activities and reports such

as student satisfaction surveys, programme validation, external examiner reports, annual programme and departmental monitoring reports and evaluations of enhancement initiatives.

The AQR working group is required to consider continuity from the previous AQR report and action plan and ensure matters are closed off or extended upon, year on year, as appropriate. Upon completion, the AQR is first considered by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to confirm the accuracy of the content, alignment of action plans with strategic objectives and to obtain commitment to investment and resources associated with any actions as may be required. Upon approval from the ELT, the AQR is submitted to the Academic Council. The Academic Council may make recommendations for edits or the inclusion or removal of material. In such cases ELT must also be notified and may request a subsequent review following the changes. Submission of the AQR to QQI can only take place when Academic Council has recommended submission, and this is supported by the ELT.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Management and Governance

Full details of the governance and management of the institution, including key points of decision-making, terms of reference and representation of learners and external stakeholders are documented in the CCT QA Manual Section 2: Governance and Decision-Making.
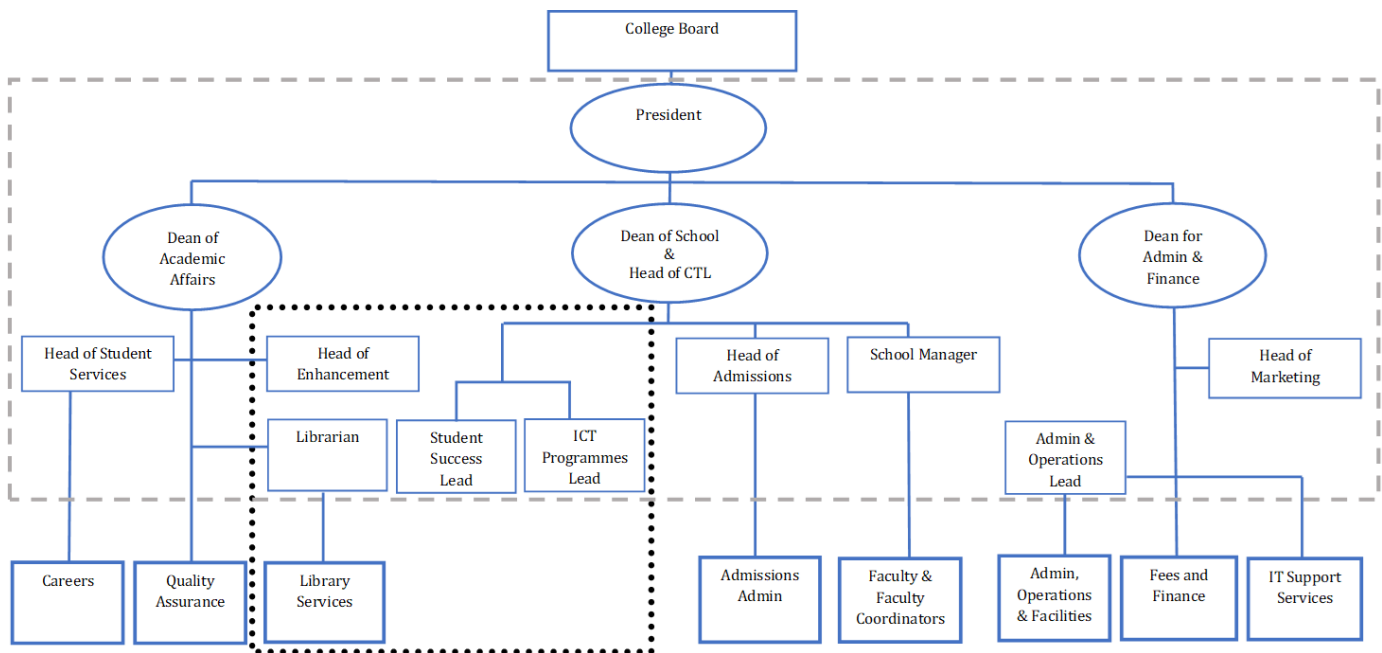
The following diagram represents the CCT Governance Structure:

Key:

Administrative
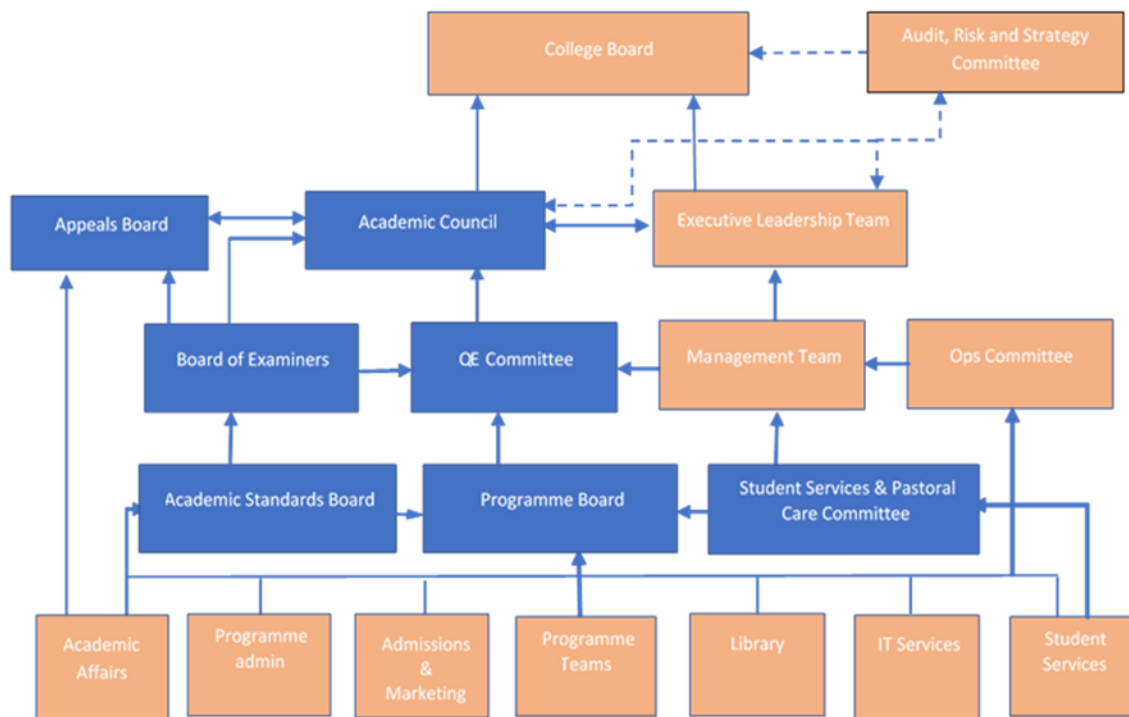
Academic

The organisation structure is as follows:

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                                    College Board
                                          |
                                     President
          ┌───────────────────────────────┼───────────────────────────────┐
    Dean of                        Dean of School                      Dean for
    Academic                            &                              Admin &
    Affairs                        Head of CTL                         Finance

Head of Student    Head of                    Head of      School Manager        Head of
  Services         Enhancement                Admissions                         Marketing

              Librarian   Student      ICT                              Admin &
                          Success   Programmes                        Operations
                          Lead      Lead                                  Lead

 Careers   Quality    Library          Admissions   Faculty &     Admin,      Fees and   IT Support
           Assurance  Services           Admin       Faculty    Operations    Finance     Services
                                                    Coordinators & Facilities
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Key:

⬭ Executive Leadership Team

– – – Management Team

• • • • • • Centre for Teaching & Learning

In academic year 2020/2021 the Board of Directors was renamed as the College Board to more accurately reflect that not all members of the Board are directors of the College. The Board includes non-executive members in addition to directors.

Quality Assurance System

The CCT QA Manual, including the policy for Quality Assurance (in section 3), documents the quality assurance system of the College.

The QA policies and procedures in operation comprise of those approved by QQI through re-engagement in 2018, the amendments and additions approved in March 2019 as part of the extension of scope of provision to include level 9 taught Masters programmes and those further approved following a virtual visit in July 2020 as part of the extension of scope application for blended learning provision.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

CCT is not currently a linked provider and does not engage in collaborative or transnational provision.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Quality assurance policies and procedures (QAPs) for the development and approval of programmes in CCT College were approved by QQI through the re-engagement process completed in 2018. At the end of the 2018/19 academic year, a review of effectiveness of the QAPs identified changes required to better ensure the fitness for purpose of the QAPs relating to programme development and specifically to better ensure the responsiveness of the College to potential programme development opportunities. These changes were approved by Academic Council.

Policy - CCTP401 - Validation Policy and Policy - CCTP402 - Programme Review and Revalidation Policy were updated to reflect changes in organisational roles and allocation of responsibilities previously attached to the Head of Faculty position which is no longer part of the College structure. The review had identified that the programme proposal form submitted to secure initial approval for developing a programme was overly prescriptive and required a degree of detail that more reasonably becomes available at a later stage in the development of a programme. It was noted that the documented process was not easily applicable in practice and therefore the revisions were made to more accurately reflect practice. Notwithstanding this, the process continues to require the presentation of a proposal to Academic Council and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for approval prior to commencement of a programme development, as per the original approved procedure.

Section 4 of the CCT QA Manual includes the policies and procedures for programme development and approval, including programme revalidation and development of blended learning programmes.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification
Guide

Section 6 of the CCT QA Manual deals with Access, Transfer and Progression and includes the following policies:

CCTP601 - Access Transfer and Progression

CCTP602 - Recognition of Prior Learning

CCTP603 - Induction of new Learners

These are as approved by QQI through re-engagement with the exception of a minor amendment to include the requirement to complete the RPL record for retention on an applicants' file in all instances of RPL applications. This amendment arose from completion of the annual admissions audit which recommended documentary evidence to support RPL admissions decisions should be included in the admissions file. This should include the recommendation from the academic staff member and a copy of records confirming satisfaction of award standard equivalence.

In addition to the above policies, section 11 deals with public information and includes the Policy - CCTP1101 - Public Information which outlines the information that must be made available to learners. Policy - CCTP404 - Blended Learning Policy, further details the additional specific requirements relating to blended learning programmes.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

CCT is not a designated awarding body and therefore does not make awards. Programmes leading to CCT Certification are clearly marketed as not leading to a framework award.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

In the 2018 / 19 AQR, CCT identified Teaching and Learning (including assessment within this) as a developmental theme of importance for future periodic review. The rationale for this was that the College had just completed extension of scope of provision to postgraduate programmes and had outlined its commitment to further increase its professional education programmes along with specialist, skills-based programmes responding to industry demand and Irish state initiatives. It was also noted that the College had established the Centre for Teaching and Learning and launched its Teaching Excellence Seminar Series along with plans for a Certificate in Teaching and Learning. These developments along with the increased digitisation of the campus and the commitment to collaboration and partnership were deemed to be of significance in informing and influencing teaching and learning developments in CCT in the medium term. The College particularly noted intentions to maximise the use of technology to enable and enhance teaching and learning. Discussion of developments reflecting this core theme is reflected in later sections of this report.

Section 5 of the CCT QA Manual accommodates the policies pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment. These are considered in conjunction with policies in section 4 which relate to programme development.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

CCT College Dublin has 29,000 square feet of campus space at its city centre site, 30-34 Westmoreland St., Dublin 2. It is fully Fire Safety Certified, has Disability Access Certification on the whole building and induction hearing loops for use with hearing aids fitted throughout the building.

The campus teaching spaces comprise of a combination of lecture rooms and interactive learning rooms each with Audio Visual display resources, including state of the art smart TVs, projection displays, and touch screen devices for lecturing purposes. In addition, the College has 2 fully sound proofed state of the art recording studios for live online lectures or recording of asynchronous content. There are 5 group-study and research areas and 3,000 square feet of library space and quiet study area. The library also includes an extensive online library catalogue of books and journals. Student printing facilities are available on campus, accessed through secure student login and a laptop loan scheme is also operated from the Library. Dedicated, fully accessible, office accommodation and lecture preparation areas are located throughout the building to facilitate lecturers being on campus and available to students outside of class times. Student lounge, kitchen and eating areas are available along with a games room and vending machines.

Student Services are located in the Main Office and are accessible to students by appointment or walk-in, by email and telephone. Supports include general guidance and information services, accommodation information supports, international learner supports including matters relating to visas, social supports, clubs and societies. The College also provides access to mental health supports and counselling services, available in multiple languages and paid for by the College. Student Success Classes are provided on campus and online through the Library Service either upon request or by referral. The College also operates a Student Mentoring Academy, an initiative of the Centre for Teaching and Learning which promotes student development through peer mentoring of small groups of students or on a one-to-one basis.

Section 9 of the CCT QA Manual addresses learning resources and student support. These remain without material change from those approved by QQI through the re-engagement process. Policies in this area are as follows:

Policy - CCTP901 – Academic Supports

Policy - CCTP902- General Student Services Pastoral Disability and International Learner Supports

Policy - CCTP903 – Complaints

Policy - CCTP904 – Class Rep

Policy - CCTP905 – Attendance, Punctuality and Leave Policy

Policy - CCTP906 – Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure

Policy - CCTP907 – Graduation

Policy - CCTP908 – Refunds-Policy-

Policy - CCTP909 – Personal Mitigating circumstances Policy

Policy - CCTP910 – Alumni

Policy - CCTP911 -Learning Environment

Policy - CCTP912 – Managing Learner withdrawals

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

While CCT does not purport to be a research institution and nor is the provision of research Masters included in the approved scope of provision, it does nonetheless recognise the value of engagement in and with research for a higher education provider and therefore encourages and actively promotes research activity. This is a more recent strategic development in CCT and is therefore in its infancy strategically. The CCT Research Strategy provides the context for research activity and ambitions within the College. Further to this, policy CCTP514 – Ethical Practice in Research, and policy CCTP805 - Scholarship, Professional Development, Innovation and Research, in the QA manual sections 5 and 8 respectively, outline quality assurance practice in relation to research.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Full details of the QQI approved policies relating to staff recruitment, development and support are contained within section 8 of the CCT QA manual – Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff and Human Resources.

Staff recruitment in CCT is in accordance with policy CCTP801 – Recruitment Selection and Probation which outlines the minimum requirements in respect of qualifications and experience as well as the selection procedures for specific types of roles. The original policy was approved by QQI through the 2018 re-engagement process but has subsequently been amended to allow for the appointment of academic faculty to teach on Masters programmes in instances where specific specialist expertise was deemed an acceptable alternative to a Masters qualification. In such cases, the approval of Academic Council must be obtained. The rationale for the change arose from the validation of the Master of Science in Applied Software Development when CCT had the opportunity to secure faculty who were leading experts nationally and internationally in areas of ICT but did not have a Masters qualification, which had initially been identified as a pre-requisite to teach on Masters programmes. The individuals in question had highest level specialist industry endorsements and were published experts in their field. To require a Masters qualification would have been detrimental to the programme and the learners, potentially losing out on this specialist expertise. It was therefore proposed that the requirement to hold a Masters qualification would be deemed desirable and that Academic Council could approve proposed alternative evidence of equivalence.

All new staff are inducted into the College, as outlined in policy CCTP802 – Staff Induction, and are actively encouraged to engage in professional development as per policy - CCTP805 Scholarship, Professional Development, Innovation and Research. The College takes a proactive approach to professional development, circulating a monthly professional development bulletin of national and international events of interest, retaining a professional development register, providing time and financial support for staff wanting to complete additional qualifications or attend conferences and events, and arranging in-house development events to facilitate ease of engagement. Promoting and supporting staff development is a strategic priority of the College and policy CCTP804 – Performance Management Appraisal plays a role in the implementation of this priority. Publishing staff profiles as part of the CCT Expert Gallery provides a further incentive for staff to continue to engage in professional development, scholarship and research.

6.0 Information and Data Management

QA Manual, section 10 - Information Management includes the policies which outline CCT's practice and procedures in respect of information management and data protection.

Information Systems and Processes

The College utilises an externally hosted and managed information system for learner records having previously used an internally designed and managed platform. A risk assessment undertaken by the College previously identified the risk of potential loss of essential knowledge and expertise, in the event of key personnel leaving, if this model was to continue. A decision was therefore taken to migrate to an externally hosted and managed platform.

The College has also acquired a CRM which is hosted by a third party. Compliance with GDPR was evaluated as part of the acquisition process and the College assured itself of the requirements of the regulation being satisfied. A template data processing agreement was established, with legal support, for such circumstances. Fuller information on the information systems used and how data is used to inform decision-making is included in policy CCTP1005 – Information Management Policy.

Data Protection

The following policies specifically address CCT's obligations in respect of data protection:

CCTP1001 – Privacy Statement

CCTP1002 – Data Protection Policy

CCTP1003 – Data Access Request Policy

CCTP1004 – CCTV policy

These polices were approved by QQI through reengagement in 2018 but as indicated in the 2018/19 AQR as the GDPR was not finalised prior to completion of CCT's self-evaluation for re-engagement, the need to review the effectiveness and completeness of these was identified by the College. This was undertaken in the 18/19 academic year, in conjunction with the College's legal team. No material revisions have been made subsequent to this.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Section 11 of the QA Manual hosts the CCT policy on public information. This is further supplemented by information included in section 7 - policy CCTP701- Protection of Enrolled Learners – Public Information and policy. These policies address requirements in relation to validated programmes as well as validation and external quality assurance reports and awards data, all of which are available via the CCT website, https://www.cct.ie/

CCT has notably increased and enhanced the information it makes publicly available since these policies were approved. This has largely stemmed from the natural maturing of the College but also as a direct result of strategic intentions. The acquisition of an institutional repository and the establishment of the Centre for Teaching and Learning has resulted in increased transparency relating to academic outputs of CCT staff, faculty and students. Staff and faculty profiles are also published on the College website.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

CCT QA Manual, Section 12: Ongoing Monitoring and Review includes policy CCTP1201 – Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review and policy CCTP1202 – External Review.
A range of self-evaluation monitoring and review activities take place at scheduled times throughout an academic year or a specific stage within a cycle, as documented within the policy. This includes annual monitoring of programmes, departments and support units. These are completed as standard and are considered through the governance framework and inform the ongoing enhancement and strategic development of the College. Actions are identified and monitored through the Quality Improvement Plan.

9.0   Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1   Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	0
Awarding bodies	1 - QQI
QA bodies	1 - QQI

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	Awarding Body / QA body
Name of body:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Bachelor of Business (Honours) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing and Information Technology Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Technology Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Certificate in Digital Transversal Skills Diploma in Applied Software Development Diploma in Artificial Intelligence and Working into the Future Diploma in Data Analytics for Business Diploma in Networking and Systems Security Higher Certificate in Science in Computing and Information Technology Higher Certificate in Science in Computing in Information Technology Higher Certificate in Science in Information Technology Higher Diploma in Science in Artificial Intelligence Applications Higher Diploma in Science in Computing

	Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics for Business Master of Science in Applied Software Development Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Applied Software Development
Date of accreditation or last review	Re-engagement, December 2018 Extension of scope to level 9, March 2019
Date of next review	TBA

9.2   Collaborative Provision

CCT has no collaborative provision.

9.3   Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	0

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2019-2020

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Strategic Developments

It should be noted that the period under review represents the final full academic year within the current Strategic Plan and the Institutional Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. Reviews of these strategy documents commenced within this period but did not conclude due to the end of the Strategic Plan lifecycle overlapping two AQR reporting cycle. Completion of strategic planning, incorporating stakeholder input, will be a priority in the 2020/21 academic year. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy will also be revised in this period, aligning with strategic priorities as applicable.

> Extension of Scope - Blended Learning

The CCT Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020 outlines the strategic intent to maintain and strengthen academic excellence as CCT's highest priority. Within this priority area key objectives include expanding investment in and use of innovative learning technologies including the use of virtual learning platforms, facilitating the provision of flexible and blended programme provision. As a direct outcome of this strategic priority, the College has been investing in the infrastructure, resources (human and physical), and systems to support the submission of an application for extension of scope for blended learning programmes. This planned approach was recognised by the QA Approval Panel in their report. In recommending the approval of the extension of scope the Panel saw fit to commend the quality of CCT's submission, acknowledging that the QA documentation and associated resources submitted provided evidence of a strategic and planned approach to blended learning. The panel further commended the College's commitment of appropriate resources to facilitate the implementation of blended modes of delivery. Specifically, the Panel commended the substantive investments and systematic building of organisational capacity to support the application.

> Enhancement of the Virtual Campus and Facilities for the Provision of Blended Learning

The College invested in a wide range of software solutions to enhance the virtual campus and better support effective teaching and learning in the online context. Alongside this, initiatives were implemented to further promote the enhancement of digital capacity. Much of this is detailed within the 2018/19 AQR.

In 2019, CCT took part in the National Forum's INDEx survey. The results of the survey evidence the positive impact of these developments and CCT student and staff responses benchmarked extremely positively against the national student and staff responses.

In addition to the enhancement of the virtual campus, 2019/20 saw the continued investment in the campus building at Westmoreland Street to facilitate the delivery of blended learning programmes. This included the upgrading of audio-visual equipment in classrooms to facilitate live streaming and recording of lectures as well as the addition of two state of the art, fully sound proofed recording studios. Additional studios will be provided during the 2020/21 academic year.

Staff training and development in relation to the effective use of virtual campus resources and the new AV and recording equipment was provided as standard and continues to be available. The investment in resources was further supported with the recruitment of additional technical support and administration staff to provide

assistance to faculty, staff and students in the use of learning technologies and engagement in teaching and learning activities in the blended / online context.

➢ Purchase of Campus Building

Further supporting the strategic objective to ensure the physical and organisational infrastructure is effective in supporting delivery of CCT's strategic intent, the College took the opportunity to purchase the Westmoreland Street campus, along with the neighbouring unit which houses Starbucks. This investment was recognised as a reflection of the College's strategic ambitions by the validation panel for the BSc Honours in Computing and Information Technology. The panel report states "*The Panel notes that CCT has recently purchased the centre where programmes are delivered (30-34 Westmoreland Street, Dublin 2). This demonstrates the college's commitment to providing programmes in higher education in the long term.*" (12/12/19, p.4)

➢ Strategic Partnerships

In the AQR for 2018/19 CCT outlined that discussions were continuing with a state funded higher education provider in respect of CCT becoming a linked provider. It was anticipated that this process would conclude in the 2019/20 academic year with CCT offering additional programmes in collaboration with the institution in question. Matters were progressing positively with due diligence activities at an advanced stage when the COVID-19 pandemic brought the process to a sudden stop. By the close of the academic year engagement between the two institutions had recommenced but progress was notably impacted by the requirement to prioritise the ongoing management of students and provision in line with contingency arrangements and changing public health and governmental guidelines. Nonetheless the proposed collaboration is progressing and remains a strategic priority for CCT.

A strategic partnership with Microsoft Ireland, a member of the CCT Industry Engagement Forum, has enriched programme development, curriculum and assessment within IT provision and contributed toward the successful validation of a number of special purpose awards and two new Higher Diploma programmes in specialist areas of ICT. Further collaborative developments are proposed and opportunities to continue working together remain a priority for both parties.

➢ Programme Validations

Strategically, CCT articulated its intention to further diversify its programme provision with a greater focus on part time, postgraduate and professional programmes, offering increased flexibility in programme provision and appealing to those seeking employment, or looking to progress their career, with industry focused higher education qualifications. This has informed programme development and validation in 2019/20 which saw the QQI validation of the following programmes:

- Certificate in Digital Transversal Skills, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits
- Diploma in Applied Software Development, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits
- Diploma in Networking and Systems Security, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits
- Diploma in Artificial Intelligence and Working into the Future, Level 7, Special Purpose, 60 Credits
- Diploma in Data Analytics for Business, Level 7, Special Purpose Award, 60 Credits
- Higher Certificate in Computing and Information Technology
- BSc in Computing and Information Technology
- BSc Honours in Computing and Information Technology

- Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics for Business
- Higher Diploma in Science Artificial Intelligence Applications

All programmes were validated in full and part time modes and the Higher Diplomas were validated for blended learning delivery. Note, the panel visits for the special purpose awards took place in June 2019 but validation was confirmed by QQI's PAEC in September 2019.

In addition to QQI validated programmes, the professional programme provision was also extended. All professional programmes in CCT, although not accredited by QQI, are still subject to the programme development approval process, requiring approval from Academic Council and the ELT. Moving forward, the College envisages further developing its micro-credentials offering, comprising a combination of accredited and non-accredited provision.

Specific Changes to QA During the Reporting Period

Outside of the approval for extension of scope of provision for blended learning, the most notable QA changes in 2019/20 arose from the government decision on March 12th, 2020 to close all education providers due to the public health risk posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant the immediate transfer online of provision, supports and services which were previously face-to-face, on-campus.

The Approved Contingency Arrangements of CCT College Dublin, March 2020, were informed by research and consultation across Ireland and internationally and resulted in Academic Council approving the following:

1. The continuation of programmes and the ongoing management and support of learners using a technology enabled approach subject to:
   - Being limited to the period of restrictions imposed due to COVID-19.
   - The ongoing monitoring and commitment to essential enhancement insofar as is reasonable and practicable in the timeframe under consideration.
2. The replacement of all face-to-face assessments with either an alternative mode of submission or alternative mode of assessment, determined by the module learning outcomes to be assessed and the suitability of the proposed approach. In all cases:
   - All assessments will seek to assess the attainment of learning outcomes and will further incorporate the opportunity for students to evidence attainment beyond the learning outcomes.
   - Proposals will be considered in the context of all modules and assessments in the period under consideration and due regard will be given to suitable variety in assessment and the appropriate planning of assessment load and timings.
   - Semester assessment schedules and proposals will evidence incorporation of good practice guidelines and be subject to internal approval by the Dean of School.
   - All assessment changes will be subject to External Examiner approval.
   - Students will be given sufficient advanced notification of changes and, where possible, afforded the opportunity to undertake practice assessments in the same mode.
   - Monitoring of student performance, progression and award will be considered in the context of these unprecedented circumstances.

Specific to quality assurance, the changes implemented included:

- All changes to teaching and assessment practices were documented and subject to approval by Academic Council and external examiners, as applicable.
- Regulations were approved to reflect the specific requirements of the alternative assessments.
  - URKUND Plagiarism Detection policy and the URKUND software settings which allow students the opportunity to submit drafts were amended to remove the ability to submit a draft in advance of final submission in the case of online open book assessments.
  - Regulatory requirements for participation in online exams / quizzes and statements of responsibilities in respect of all alternative assessments were approved.
  - Implications of technology failure were factored into existing policies for late submission and non-submission of assessment and in the context of no-repeat for honours.
  - Revision of PMC policy to include accepting employment matters or family / household circumstances as grounds for personal mitigating circumstances and accepting applications without medical certificates or other supporting evidence in recognition of students working as frontline or essential workers, challenging home circumstances and inability to access GPs as easily.
- Online support guides on matters such as review, recheck and appeal and personal mitigating circumstances were created.
- Continued provision of reasonable accommodations in response to specific needs and revisiting all reasonable accommodation applications of existing students to ensure suitability of supports and accommodations in the online context.

The Self-evaluation of Contingency Arrangements, July 2020 confirmed the suitability of these in ensuring the continuity of provision and supports for learners.

Representation of learners

Through re-engagement CCT identified that the approach used up to that point for the participation of student members on Academic Council was proving ineffective in attaining continuity and genuine student partnership. The proposal was therefore approved to replace the model of class reps rotating attendance at Academic Council, with elected student members of the Academic Council. The first election took place in 2019 and the 2019/20 meetings of Academic Council were attended by the elected student members. The participation of dedicated student members greatly enriched the discussions at Council meetings and was vital in informing essential decision-making, particularly in respect of contingency planning and new programme developments. The College has also strengthened opportunities for student partnership throughout this period, engaging students in initiatives such as the CCT Student Mentoring Academy, consultations on CCT developments and membership of working groups or project teams.

1.2   Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR.

Through monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan, programme and departmental annual reviews and the completion of the AQR 2018/19, CCT incorporated the objectives identified in the table below in the annual Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/20.

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	Section 5.1 of AQR 2018/19 Objective: Extend the CCT student community to include greater representation of part time, postgraduate and professional students. Specifically, the College aims to design and develop a series of part time QQI validated special purpose awards relating to priority skills areas identified by both State and industry.	Status: Complete and continuing This remains an ongoing objective for the College and will inform developments in the 2020/21 academic year, and beyond. The initial actions associated with fulfilment of the objective in the first stage are complete and evidenced by: • Validation of 6 special purpose awards relating to priority skills areas. • Validation of two new Higher Diploma programmes (F/T, P/T and blended learning) in specialist IT areas of artificial intelligence and data analytics • Validation of undergraduate IT degree in both full and part time mode • The College commencing delivery of its first QQI validated Masters programme. • Increased professional programme offering
2	Section 5.1 of AQR 2018/19 Objective: Expand and enhance accessibility, delivery methodologies, student services and staff availability to reflect increase in provision outside of full-time daytime programmes.	Status: Complete. In support of the provision of more flexible modes of programme delivery the College has introduced extended hours for student services and library services, including during weekends and holiday periods. Further to this, the College has invested in a range of platforms to facilitate the provision of support of services to students including instant access supports.
3	Section 5.1 of AQR 2018/19 Objective: Extension of scope – blended learning. The development of QA procedures as part of the re-engagement process prepared for the extension of scope to level 9, but also factored in future developments relating to collaborative provision and blended learning, reflecting the College's strategic ambitions.	Status: Complete Extension of scope approved by QQI.
4	Section 5.1 of AQR 2018/19 Objective: NStEP membership for CCT. CCT intends to further evidence its commitment to student partnership in the upcoming academic year and beyond. Student membership of	Status: Complete CCT joined NStEP at the first available opportunity once membership was again opened to providers and has since worked with NStEP in the provision of class rep training.

	Academic Council is a priority and membership of NStEP remains a key objective of the college.	CCT staff have also attended a number of NStEP network events.
5	Part 3 of AQR 2018/19 Objective: For the 2019/20 academic year the College intends to widen the opportunities for industry engagement	**Status: Complete and continuing** The College welcomed a number of new industry contacts into its Engagement Forum in 2019/20. Of interest was the enthusiasm from industry contacts to engage with the College and students virtually. The guest lecture series and the programme development process in particular benefitted greatly from this approach.
6	CCT QIP Objective: Increase sectoral engagement of CCT staff, including as panel members, and increase externality in CCT enhancement initiatives.	**Status: Complete and continuing** Originally identified by the College as part of the re-engagement process, and supported by the re-engagement panel, CCT benefitted from this increased engagement in 2018/19 and identified the intent to continue to promote this. In the year under review, staff have engaged in committees, working groups and projects across the sector including with NStEP, the National Forum, EDEN, the Library Association of Ireland, HECA, QQI, to name only a few. Staff have also participated as review panel members for private and public providers in bother further and higher education and training contexts.
7	CCT QIP Objective: Develop and implement QA and Exams online information resource for staff and students	**Status: Complete** The CCT Learning Space provides explanatory guidance on exam regulations as well as information on different types of assessments. Information is provided to support learners in preparing for different types of assessments and also for staff in designing assessments. Additional information is available to staff on the Centre for Teaching and Learning Moodle page also.

1.3 Governance and Management
1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Board of Directors (Now College Board)	14 Oct 2019 28 Jan 2020 13 Aug 2020
Academic Council	08 Dec 2019 19 March 2020 07 July 2020 08 Sept 2020
QE Committee	25 November 2019 16 December 2019 30 January 2020 20 February 2020 10 March 2020 20 April 2020 25 May 2020 26 June 2020 04 Aug 2020
Board of Examiners (Business)	18 Dec 2019 12 Feb 2020 01 Jul 2020 03 Sept 2020
Board of Examiners (IT)	17 Dec 2019 13 Feb 2020 02 Jul 2020 03 Sept 2020

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

The organisational structure (see part A, section 1.1) remains consistent with that approved by QQI through re-engagement with some further expansion of the management team. In anticipation of the move to blended learning provision, the College had identified the intention to establish the role of Administration and Operations Lead; a management role with responsibility for ensuring the logistical and administrative requirements for the delivery of programmes and supports for learners, including in the blended learning context, are satisfied. The self-evaluation conducted in preparation for extension of scope confirmed the ongoing requirement for this position, which was subsequently appointed. In addition, the Head of Faculty positions were replaced with a School Manager role that oversees the operational management of the School and programmes, including administration responsibility for the VLE. Additional posts of Student Success Lead and ICT Programmes Lead were also created and incorporated, among other matters, specific focus on blended learning developments and students registered on blended learning programmes. Further details of the individual roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority associated with these, and all leadership and management roles, is contained in the CCT QA Manual section 2.

1.4   Internal Monitoring and Review
1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

No external reviews of CCT, its programmes, services or departments took place in the 2019 academic year. However, in accordance with CCT policy, the following annual monitoring activities were completed:

- Admissions audit
- Board of Examiners review
- Student satisfaction survey
- Graduate Outcomes Survey
- Staff survey
- Annual monitoring review of:
    - CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning and Library Services
    - Students Services and Careers
- Annual programme monitoring of all active validated programmes:

In addition to quality assurance reviews, annual financial auditing review, annual marketing and communications review, and monthly and annual facilities and resources reviews also took place, informing enhancement of the learning environment and student experience.

There were no programme reviews scheduled for the 2019/20 academic year.

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

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes					4		1
of those:							
On-site processes					3		
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes					1		1
Average panel size for each process type*					6 - 7		3

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

As an independent provider CCT does not currently have responsibility for convening panels for validation or extension of scope of provision, which are the two types of evaluation activities undertaken in the 2019/20 academic year. The panels involved in these processes were convened by QQI who retains the information required in this section.

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

In the AQR for 2018/19 CCT identified 5 developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review:

1. Strategic Planning and Implementation
2. Quality Enhancement Culture
3. Partnership and Collaboration
4. Student Success
5. Teaching and Learning

It was not, and is not, the intention that subsequent AQRs would discuss these themes discretely but that the themes would be apparent to readers within the content of the AQRs submitted and supporting materials provided. The following section outlines a range of enhancement activities which relate to these developmental themes.

Governance and Management of Quality

➢ Risk Management and Mitigation

An interim arrangement introduced in the 2019 /20 academic year was the establishment of the CCT Monitoring and Response Team (MRT). This came about as the potential of the COVID-19 virus arriving in Ireland became increasingly likely. The MRT, comprising of the ELT and senior members of the management team, was tasked with completion of a risk assessment, identifying the priorities and associated necessary actions to ensure continuation of provision and services in the event of a partial or full closure of the College, either resulting from a government decision or as a result of a COVID-19 outbreak on campus. As a result of this advanced planning and risk management activity, CCT was in a relatively well-prepared position when the government announced the closure of all colleges on March 12th, 2020. The MRT continued to meet virtually until contingency arrangements were approved by Academic Council, at which point responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the risk assessment outcomes returned to the ELT and management team in conjunction with the Academic Council. Risk identification, management and monitoring within CCT has operated within the existing governance structures and has been a feature within the matters of business for the College Board, the Executive Leadership Team and wider management team as well as the Academic Council. On reviewing the effectiveness of the MRT, it was felt that having this body with specific responsibility for identification of risk, proposal of mitigating actions and oversight of implementation was highly effective, more time efficient, and enabled greater responsivity. The membership including representation from the Directors, the ELT and Academic Council, ensuring representation of and connectivity with the respective governance bodies was viewed as central to this. The College intends to investigate the potential integration of a committee with specific responsibility for risk management and oversight into the existing governance structures of CCT.

➢ Stakeholder Engagement

Strategic objective 4 of the current plan, articulates CCT's intention to foster active engagement with industry partners. The College established its Industry Engagement Forum in 2018/19 and within the previous AQR outlined plans to strengthen industry engagement throughout the year under review. As indicated in Part B, section 1.2, the College welcomed a number of new industry contacts into its Engagement Forum in 2019/20

and a strategic partnership was entered into with Microsoft Ireland contributing to the successful validation of a number of specialist ICT programmes designed to serve industry requirements.

Of interest in the period under review was the enthusiasm from industry contacts to engage with the College and students virtually. The guest lecture series and the programme development process in particular benefitted greatly from this approach. The validation panel for the BSc Honours in Computing and Information Technology commended CCT's practice in this area, noting "*The Panel commends CCT's ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders, particularly with learners and industry. The provision of the Employer Engagement Forum Guide and associated Employer Register is a good example of best practice in the area of industry engagement.*" (12/12/19, p.28). A subsequent validation panel, participating by way of virtual visit, however, expressed a view that there is a deficiency of documented evidence of CCT systematically engaging employers in the process of programme design or seeking out and taking into account the view of employers and industry bodies. The College satisfied itself that this process is formalised and embedded within programme development but accepted the need for greater transparency of this in validation applications. This will be a focus for future programme validation applications.

Stakeholder engagement has been broadened significantly throughout the year under review to encompass a wider range of engagement opportunities and an increasingly diverse stakeholder demographic. The College has embarked on increasing engagement and formalising partnerships with community and charitable organisations with a view to developing and enhancing initiatives, practice and graduate attributes that strengthen and promote diversity and inclusion. In addition, the College has been proactively strengthening the relationship with CCT alumni and will continue to develop this relationship for the mutual benefit of students, the College and the alumni community.

CCT's sector level engagement has grown substantially during the period under review with an increased number of CCT staff participating in sector level initiatives and becoming members of committees, working groups and project teams. There is also a growing number of staff participating as evaluation and review panel members for QQI or Institutes of Technology. Further to this, the College as an organisation has continued with and expanded its membership of sector level organisations including National Forum, NStEP, HECA, the Library Association of Ireland, AHead, and EDEN. Participation in these sector level initiatives requires a time and resource commitment that can be more easily facilitated as the College has grown. Such activities bring valuable learning and insights that inform developments and decisions within the College but moreover enrich the working lives of staff, assist in retaining a high level of staff morale and motivation, and raise the awareness of activities, initiatives and expertise within CCT raising its profile and public confidence.

Staff Recruitment Management and Development

> ➤ Supporting and Developing Staff for Online Delivery of Programmes and Services

The period of review represents the second year of the CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). As indicated in the previous AQR, a primary objective of the CTL is to facilitate and provide professional development and supports for staff and faculty. Technology enhanced learning. A focus on inclusion and an ethos of student partnership are key enablers of CTL initiatives. The validation panel for the BSc Honours in Computing and Information Technology (December 2019) commended CCT's ongoing commitment to staff Continuing Professional Development for FT and PT staff, both discipline-specific and pedagogical.

Activities which proved effective in the first year of operation, including the professional development bulletin and the Excellence in Teaching Seminar Series were continued into the year under review. Additional enhancements included the promotion of a wider range of PD opportunities with an increased focus on technology enhanced learning, universal design and student partnership, expansion of the CCT online resource hub – Learning Space, to include the provision of resources for students, staff and faculty, and the launch of the CCT Certificate in Teaching and Learning. The impact of the increased focus on technology enhanced learning generally was that it supported a more straightforward migration to emergency remote online teaching and learning. In the Index Survey, 78% of students positively rated digital teaching and learning at CCT (31.9% as excellent), 74% of students positively rated their online assessments as well managed and delivered and 79.7% of students positively rated digital infrastructure with 28% rating it as excellent. These scores were higher than the national average as presented in the report.

➢ CCT Certificate in Teaching and Learning

This Certificate was designed by CCT to provide a programme of development for CCT faculty that was tailored to the CCT context with the objective of developing knowledge and practice in teaching and learning drawing on internal and external expertise. The National Forum digital badge "Teaching Strategies for [New] Lecturers" was also integrated into the programme. The programme was delivered over 12 weeks and included input from Dr Terry Maguire, Director of the National Forum, Rob McKenna, Griffith College, Dr Orna Farrell, National Institute for Digital Learning, Oisín Hassan, Programme Manager, National Student Engagement Programme, Dr Dara Cassidy, Head of Online Learning RCSI, Dr Fiona O Riordan, Academic Developer, DCU, Dr Geraldine Gray, TU Dublin, Dr Brett Becker, UCD, and Kelvin Martins, Creative Engine Project, DCU.

A page on CCT's digital Commons ARC was created to showcase and disseminate lectures from the certificate: https://arc.cct.ie/cert_tl/.

Upon completion a programme evaluation was undertaken which confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the programme and a positive impact on practice. A survey of the participants confirmed 66% of respondents use a more evidence-based approach to their teaching as a result of the programme and 83% advise that their professional confidence had increased. See section 4 for the case study on the CCT Certificate in Teaching and Learning and access to the full evaluation findings.

A further impact of the development and delivery of this programme relates to the integration of the digital badge and CCT's roles in supporting the further enhancement of that. The Head of the CTL and the Certificate Programme Director were invited by the badge developers, based at CIT, to peer review the next iteration of the badge. This process has been completed and recommendations based upon the CCT experience have informed revisions, including the addition of content on student self-efficacy.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

➢ Extension of Scope

The extension of scope for blended learning provision was the primary strategic development of teaching, learning and assessment planned for the review period. The approval was secured at the end of the academic year and was therefore not applied to such an extent to include the review of impact and effectiveness. However, much of what had been developed and proposed for blended learning provision was implemented in order to successfully employ the contingency arrangements proposed to manage the continuation of

programmes, supports and services during the COVID-19 closure period. A self-evaluation of the effectiveness of contingency arrangements was conducted at the end of the academic year.

In order to inform and enhance proposed contingency arrangements the CTL conducted a consultation with experts in the sector to establish best practice in relation to methodologies pertaining to remote online teaching and blended learning delivery. The consultation secured views from:

- Dr Catherine Cronin, Strategic Developer, National Forum
- Dr Orna Farrell, National Digital Learning Institute
- Dr Roisin Donnelly, TU Dublin
- Dr Kevin O' Rourke, TU Dublin
- Dr Dara Cassidy, Head of Online Education RCSI
- Ruth Ní Bheoláin, Quality Assurance Officer, Hibernia College

The consultation confirmed the suitability of the approach employed by CCT but also identified recommendations for further enhancement. Three key findings were:

1. An improved teaching and learning experience can be obtained through increasing the use of asynchronous activity in programme, module and lesson design.
2. Develop a productive online learning environment where knowledge is constructed through use of Garrison's Community of Inquiry approach
3. Facilitate a cohesive approach to programme design that promotes effective teaching, learning and assessment through employing the ABC Curriculum design process.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning will continue to promote good practice and support faculty in the implementation of a variety of tools and techniques which support the findings of the consultation and address the outcomes of stakeholder feedback.

The self-evaluation of the contingency arrangements highlights that staff feedback indicated a desire for increased use of additional functionality in the virtual classroom, such as breakout rooms and whiteboard tools to increase interactivity to address some of the challenges relating to student interaction and engagement. This is supported by student feedback which identified variety in the teaching approach used by lecturers with some making classes highly interactive. In the Index Survey CCT faculty identified support from the institution to practice digital teaching and learning as strong with 51.7% identifying it as good and 17.1% as excellent. In open ended feedback, some faculty requested more formalised training with 74.3 % stating that they would like to increase the number of digital tools that they use. This feedback informed the provision of additional professional development opportunities, the Excellence in Teaching Series and the development of the Online Teaching and Learning Toolkits. The College was also proactive in addressing this through the additional investment in the online classroom software Zoom and ScreenCast-O-Matic screencasting software along with the publication of CCT approved software and third-party apps, the creation of videos on the use of these, and the continued provision of online professional development workshops and webinars focusing on teaching and learning online. In the end of year survey students reported feeling comfortable and confident in the technology platforms and tools used and the majority reported finding the transition easier than expected. Teaching faculty described the semester as challenging and stressful but also found the experience enjoyable, interesting and engaging and identified learnings they will continue into their teaching practice on campus.

Supports and Resources for Learners

> ➢ Increased Digitisation of Supports and Services

In the AQR for 2018/19, the College identified the future development and enhancement of learner supports in response to plans to increasingly diversify the student body and the range of provision. This originated from documented strategic objectives pertaining to the growth of the college, including the plan to extend scope of provision to blended learning. The Strategic Plan articulates the intention to expand the array of services and supports while maintaining the personal touch and open-door policy practiced in CCT. Expansion of supports and increasing accessibility of services and resources was already underway prior to the commencement of the period under review. The rationale for the development of virtual supports was two-fold at the outset of the academic year; the need to facilitate the provision of supports to learners, at any time of the day or week, in the context of an increased study community and the planned extension of scope, and the desire to promote greater independence of students, especially those who were well established in CCT.

These developments were then accelerated when the risk assessment undertaken by the Monitoring and Review Team (MRT) identified the increased likelihood of college closure arising from COVID-19 and the mitigating factors required to facilitate continued provision of programmes and services.

With increased evening and weekend provision the College had introduced expanded office hours for Student Services and the Library ensuring accessibility for students during their times of attendance. A College-wide approach to moving this online was planned for and implemented. The College has offered an online library for several years. The transition to blended learning included an expansion of this to include live chat facilities to contact the library support desk and the provision of Student Success classes online. Similarly, the Careers Service successfully transitioned to a virtual service with the provision of open access resources and guidance, live online careers information and guidance sessions and a virtual appointments service. Wider student services were also accessible via the virtual drop in or appointments service and online social events were also introduced as well as CCT subsidised online yoga classes.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning established a cross-college working group to lead the expansion of the College's online resource hub - CCT Learning Space, established in 2018/19, providing access to reliable information and guidance for students on a range of matters from regulatory issues to study skills, as well as an online learner toolkit and guidance on different types of online assessments, reflecting those approved as alternative assessments within the CCT Contingency Arrangements. The CCT Student Mentoring Academy, a student success initiative operated by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, was also moved online. Feedback from faculty and students alike confirmed the effectiveness of these supports in preparing students for the online experience and developing their understanding of assessment practice and expectations in the online context.

The College also implemented a range of tools including live chat, video conferencing, online meetings, virtual office drop-ins and a virtual appointments service in addition to the existing text-based communication tools such as email and Slack. Many of these developments had been highlighted as future enhancements as the College looked to increase capacity and further digitise its campus. These were fast-tracked to ensure maximum support for students and staff in an unprecedented situation.

Students reported feeling comfortable and confident in the technology platforms and tools used and the majority reported finding the transition easier than expected. Student survey results identify a high level of satisfaction with the supports and receipt of regular feedback from lecturers was consistently identified as a further benefit, particularly in preparing for alternative assessments. Staff identified the potential for confusion arising from the

variety of communication channels in particular, and the parameters required regarding the use of these in order to effectively manage expectations. These factors will be addressed and reflected within the new online induction programme in the 2020/21 academic year. The role and purpose of various virtual supports and services will be explained, and learners will be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the different communication technologies as part of this.

Take up of the virtual appointments service for potential students and the virtual office drop-in service for existing students was very high and proved highly effective. This tool was particularly well received by students who were struggling with isolation. The provision of the virtual office drop-in replaced the on-campus Main Office and Student Services and enabled students to have a private video discussion with a member of student services or administration. This was vital to managing student mental health, supporting students with their general college related concerns and assisting students considering deferrals, withdrawals or extensions.

Mental health and well-being of students was identified as a matter of notable concern in the MRT risk assessment and this became evident quite early in the closure period. The College had prepared for this, prior to closure, by increasing access to CCT funded online counselling services. This proved invaluable, particularly as the services the College contracts are available in multiple languages, making it more accessible and increasingly beneficial to international learners. The College intends to continue with the increased availability of services. Student feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction and appreciation for the supports.

> ➢ Student Success

A core development theme identified by the College in the last AQR was that of student success. This was in recognition of the College and sector level developments in respect of student success strategies and initiatives. The focus on continuous improvement and partnership and collaboration was identified as being central to the development and implementation of a CCT Student Success Strategy. The approval of a strategy was projected, looking to formalise the existing approach to supporting learners in all aspects of their learner journey, inside and outside the classroom, and building upon this to better support student success.

In the period under review, the College appointed a Student Success Lead to work with colleagues across the College to develop and support college-wide efforts to improve outcomes for all students in CCT. The Student Success Lead, along with other staff and a student representative of CCT, participated in the Student Success Symposium organised jointly by the National Forum and the HEA. This event was instrumental in shaping the CCT Student Success Strategy. During this period, consultation with key stakeholders took place to inform the Strategy and a working draft was circulated for review and comment. A pilot of a student assessment tracing initiative was also implemented with a view to identifying students experiencing difficulty and signposting them to specific supports. The progress of strategy development was impeded as a result of the emergency pivot and implementation of contingency arrangements taking priority for the latter part of the academic year. Nonetheless it remains a key priority for the College and will be progressed in the coming academic year.

While the pivot to emergency remote learning impacted on the pace of the development of the Student Success Strategy, initiatives to promote student success were further prioritised in recognition of the additional challenges presented by the pivot. This included the expansion of supports made available through the CCT Learning Space, the increased accessibility to staff and support services through the use of virtual drop-ins and virtual office arrangements, and the continued availability of pastoral support services, also made available online,

including fully subsidised professional counselling services. One particular initiative that was greatly received by students was series of Student Success Classes, and the transition of these online.

The Student Success Classes, developed by staff from across multiple departments in the College, were coordinated from the library in the 2019/2020 Academic Year. In the Autumn semester, they were held in physical classrooms, in the Spring semester the classes were moved online, using Google Hangouts.

The classes encompass academic and career topics and were given by the Librarian, the Head of Enhancement and the Careers Advisor. The topics addressed by the classes were as follows:

Academic Success

- Research Skills and Using Library Resources
- Academic Integrity – What it is and why it is important
- Effective Group Work

This category incorporates a suite of classes expressly focussing on Academic Writing skills:

- Effective use of sources
- How to use Harvard Referencing
- Quotation, Paraphrase, Synthesis and Summary
- Literature Reviews and longer-form research assignments
- Writing with confidence in your own style

Career Success

- Interview Skills
- Workshop: Using LinkedIn and other social media effectively for networking
- CV workshop: Designing your CV for the job you want.
- Targeted Cover Letters

These classes were run several times throughout the academic year to allow for maximum accessibility. The move online saw an increase in average attendance, from approximately 10 per class in physical classrooms to 15-16 per class when held virtually. Online classes also allowed for enhancements such as Padlet, Mentimeter and Vevox to enhance interactivity and allow for anonymity. The increased participation along with the positive feedback from participants justifies the continued virtual delivery of these classes, including after the physical campus re-opens. Additional subject areas will also be introduced including in the area of evaluating the reliability of information sources.

Mirroring the approach taken by the Library Service, the Centre for Teaching and Learning also rapidly transitioned the CCT Mentoring Academy online, again facilitating access to peer support throughout the semester.

A programme validation panel who engaged with the College in December 2019 commended the "*systematic supports provided to learners, particularly international students"* and recognised student success and well-being as being "*at the heart of CCT's culture.*" Encouragingly, the Panel also commended CCT for "*the development of student success initiatives and for their introduction of the Student Success Lead role.*" (12/12/19, p.28). While this panel observation was based upon an evaluation of on campus services, the College looked to replicate these services in the virtual campus and also to further increase their accessibility by providing instant access supports in video, audio and text form and introducing live chat functionality.

Information and Data Management

➢ Grad Outcomes Survey

Within the Strategic Plan CCT articulates its intent to strengthen engagement with and supports for its alumni community. The CCT Careers Service engages with alumni to assist with career development, employment opportunities, CV and interview preparation and providing advice on future study. Alumni feedback and input is sought in respect of service enhancements and in relation to new programme developments. To date collation of alumni outcomes has been more informal and anecdotal in nature. 2019/20 saw the CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning design and launch the College's inaugural Graduate Outcomes survey. The Survey was adapted from the HEA's Survey. The College consulted with Deirdre Frawley, then Acting Head of Performance Evaluation and Statistics, at the HEA and acted upon advice provided in relation to graduate engagement with the Survey. The survey confirms that CCT programmes enable graduates to secure relevant employment, with 86% of graduates already employed in a variety of roles across a range of business and IT organisations including many multi-nationals. Notably, 98% of respondents said they would recommend CCT to a friend. A video summarising the key findings of the CCT Graduate Outcomes Survey is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYOB50ije3o&feature=youtu.be.

➢ Benchmarking

Benchmarking of retention, progression and award data remains a challenge for independent higher education providers due to the absence of publicly available data from comparable providers. The College continues to undertake benchmarking against data from public providers but is mindful that the institutional contexts and student demographics, are notably different. The College does recognise the value of benchmarking however and looks to maximise opportunities for benchmarking to help inform decision-making and facilitate drawing conclusions. One such example pertains to the participation of females in ICT. This is an area in which CCT has ranked highly when compared against national data. In the period under review the gender breakdown of graduates from CCT programmes in IT/Computing was 61% Male and 39% Female. This is double the national average of female graduates reported by the HEA in Ireland annually. A similar pattern is present in respect of graduates from business programmes in CCT with 47% Male and 53% Female. Overall, the gender breakdown of CCT graduates for 2019/20 is 52% Male and 48% Female.

In the period under review, in addition to the comparison exercises undertaken to support new programme developments as required by QQI, the College has benchmarked its practice, technologies, services and outcomes through participation in national initiatives such as the Index Survey, undertaking subject matter expert consultations, and seeking external expert peer review. The outcomes and impact of these benchmarking activities have been referenced at different stages within this report.

➢ Surveys

In November 2019, a working group was established to review the CCT student satisfaction survey with the intention of revising the survey to better serve decision-making, to make efficiencies in survey management, administration and reporting and to potentially further strengthen response rates. This project was impacted by the pivot to emergency remote learning and the need to redesign a survey, at short notice, to reflect the data required in respect of the delivery of programmes and services remotely.

Implementation of the emergency remote survey highlighted the limitations of the survey platform in use and the overly burdensome workload demands of the platform when using surveys at the scale required by the College. As a result, the College undertook a needs analysis and evaluated alternative survey platforms. At the end of the period under review the College migrated to a new survey platform which is better equipped to satisfy the College's requirements. The new platform will better support the College in data collection for a wider range of initiatives and QA activities.

While a redesigned survey was administered in the year under review this was specific to the emergency pivot and not the intended revised survey for general use following completion of the planned evaluation project. The project to review the student survey will recommence in the 20/21 academic year. In making the necessary revisions to reflect surveying students in and about the emergency online context, consideration was also given to how the feedback loop would be closed so that students would be informed of how their feedback influenced actions and developments within the College. Closing the feedback loop is an essential part of all stakeholder input processes within CCT and it was a priority that this practice was continued. Having collated and analysed survey results, approved actions and developments were signed off by the Executive Leadership Team. Subsequently, a "You Said, We Did…" video was posted on the Moodle platform detailing the enhancements the College had implemented throughout the year and those that were in progress or planned for the year ahead that were of relevance to the feedback received for learners. For further information on CCT's practice in closing the feedback loop, see section 4, case studies.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

> ### Annual Monitoring

Having participated in the pilot AQR process for independent providers, reviewing academic year 2018/19, the College revised internal monitoring report templates and guidance to better serve the College as well as to better inform quality improvement planning and annual quality reporting moving forward. In support of this a workshop of evaluative report writing was hosted by the Centre for Teaching Learning for all report authors. The combination of the workshop and the revised template and guidance resulted in the submission of more comprehensive reports which outlined key developments, their effectiveness and impact and identified plans for further developments in the upcoming year. Upon receiving the revised reports Academic Council acknowledged the improved quality of reporting. Report authors indicated increased understanding of requirements and recognition of the value the reporting and planning brought to their areas of responsibility. Further enhancement was recommended to deter the potential for duplication of report content where initiatives have been cross-departmental.

> ### Self-Evaluation

In addition to the standard annual monitoring and self-evaluation activity, CCT engages in self-evaluation for specific projects or initiatives. A recent example of this is the Self-evaluation of Contingency Arrangements, July 2020. This was an invaluable exercise which sought the views of staff, teaching faculty and students and also drew upon information from the wider higher education sector to establish the effectiveness and fitness for purpose of the contingency arrangements and identify any further amendments required in the instance of continued or repeated instances of contingency arrangements being required due to COVID-19. The outcomes

from the evaluation will inform practice in the year ahead as well as the ongoing delivery of programmes validated as blended learning provision. The findings of the self-evaluation have been referenced at different stages throughout this report.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity.

Within the period under review the College continued its existing practice of providing Student Success classes, through the CCT Library Service, on matters such as referencing, academic writing, and research skills. The inaugural CCT Academic Integrity Week which took place in March 2019 highlighted a need for these classes to be more formally embedded into the curriculum for every student cohort and reinforced annually. Previously the classes were provided either upon request or at regular times throughout the academic year for students to attend on a voluntary basis. This model would also continue in order to maximise student engagement with the content. A more recent development also included the mandatory requirement for a student to attend a specific Student Success Class if they were found by the Academic Standards Board to have committed academic misconduct. The implementation of these changes in practice commenced within the period under review and the classes also moved online. The combination of developments has resulted in greater participation in and completion of Student Success Classes than in previous years.

Alongside the delivery of the Student Success Classes, the CCT virtual resource hub, Learning Space, was further populated with text and video guides on subjects including Strategies for Academic Writing, Referencing, and Academic Integrity as an Online Learner. Staff and students report a high level of satisfaction with these resources. Teaching faculty in particular welcome having CCT specific resources and students feel these resources assist them in being confident in the approach they employ.

Academic integrity was central to discussions and proposals for contingency arrangements when the College had to revert to emergency remote programme delivery and assessment. Initial concerns about the potential for increased academic integrity were largely alleviated as a result of disseminating the outputs from consultation, engagement with peer networks, and review of research and good practice internationally. Investment in technology, provision of tech support and interim revisions to policy and practice relating to the use of text matching software – URKUND, and the right to request a student to participate in a viva voce provided additional confidence and assisted faculty in assessment design that promoted academic integrity and deterred misconduct.

Some students expressed concern about the potential for cheating, but the main concern for students was their ability to perform to their full potential, particularly where time restrictions of specified hours, rather than days, were included in assessment parameters. The College acted to alleviate these anxieties in the interest of student wellbeing but also because it was felt this anxiety could feed the potential for academic misconduct. In addition to the supports referenced above, further developments included:

- The publication (and ongoing population) of an assessment FAQ database
- Example alternative assessments and practice assessments in the alternative assessment format were provided,
- A virtual helpdesk for alternative assessment queries and concerns was established for students to drop in to at any point.

Once these supports were fully implemented there was a notable drop in assessment related concerns outside of class. The benefit of the supports is well reported by faculty, administration staff and students and will continue to be built upon moving forward.

In the end of year survey, teaching faculty felt overwhelmingly that academic integrity had been maintained in both the award stage and the non-award stage, a minority felt in had been enhanced but nobody felt it had declined.
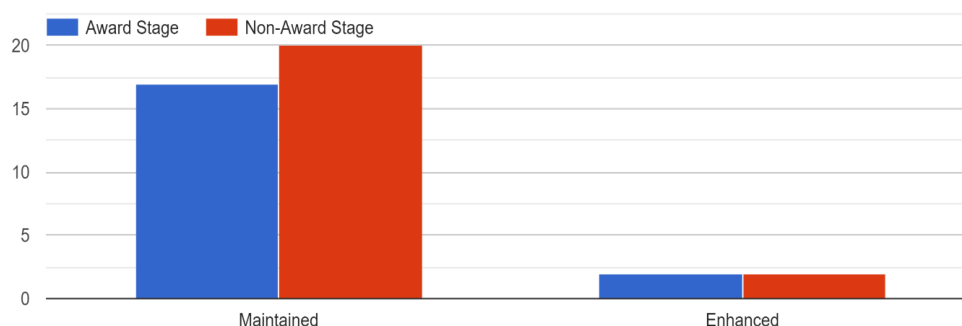
Faculty identified the range of supports, fit for purpose assessment approaches and design, awareness raising of academic conduct expectations, and effective use of technologies employed as the primary justifications for their answers.

Teaching faculty were also asked to comment on academic standards and again predominantly shared the view that standards were maintained in both the award and non-award stage teaching. One person felt the standard declined in the non-award stage, three felt it had increased in the award stage and two felt it had increased in the non-award stage.
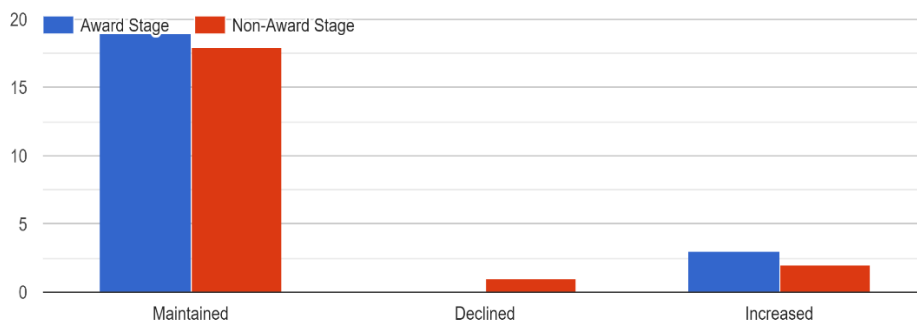
The availability of online supports, recording of classes and provision of video content were identified as primary justifications for maintaining or enhancing standards. The decline in standards was explained as being a result of the online experience being less productive.

External Examiners commended the level of commitment and the approaches taken to ensure protection of academic standards and the use of effective assessment tools with remote learners.

The number of cases of academic misconduct upheld by the Academic Standards Board represented a marginal increase on previous years. It is not possible to identify any specific cause of the increase, but it is not

considered to be of concern given the size of the increase and when considered in the context of an increased number of registered students.

An evaluation of the 2018/19 Academic Integrity Week hosted by the College identified that scheduling the event in the early stages of the academic year would be more effective in capturing a greater number of students in advance of assessment submissions. This will be factored in for future events.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1   QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators.
1	Investigate alternative models for risk management in governance structures. (Ref: Part B, 2.0, Risk Management and Mitigation)	**Responsibility:** College Board and ELT **Action**: A review of the existing approach and consideration of alternative models which include specific fora with responsibility for risk identification and mitigation planning will be undertaken with a recommendation put to the College Board. **Indicator**: Review concluded, and risk identification practice more firmly cemented and more clearly articulated within terms of reference in the governance structure. **Origin:** This action arises from the self-evaluation of contingency arrangements, recognising the value the Monitoring and Review Team brought in aiding risk management preparing for potential campus closure. The re-engagement Panel recommendation that CCT further increase externality in governance, while already addressed, will also be considered as part of this review.
2	Embed mechanisms which further promote diversity of provision and facilitate greater accessibility and inclusion within the College community. (Ref: Part B, 1.0, Strategic Partnerships)	**Responsibility:** ELT, Management Team and Academic Council **Actions:** Continue the strategic priority to diversify provision in order to widen participation in CCT programmes. Increase responsiveness to market demand / needs and flexibility in programme development and validation. Progress to a positive conclusion the potential partnership with a second accrediting body within Ireland Investigate devolution of responsibility for validation sub-processes from QQI. Explore micro-credential opportunities, including demand for both accredited and non-accredited options.

		Indicators: Greater diversity in programme provision, including increased postgraduate offerings, additional professional programmes and introduction of micro-credentials Partnership with second accrediting partner finalised. Devolution discussions commenced with QQI and considered by Academic Council. **Origin:** These actions arise from self-evaluation which commenced with preparing for re-engagement and has continued through ongoing quality improvement planning.
3	Continue with existing stakeholder engagement activities and broaden participation in this to include a broader range of stakeholders for mutual benefit. (Ref: Part B, 2.0 Stakeholder Engagement)	**Responsibility: ELT and management team** **Action:** Increase transparency of employer input in programme design Grow engagement with social partners to promote diversity and inclusion within the CCT community and as part of business activities to fulfil corporate social responsibilities. Continue, and where appropriate increase, engagement with the education and training sector. Strengthen the relationship with the CCT alumni community through a range of activities and engagement initiatives and secure alumni feedback to inform continuous improvement. Further increase opportunities for student partnership within teaching, learning, assessment and governance Proactively seek out stakeholder feedback to inform strategic planning, developments and implementation activities. **Indicators:** Increased membership of CCT industry engagement forum Evidence of stakeholder involvement in core activities of the College is clearly apparent through, inter alia, document contributions, committee / network / panel / working group membership, statistical analysis, marketing initiatives. Enhanced alumni engagement and evidence of input to inform enhancements. Greater number of student partnership initiatives and increased role for students as partners in strategic, operational and governance developments.

		Origin: This action is a result of CCT self-evaluation and strategic planning. The requirement to increase transparency of employer involvement in programme design was also highlighted by a validation panel.
4	Further progress implementation of the CCT Research Strategy. (Ref: Part A. 4.0 QA of Research Activities)	**Responsibility:** CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning **Actions**: Increase publication capacity, including with students as partners. Broaden sectoral engagement in research, innovation and scholarship with CCT. Develop proposal for a research day with a view to implementation early 2021/22. **Indicators:** Institutional repository population increased with greater publication of case, studies, research projects, conference papers, products of scholarly activity, and journal articles from within the CCT community and collaborating partners. **Origin:** This originated from CCT strategic ambitions to extend scope to level 9 and increasing engagement in research and scholarship is a continued priority to support the enhancement of learning environment in a level 9 context.
5	Continued expansion of activities to promote student success. (Part B. 2.0, Student Success)	**Responsibility**: CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning in conjunction with the Library Service and Student Services. **Actions:** Finalise student success strategy including agreed graduate attributes. Establish initial and continuing development opportunities for learners to familiarise themselves, and develop confidence, with CCT technology platforms and support services. Further enhance existing supports and increase accessibility to facilitate student success. Pilot and or implement assessment initiatives to facilitate student success and reduce or prevent over-assessment. Increase peer support for student success. **Indicators**: Publication of the CCT Student Success Extended online induction and orientation programme implemented. Student success classes expanded and enhanced. Increased application of universal design methodologies. Expansion of Student Mentoring Academy to reflect growing programme offering.

		Origin: Students are at the heart of the CCT strategic plan and these actions arise from strategic ambitions informed by stakeholder feedback, research into best practice, sector level engagement and quality improvement planning.
6	Review effectiveness of blended learning policy and CCT standards. (Ref: Part B, 1.0, Extension of Scope)	**Responsibility**: Dean of School, Dean of Academic Affairs and Academic Council **Action**: Undertake sector level consultation Secure feedback from stakeholders on experience of implementing or impact of policy and standards. Prepare report of findings for submission to Academic Council. **Indicators**: Review and recommendations submitted to Academic Council. Note: review to be completed at end of Academic Year 20/21. **Origin**: It is standard practice within CCT to review fitness for purpose of all newly approved QA policies and procedures after one year of operation. In this instance there is an added driver arising from the QA approval panel's concern in relation to the practical implementation of the standards and specifically the extent of responsibility assigned to lecturers.
7	Strategic Planning and Implementation (Ref: Part B: 1.1, QA Updates)	**Responsibility**: College Board, ELT, Academic Council, Centre for Teaching and Learning **Action**: Undertake consultation activities to inform the development of the next iteration of the CCT Strategic Plan and the CCT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, ensuring alignment of the two Draft and secure approval of revised strategies. **Indicators**: New strategy documents, evidencing consultation and research, approved and published **Origin**: Ongoing strategic planning and implementation is the foundation of all QA policy and practice, governance and operations within CCT. While this is a requirement articulated through the QQI Core QA Guidelines, CCT improvement planning highlights the timeframe and approach to strategic planning.

3.2   Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods
Guide:

3.2.1   Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period
Please provide a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from previous reviews here.

Please delete guide text before submission.

There are no QQI reviews scheduled in CCT for academic year 2020/21 but review activity will commence for those programmes with a last validated intake in September 2021.

Objectives from re-engagement were updated in the 2018/19 AQR and, where they continue to apply, are reflected in the objectives detailed in Section 3.1 of this report.

Unit to be reviewed.	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing	Last intake August 2022	Validated from Sept 2017
Bachelor of Business Honours	Last intake August 2022	Validated from Nov 2016

3.2.2   Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period
Provide a link to the published review schedule for any reviews beyond the upcoming reporting period.

Please delete guide text before submission.

Programmatic reviews are determined by the dates of validation indicated on the QQI Certificates of Validation available here.

At the time of writing, no information has been provided to indicate the timeframe for Institutional Review.

4.0   Additional Themes and Case Studies

Four case studies are being provided to further evidence practice in CCT College Dublin during the period of review.

Case Study 1: Internal Quality Assurance Response to Emergency Situations / COVID-19 Pandemic
This case study documents the College's approach to assuring quality through approval, implementation and monitoring of contingency arrangements for teaching, learning, assessment, student management and support. It further summarises the enhancements introduced to better support learners and staff to ensure continuity of provision, supports and services in the emergency remote context.

Case Study 2: Closing the Feedback Loop in an Emergency Remote Learning Context
Following on from case study 1, this case study describes a specific aspect of quality assurance in the emergency remote learning context. It describes the project implemented by the College to ensure that student feedback tools were fit for purpose for the new context and also incorporated alternative mechanisms for closing the feedback loop in a way that would reach all learners.

Case Study 3: A Multi-Prong Approach to Professional Development at CCT College Dublin
This case study describes the mechanisms CCT adopted to fulfil the strategic priority to proactively enhanced access to, and increased participation in, professional development in the period under review. The case study considers structural changes, investment in resources and institutional responsibility for professional development opportunities as well as the importance of collaboration with the wider higher education sector.

Case Study 4: The CCT Certificate in Teaching and Learning
Related to case study 3, the case study describes the pilot project of the CCT Certificate in Teaching and Learning, an initiative of the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The programme was designed specifically to support the professional development of those who teach in CCT and incorporated a National Forum digital badge into the programme design. The assessments for the programme were designed to enable participants to experience the practical application of their learning in an area of their choosing for example, preparing to teach at level 9, digital teaching, learning and assessment, using group assessment effectively etc.